

Helen McEntee TD,
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade,
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,
Stephen's Green,
Dublin 2

15 December 2025

Re: Human Rights Situation and Elections in Myanmar

Dear Minister McEntee,

We are writing to follow up with you on the resolution concerning the application of measures under Article 33 of the ILO Constitution on Myanmar, adopted at the 113th International Labour Conference (ILC) in June this year. The resolution was widely welcomed by trade unions and workers in Myanmar as a key step toward implementation of the recommendations of the ILO's Commission of Inquiry on Myanmar (2023), restoring civil liberties, ending military violence against trade unionists and ending forced labour in the country. We stand firmly with the trade union movement in Myanmar in urging all ILO constituents and international organisations to contribute to its full implementation.

The human rights situation in Myanmar continues to deteriorate as the military junta intensifies military violence and proceeds to organise an election on 28 December. As noted by the 355th session of the ILO's Governing Body, the military-organised election raises deep concern. It is initiated against the backdrop of the continued absence of progress made by the military authorities towards respecting the will of the people and restoring democratic institutions and processes over four years since the military coup.

We have learned from the trade union movement in Myanmar that the military junta is exerting enormous pressure on workers and the legitimate voters, coercing them to vote during the election in December. Meanwhile, approximately 100 people have been arbitrarily arrested for alleged acts of interference and disruption of the election under the repressive laws that have been passed by the military authorities since August¹. These laws criminalise free expression and opposition to the ballot.

At the same time, the military authorities have intensified air strikes against civilian targets, including the makeshift office of the ITUC affiliate, the Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar (CTUM), at the border area with Thailand last month. A parallel trade union sponsored by the military is operating to replace the voices of independent trade

unions, namely the CTUM while their leaders remain under arrest warrants and stripped of citizenship.

Eight detained members of the Solidarity Trade Union Myanmar (STUM) remain in detention for organising trade unions. They are threatened with criminal convictions if STUM continues to speak out publicly, demanding wage increases and better working conditions for workers. Although STUM's Director, Myo Myo Aye, and the General Secretary of MICs-TUFs, Thet Hnin Aung have been released in a nationwide pardon, they remain under severe surveillance on conditional bail.

We share the grave concerns with the trade union movement in Myanmar and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights that the junta-imposed election is far from being a process that could spearhead a political transition from crisis to stability and the restoration of democratic, civilian rule. The election will not be free and fair and inclusive, but a process that is “nearly certain to further ingrain insecurity, fear and polarization throughout the country” (OHCHR).

We note that the Irish Government and the EU are largely aligned with our position on the election and would encourage you to use any opportunity to continue to openly denounce the 28 December election in Myanmar, express concerns about the military's suppression of fundamental rights and freedoms under the election, and not recognise the results of the sham election.

We refer to the decision of the 355th session of the Governing Body of the ILO on follow up to the 113th ILC resolution on Myanmar and request the convening of a tripartite meeting at the earliest possible date to discuss Myanmar. We propose that the tripartite meeting should be extended to include the competent ministries. This will enable a discussion on the observance and contributions of our government and tripartite partners in enforcing the 113th ILC resolution on Myanmar, in particular with regard to the measures under paragraph 2.

The 2025 resolution highlights specifically the continuous supplies of jet fuel, military support and financial flows to Myanmar under paragraph 2 (c). If fully implemented, this could help to bring an end to air strikes and the continued use of military violence against the civilians and trade unionists.

Under paragraph 2, member states and tripartite partners are further urged to coordinate comprehensive and strategic actions, and to support activities that directly benefit the people of Myanmar and their communities. These include support for the activities of trade unions in Myanmar, the creation of an independent monitoring and reporting mechanism for accountability; and respect for the principle of non-refoulement concerning trade unionists and human rights defenders fleeing persecution in Myanmar.

Thank you for your attention and we look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,

Owen Reidy

General Secretary

CC: Minister Alan Dillon, Minister of State for Employment, Small Business and Retail