



## ***On Pride Month: LGBTQIA+ asserts genuine liberation; vow to strengthen solidarity***

**Milk Tea Alliance - Friends of Myanmar (MTA-FOM)**

### **Pride Month Solidarity Statement**

The Milk Tea Alliance - Friends of Myanmar (MTA-FOM) stands in solidarity with the LGBTQIA+ community. MTA-FOM asserts that LGBTQIA+ rights are human rights and that any person must not be discriminated against and condemned based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sexual characteristics.

It has been 55 years since the Stonewall Uprising and while much progress has been made in many places the queer community continues to endure the onslaught of discrimination and oppression. Particularly in the region, governments continue to subscribe to the framework of archaic laws and attitudes. In Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Myanmar, homosexuality remains criminalized - their penalties ranging from prison to death sentences. In countries such as Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand which boast tolerance and 'acceptance' for the queer community, cases of discrimination and violence against LGBTQIA+ people remain high.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, in the Philippines, the SOGIE Equality Bill remains in legislative limbo<sup>2</sup> despite hundreds of thousands of LGBTQIA+ peoples and allies calling for the passage of the bill.<sup>3</sup>

While there have been pro-LGBTQIA+ measures such as the recently passed marriage equality law in Thailand,<sup>4</sup> the decriminalization of homosexuality in Singapore,<sup>5</sup> and moves to end discrimination in medical care in Vietnam,<sup>6</sup> any gains for the rights of the queer community are destined to fall short under an inherently exploitative neoliberal framework.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ibanet.org/LGBTI-rights-Many-challenges-in-Southeast-Asia>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.tatlerasia.com/newsletters/bot-status-of-the-sogie-bill-in-ph>

<sup>3</sup> <https://news.abs-cbn.com/lifestyle/2024/5/30/as-pride-2024-opens-lgbt-community-promises-show-of-force-to-pass-sogiesc-equality-bill-2133>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/06/18/victory-same-sex-marriage-thailand>

<sup>5</sup> <https://thediplomat.com/2022/08/singapore-to-repeal-colonial-era-law-criminalizing-sex-between-men/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://thediplomat.com/2022/08/vietnam-takes-major-step-forward-in-recognizing-lgbtq-rights/>

We believe that the struggle for genuine queer liberation must be rooted in the battle against all oppressive systems and is not detached from other forms of oppression such as monarchies, colonialism, fascism, capitalism, and dictatorships. These systems have fueled gender oppression throughout human history.

Gender oppression around the world is not separate from other forms of oppressive systems such as monarchies, colonialism, fascism, capitalism, and dictatorships. These systems have fueled gender oppression throughout human history. s. Such attempts to limit gender identity into binary categories such as male and female are no different from securitized approaches of forcibly identifying people as either enemies or allies.

Upholding LGBTQIA+ rights and welfare cannot be done in isolation. We recognize that pinkwashing continues to be an issue, with authorities seeking to promote LGBTQIA+ advocacies to soften oppressive practices—and that this is a tactic being used against our people. In the Philippines, the Duterte dynasty has supported local anti-discrimination ordinances to prevent discrimination along lines of gender and ethnicity. Yet, they also oversaw countless forms of oppression such as extrajudicial killings and profiling of activists and other people they considered to be enemies of the state. In Thailand, corporations have been attempting to hijack the pride parade for their vested interests. Israel is trying to distract the whole world from the Palestinian genocide by claiming support for queer communities.<sup>7</sup>

Despite pinkwashing attempts, we are not fooled by these governments and corporations as we see right through their charades and performances. Their attempts to prioritize certain rights over others are nothing more than attempts at divide-and-conquer. The solidarity of the oppressed peoples and their fight against injustice is to end the oppressions that exist in our world today.

Today, we recommit to vow to strengthen and build robust solidarity with the queer community in their continuing quest for equality, dignity, and justice. To support their struggle in what ways we can, to amplify their voices, and to ensure they are fully represented and heard in our spaces.

MTA-FOM stands with our LGBTQIA+ friends & allies, as we celebrate the achievements, hopes, and dreams of our rainbow community. This Pride Month, we hope to manifest a more just, secure, and safe world for all. We will stand and fight alongside the oppressed people around the world and continue to push ourselves and our allies to do & be better in the midst of our struggles.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/8/9/against-the-pinkwashing-of-israel>