

Myanmar Military Should Respect Democracy and its Peoples' Choice

Joint Regional Statement by LGBTIQ+ Organizations, Networks, and Allies

5th February 2021

We are organizations, networks and concerned individuals advancing the human rights of persons with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). We strongly condemn the military coup and its attack on civilian rule in Myanmar that took place on 1 February 2021. We affirm and support Myanmar's democratic process that was legally conducted through the Myanmar General Election in November 2020.

While not without its flaws, Myanmar has been on the journey towards a diverse, inclusive and participatory democracy since its democratic transition a decade ago. This progress has enabled a broad and meaningful involvement of civil society, including LGBTI organisations and activists in Myanmar. The military coup jeopardises and threatens to reverse all these progress.

Without civilian rule, people in Myanmar are disenfranchised and removed from decision-making processes. Without democracy, people, especially marginalized groups, are at risk of suffering from serious human rights violations. Fearing people's dissent, the military junta is unlawfully restricting freedom of expression and access to information, by means of cutting communication lines, and prohibiting social media channels.

We urge the military to immediately restore civilian rule, safely and unconditionally release all political detainees and human rights defenders complying with international human rights laws. Ultimately we call for the military to respect the wills of the people of Myanmar, and that any allegations of electoral irregularity be addressed lawfully through mechanisms set up through its Constitution.

We demand ASEAN to undertake clear, courageous, meaningful and effective steps to restore democracy and rule of law in Myanmar. ASEAN must no longer remain in the sidelines, passively witnessing the reign of terror of the Myanmar military.

We urge the international community to express solidarity with the people of Myanmar. We urge governments, the United Nations and other international actors to closely monitor the situation, receive communications from affected populations, and respond in a timely manner. International responses, including targeted measures against the military, must be implemented in a way that respects human rights principles.

We stand united with the people of Myanmar, its civil society and LGBTIQ communities. We are in this struggle together. Be strong; have courage. Restoring democracy and upholding rule of law is our common responsibility.

We, the undersigned groups:

ILGA Asia

ASEAN SOGIE Caucus

Colors Rainbow Myanmar

APCOM

Outright Action International

Mujer-LGBT Organization, Inc. (Philippines)

Bisdak Pride, Inc. (Philippines)

Bahaghari Philippines

SHINE SOCCSKARGEN (Philippines)

Equality Philippines (EQPH)

Metro Manila Pride (Philippines)

Rainbow Rights Philippines (Philippines)

PLUHO, People Like Us Hang Out! (Malaysia)

Youth for YOUTH Organization (Philippines)

Pioneer Filipino Transgender men Movement (Philippines)

Iloilo Pride Team (Philippines)

Equal Asia Foundation (Stichting EqualA Foundation)

Arus Pelangi (Indonesia)

Intersex Philippines

Ladlad Caraga Incorporated (Philippines)

Mindanao Pride (Philippines)

Side B Philippines

Philippine Anti-Discrimination Alliance of Youth Leaders (PANTAY)

Center for Youth Networking and Development Initiatives, Inc. (Philippines)

International IDAHO Committee

Samasetara.id (Indonesia)

Sayoni (Singapore)

The Healing Circle sg (Singapore)

Visayas LGBTQ Network (Philippines)

San Julian Pride Advocacy Group Inc. (Philippines)

Prout (Singapore)

Illuminates of the Spectra (Philippines)

UP Babaylan (Philippines)

IndigNation (Singapore)

Justice for Sisters (Malaysia)

Toleransi Indonesia (Indonesia)

Youth Voices Count

Regional Gabriela Panay-Guimaras (Philippines)

ALTSEAN-Burma (Burma)

People Like Us Support Ourselves (PLUsos) Malaysia

GSHR Udayana (Indonesia)

PELANGI Campaign (Malaysia)

JEJAKA (Malaysia)

Program on Alternative Development, University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies

&PROUD Myanmar

Cangkang Queer (Indonesia)

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

Edge Effect (Australia)

And 24 individual signatories across Asia.

The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) is a regional network of 81 member organisations across 21 Asian countries, with consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and consultative relationship with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights. Founded in 1991, FORUM-ASIA works to strengthen movements for human rights and sustainable development through research, advocacy, capacity-development and

solidarity actions in Asia and beyond. It has sub-regional offices in Geneva, Jakarta, and Kathmandu.

www.forum-asia.org

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