



## **ITUC Asia Pacific, Global Union Federations Asia Pacific Regional Organisations Joint Statement on the Myanmar Military Junta's Illegal and Sham Elections**

Today, 15th September on commemoration of International Democracy Day, we, the undersigned international trade union organisations—Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI) Asia-Pacific, Education International (EI) Asia-Pacific, International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF), International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), IndustriALL, International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), International Trade Union Confederation – Asia Pacific (ITUC Asia-Pacific), International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations – Asia Pacific Regional Office (IUF A/P), Public Services International (PSI) Asia-Pacific, and UNI Global Union Asia and Pacific — issue this joint statement to unequivocally condemn the Myanmar military junta's dangerous manoeuvring to legitimise its dictatorship through sham elections scheduled on 28th December.

### **A Mockery of Democracy**

Today, as the world celebrates the principles of democracy, Myanmar's illegal military junta stands exposed for its relentless assault on those very ideals. The so-called "elections" orchestrated by the military regime are not a restoration of democracy but but a calculated ploy to entrench military rule and extend authoritarian control. These polls are conducted amid systematic violence, mass detentions, the dismantling of genuine opposition, and the exclusion of millions through conflict and displacement. These are conditions fundamentally hostile to free, fair, and participatory elections.

Since the coup in February 2021, the junta has waged a campaign of terror and repression against the people of Myanmar. Over 5,000 civilians have been killed, more than 30,000 arbitrarily detained, and hundreds of thousands displaced. Trade unions have been systematically targeted, with at least 151 trade union leaders arrested and 37 killed for their activism. These attacks have dismantled fundamental freedoms, including the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

The junta's assault on freedom of expression has also intensified. At least 11 media workers have been killed since the coup. Over 220 journalists from more than 100 media outlets have been detained, with 176 of them charged under nine separate laws, including incitement, "false news," and sweeping counter-terrorism provisions. As of July 2025, 49 journalists remained behind bars.

Elections held under martial law, with legitimate and independent political parties banned, journalists silenced, and entire regions subjected to occupation and terror, are a mockery of democracy. They are not a pathway to restoration—they are a deliberate façade. The military's "roadmap" is paved with bloodshed, intimidation, and exclusion; it leads only to permanent authoritarianism and continued suffering for the people of Myanmar.

We therefore issue this urgent call to the international community:

Reject the Myanmar junta's sham elections. Denounce and do not recognize their legitimacy, outcome, or structure. Expose this spectacle for what it is: a tool to consolidate military rule and whitewash human rights abuses.

## **The Junta's Rebranding Trick: SAC to SSPC**

To make matters worse, the junta has rebranded its governing body from the “State Administration Council” (SAC) to the “State Security and Peace Commission” (SSPC). This rebranding is a strategic ploy to circumvent international sanctions. The name may have changed, but the violence, repression, and impunity remain the same.

We call on governments and multilateral institutions to close this loophole and to relentlessly continue to enforce and monitor sanctions. Any failure to sanction the SSPC as the direct continuation of the SAC will embolden the junta and undermine global accountability efforts.

## **There Can Be No Democracy Without the People**

The people of Myanmar have already spoken. Through mass protests, civil disobedience, and ongoing resistance, they have made clear that they reject military rule and demand a genuine democratic transition.

We stand in solidarity with Myanmar's workers, youth, ethnic nationalities, and democratic forces. We will not normalize dictatorship. We will not remain silent. And we will not allow a fabricated electoral process to overwrite the will of the people.

