

Nyon, 25 February 2021

Statement of UNI Global Union’s ICTS Presidium – the international leadership body for information, communications, technology, and services trade unions – on the military coup in Myanmar

“Telecommunications companies in Myanmar must resist and appeal directives from this illegitimate military government.”

UNI ICTS, the global trade union federation for workers in the ICTS sector, represents 3 million workers around the world. The leadership of UNI ICTS calls for the immediate restoration of the democratically elected government in Myanmar, and end to the blockade of free-flowing information in the country.

Telecommunications companies have international human rights obligations to ensure that citizens have access to communications platforms. Freedom of expression and access to information are protected under international human rights law. Since the military coup on the 1st of February 2021, authorities have required telecommunications companies to block or restrict access to the internet in an attempt to quell resistance to the coup. It is deeply concerning that the military proposed having telecommunications companies provide authorities with individual user data.

We call on all telecommunications companies present in Myanmar, especially multinational companies that dominate the telecoms market -Telenor (Norway), KDDI¹ (Japan) and Ooredoo (Qatar) - to publicly speak out against the requirements that the military is making of them and take all reasonable actions to resist and appeal directives from this illegitimate military government.

Specifically, telecommunications companies must:

- Publicly speak out against efforts to restrict and block access to communications.
- Take all reasonable steps to protect individual user data.
- Develop action plans with civil society organizations, in the case that the human rights situation deteriorates.
- Not to take retaliatory action against workers who participate in strikes against the military regime, or who resist illegitimate orders from authorities that violate human rights.

¹ KDDI is part of a joint venture with Myanmar Post and Telecommunications (MPT).

Under [OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct](#) and the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#), telecommunications companies must take reasonable steps to ensure that human rights violations do not take place. Telecommunications companies should work with civil society organizations, both nationally and internationally, as part of steps to ensure that all possible measures are taken to protect human rights in this troubling environment.

Shutting down and limiting communications infrastructure, has the objective of silencing the population of Myanmar, allowing the military to illegally maintain power and for human rights violations to occur with impunity. We extend our solidarity to the people of Myanmar who are resisting this illegitimate military government.

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About UNI ICTS and the UNI ICTS Presidium

Part of the 20-million member UNI Global Union, UNI's ICTS sector represents more than three million workers in the information, communication, technology and services sector of the economy.

The UNI ICTS Presidium is the global leadership of the organization comprising of its regional presidents from Asia-Pacific, Europe, Africa and the Americas, as well as its global president.