

Senator the Hon. Marise Payne
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Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash
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Dear Ministers,

Credentials of the Myanmar military junta at the 109th International Labour Conference

On behalf of the Australian trade union movement, and in solidarity with the Myanmar trade union movement, I request that the Australian Government challenge the credentials of the Myanmar military junta at the upcoming 109th International Labour Conference (ILC) and other international and regional fora.

The illegitimate coup that occurred on 1 February 2021 in Myanmar directly negated the democratically elected Government and has been responsible for the killing of more than 800 civilians, including children, and the arbitrary arrest of almost 5000 people. The military junta has also illegally dismissed tens of thousands of workers, brutally targeted trade unionists, and declared sixteen trade unions and workers' organisations illegal. Despite this repression, trade unions and civil society organisations, under the banner of the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), managed to establish a National Unity Government (NUG) – the representative body of the democratically elected Myanmar MPs.

It would be tantamount to legitimising the junta's actions if its credentials at the ILC and other UN meetings are not challenged. We request that the Australian Government takes leadership by formally challenging the junta's credentials at the 109th International Labour Conference and all other UN meetings, and by directing Australian Government representatives to withhold the use of formal titles when engaging with representatives of the Myanmar military junta at international fora, including not using formal titles such as 'Minister' and referring to Myanmar junta delegations not by the country's name but by the regime's name (State Administration Council).

We call on the Australian Government to recognise the NUG as the sole legitimate authority and refuse to recognise the military junta in order to support a return to democratic rule in Myanmar. Challenging the junta's credentials at the ILC would be an important first step in this regard and would confirm the essential role that the ILO has played in the past in the country's democratic transition.

The Australian Union movement stands in solidarity with the people of Myanmar and looks forward to seeing strong and urgent action to support a return to democracy. I would appreciate your response to the issues raised in this correspondence.

Yours sincerely



Michele O'Neil
President
ACTU

CC:

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