

Southeast Asian Women Stand with Myanmar for Freedom and Democracy

We, members of Southeast Asia Women's Watch (SEAWWatch), a network of women's organizations in Southeast Asia, condemn the recent illegal and forcible military takeover of the government of Myanmar. We are alarmed and appalled at the forcible dispersal and arrest of duly elected officials, opposition leaders, and thousands of Myanmar citizens who organized themselves in opposition to military rule.

We join the international community in calling for the restoration of democratic order, for respect for the election results, and for the return of elected officials to their positions. Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) won by a landslide, capturing 396 of 476 votes, compared with the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party's (USDP) 33 won seats in addition to 25 more assured seats in parliament. The NLD has won the right to form a government and continue the work of restoring and rebuilding Myanmar's democratic institutions and processes. The recent military coup robs the people of Myanmar of their hard-won freedoms and liberties, taking the country back to a dark period of military dictatorship.

We strongly support the people of Myanmar in their quest for a more democratic society and a more sustainable peace, and call for the release of all arrested citizens and respect for the people's fundamental right to free expression and peaceful assembly. We urge Min Aung Hlaing of Myanmar's Tatmadaw to initiate dialogue with opposition leaders and resolve the issues peacefully and in accordance with the overwhelming will and interest of the people. After all, Myanmar's history shows that force and violence can never permanently suppress the people's will for freedom and their human rights.

Women and Gender Institute
(Philippines)

Yaung Chi Thit
(Myanmar)

Sisters in Islam
(Malaysia)

Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau
(Philippines)

Institute for Women's Empowerment
(Indonesia)

Mitra Perempuan
(Indonesia)

Assosiasaun Chega! ba Ita
(Timor Leste)

Thai Women Watch
(Thailand)

Silaka
(Cambodia)

Rede Feto Timor Leste
(Timor Leste)

ASEAN SOGIE Caucus
(Regional)

These organizations echo the voices of thousands of women in Southeast Asia.