

Dear ACT brands,

For over a month the people of Myanmar are on the streets every day to oppose the military coup. The people stand up peacefully with courage. They are risking their lives for democracy. The people can win if the international community is on their side and takes strong actions that show the military that turning back the clock has no future.

I ask your understanding that with this situation we have to decide on difficult questions. The negotiation mechanism at factory level is not working right now because our union leaders are in danger when they try to negotiate. Our union leaders have to hide and are in danger every day.

You will have seen the CTUM call for comprehensive sanctions. I am attaching it for you.

We need international support. We need to isolate the military regime within the country and internationally. That is why my trade union confederation CTUM took the difficult decision to call for comprehensive personal and economic sanctions against the military regime. Calling for comprehensive economic sanctions is a decision that we have not taken easily. We know better than anyone else the impact on workers employment and livelihood. But now it is about the future of our country.

There is no future, no freedom, and no worker rights under military rule. We know this from the past. We need a country that is attractive for companies who want to respect worker rights. We need a country that will attract ethical companies to invest and to grow. That is why we call for comprehensive sanctions. With the pressure from the civil disobedience movement in the country and strong measures by the international community, we can and we will win democracy and freedom of association back in Myanmar.

As international companies you are doing business in Myanmar. We expect you to do nothing that supports the military junta.

Governments, international organisations, but also businesses need to make the military understand that the coup is putting all trade preferences and international investment at risk.

Suppliers need to respect workers' right to participate in political strikes or demonstrations without taking disciplinary action. That includes that protesting workers and trade unionists should not be dismissed for participating in protests. We ask you to require your suppliers to do this and not punish suppliers with compensation demands for late delivery.

We need you to assure your suppliers that all products currently under production or ordered will be paid and no penalties or compensation charges will be applied when deliveries are delayed. Putting economic pressure on suppliers in the current situation forces suppliers to put pressure on protesting workers. By doing this, brands would take the side of the military.

We are sure that brands and employers do not want to take the side of the military. We know that you are committed to workers rights, freedom of association and human rights. We may disagree on some issues, but we believe that we share the same vision of a free and democratic Myanmar where workers and human rights are respected. We need to continue our good dialogue and cooperation and we count on you to not let us down.

Best regards,

Khaing Zar Aung (Ms)

Treasurer - Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar (CTUM)

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