

Public Statement by Friends Against Dictatorship (FAD)

5 March 2021, Chiang Mai, Thailand

**Support mass movements against the Myanmar military dictatorship**

**Support demands for federal democracy in Myanmar**

In the 10 years prior to the military coup on 1 February 2021, the Myanmar Army was able to cement its political power through the 2008 Constitution drafted by the committee appointed by the previous military regime, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). The government led by the National League for Democracy (NLD) was unable to garner the necessary 75% of parliamentary votes to amend the Constitution to minimize the military's political power, due to the military's fixed bloc of 25% seats under the current Constitution. The NLD had been advocating for the reduction of the proportion of military MPs to 15% after the elections in 2020, and then 10% and 5% respectively during the next elections.

The NLD-led government had also failed to achieve concrete progress in the peace process begun during the Thein Sein government. Even though 10 Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) between 2015 and 2018, the Myanmar Army continued to violate ceasefire agreements and launch offensives against these EAOs. Meanwhile, armed conflicts with EAOs that did not sign the NCA have continued unabated in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States. The NLD government also backed the genocidal campaigns against the ethnic Rohingya in 2016 and 2017, causing the international community to lose their faith in Aung San Suu Kyi. The ongoing political turmoil and conflict attest to the urgent need for genuine structural political reform, compliant with Myanmar as a plural society, not just token transition to quasi-civilian rule.

The current mass uprising to demand democracy and peace has yielded a violent response, causing the number of casualties to rise day by day. We, the Friends Against Dictatorship (FAD), composed of academics, activists, media and those who want to see peace and democracy established in Myanmar, wish to show our respect to the people who have been taking to the streets to show their resistance to the Myanmar military dictatorship. We also offer our deepest condolences to the families of those who have died in these events. If this uprising only leads to another election without structural political change -- including bringing the military under civilian control and respecting political rights of ethnic groups -- it will make it even more challenging for a genuine political transition toward democracy and peace to take place.

FAD stands in solidarity with the people of Myanmar

1. We support the people who are mobilizing against the Myanmar military dictatorship.
2. We support the demands for a new federal constitution which reflects the plural society of Myanmar, and grants ethnic groups including the Rohingya their political rights, allowing them to make their own decisions regarding public administration in their own territories.

Given the latest humanitarian crisis due to the violent crackdown by the Myanmar Army against peaceful demonstrators, FAD has the following demands:

1. All countries are urged to suspend any form of support for the Myanmar military regime and its businesses and not accept the legitimacy of this putsch.
2. UN mechanisms and regional mechanisms should come up with measures to punish the use of violence by the Myanmar Army against the people.
3. The international community should support and promote initiatives to establish federal democracy in Myanmar.
4. All people should lend their support and show their solidarity with the people in Myanmar during their struggle against military dictatorship.

Peace and happiness of people of the region and the world will not be possible, as long as their voices and rights continue to be suppressed. #StopViolenceAgainstThePeople #AllOfUsArePeople

#### **Individuals and organizations who are part of Friends Against Dictatorship (FAD)**

1. Chayan Vaddhanaphuti
2. Naruemon Thabchumpon
3. Ouyporn Khuankaew
4. Supawadee Petrat
5. Pipob Udomittipong
6. Adisorn Kerdmongkol
7. Koreeyor Manuchae
8. Somboon Chungprampree
9. Pianporn Deetes
10. Teerachai Sanjaroenkijthaworn
11. Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma (TACDB)
12. Spirit in Education Movement (SEM)
13. Mekong Peace Journey (MPJ)