

To  
Minister Elina Valtonen  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs  
Government of Finland

Councillor Ignazio Cassis  
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs  
Government of Switzerland

10 November, 2023

**Subject: Finland and Switzerland must stop lending legitimacy to Myanmar military junta and its sham peace efforts**

Dear Minister Valtonen and Councillor Cassis,

We, 455 civil society organizations – call on the Governments of Finland and Switzerland to end all engagements with and support of the Myanmar military junta, particularly its sham peace efforts. We urge Finland and Switzerland to instead support the people of Myanmar's ongoing efforts towards inclusive federal democracy and sustainable peace.

First, we have learned that the Government of Finland, through the CMI – Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation, recently invited members of the Myanmar military junta's so-called Peace Committee to a secret meeting in Helsinki, Finland, and met with them there – all while the junta is deliberately targeting and killing civilians across the country.

By bringing junta representatives to Helsinki, the Finnish Government has signaled its recognition, acceptance, and support of the junta – in complete violation of democratic principles and most importantly, the will of the people of Myanmar.

Let us be clear: The people of Myanmar are not merely in a political disagreement with the illegal and illegitimate military junta. Since its failed coup of 1 February 2021, the junta has [killed](#) at least 4,174 people, as of 6 November 2023, and over 1.7 million people have been internally [displaced](#). In recent months, the junta has ramped up its use of airstrikes to terrorize and murder Myanmar civilians across the country. From May to August 2023 alone, the junta [launched](#) 272 airstrikes, amounting to at least two airstrikes per day – killing 72 civilians and injuring 163, as well as damaging schools, medical facilities, and religious buildings.

By supporting and lending legitimacy to the murderous junta, the Finnish Government has failed to uphold its international obligations to protect the people of Myanmar and has undermined Myanmar people's resistance movement in defense of democracy and human rights. Finland's actions have also undermined international sanctions targeting the junta and emboldened the junta to continue its mass atrocity crimes against Myanmar civilians with blanket impunity.

Second, we have also learned that the Government of Switzerland, in conjunction with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Swisspeace, organized a workshop on the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) peace process in Naypyitaw from October 16 to 18, 2023.

By supporting the junta's futile and sham NCA efforts, the Swiss Government not only lends legitimacy to the junta, but also prolongs the junta's relentless violence that is attempting to force the people of Myanmar back under military dictatorship.

The failed NCA is completely irrelevant in addressing Myanmar's multi-faceted crisis. In fact, support for the NCA emboldens the junta and worsens the unfathomable devastation in Myanmar, as the military is the source of violence and the root cause of the crisis. As declared by three original signers of the NCA, the military junta's illegal coup attempt and its use of extreme violence against civilians have violated and invalidated the NCA, particularly its principle of non-violence.

From its start, the NCA has never been a praiseworthy, genuine peace deal, as its original process was deeply flawed and exclusive. Today, the ethnic armed organizations that continue to engage with the junta's futile NCA efforts do not hold territory, have significant troop numbers, nor hold the mandate to represent their people. Any actions of the junta related to the NCA are thus illusory and invalid, and must be denounced by the international community.

Third, we have further learned that Switzerland and Finland are trying to provide humanitarian assistance through the Technical Secretariat Center (TSC), a working group of the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (JMC), in collaboration with a few other countries.

Humanitarian aid provided through junta-controlled channels, such as the JMC and TSC, will not reach the people in need and will instead lend legitimacy to the illegal junta, bolster its violence against civilians, and whitewash its mass atrocity crimes.

Switzerland and Finland know very well that the military currently controls both the JMC and TSC, as it has in the past. When the JMC was first formed, the pre-existing civilian ceasefire monitoring was banned, and today, the junta's control overrides any civilian voices more so than ever before. Indeed, since their formation, the JMC and TSC have never functioned to aid civilians – and never will.

Rather than deliver aid to the people, the junta will only continue to weaponize the aid provided through the TSC, blocking aid deliveries, attacking humanitarian workers, and lining its pockets to continue its violence. Aid provision through the TSC also stands to hinder other avenues for aid delivery, namely cross-border channels that support locally led, frontline humanitarian responders throughout Myanmar.

Overall, we are appalled to learn that Switzerland and Finland are pursuing these unethical initiatives that allow the junta to continue its war of terror against Myanmar's people. In asymmetric conflict, the oppressor – here, the military junta – cannot be an equal or trusted partner at any negotiation table. As European history has shown us, the privilege to join peace

efforts and deliver humanitarian aid must not be afforded to brutal oppressors who have no interest in genuine peace or cessation of violence.

Therefore, we call on the Governments of Finland and Switzerland to stop lending legitimacy and recognition to the junta and instead fully support the people of Myanmar. To do so, Finland and Switzerland must immediately cease any engagement with the junta, including the aforementioned initiatives, which are an insult to Myanmar's people who have endured decades of immense suffering from the military's violence.

To align with the will of Myanmar people, Finland and Switzerland must also join ongoing international efforts to actualize justice for Myanmar people and hold the military accountable for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. Relatedly, we call on Finland and Switzerland to denounce the military junta's sham NCA-related peace efforts, and instead provide financial and political support to Myanmar people's efforts to build sustainable and inclusive peace from the bottom up.

For Myanmar to achieve sustainable peace, not only must the military be held accountable under international law, but also the junta's access to weapons and foreign currency must end. Therefore, we further call on Finland and Switzerland to strongly recommend a UN Security Council resolution that refers the crisis in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court or establishes an ad hoc tribunal and that imposes a global arms embargo, as well as robust, targeted economic sanctions against the military junta.

In tandem, Finland and Switzerland must end all partnerships with the junta and junta-controlled or -linked entities for the provision of humanitarian aid. Humanitarian aid should instead be provided directly to local ethnic and community-based organizations, including through cross-border channels to enhance locally led humanitarian response efforts.

Through a strong people's resistance movement across the country, Myanmar people are aiming to dismantle the military junta and end the military's violent oppression. It is high time that Finland and Switzerland stand unequivocally on the side of the people of Myanmar.

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Signed by 455 civil society organizations, including 277 organizations that have chosen not to disclose their names because the junta continues violence in Myanmar.

1. 5/ of Zaya State Strike
2. A-Yar-Taw People Strike
3. Action Committee for Democracy Development (Coalition of 14 grassroots networks)
4. Action Committee of Basic Education Students (ACBES)
5. Action Group for Democracy and Human Rights
6. All Arakan Students' & Youths' Congress - AASYC
7. All Arakan Youth Orga

8. All Aung Myay Thar San Schools Strike Force
9. All Burma Federation of Student Unions (Monywa District)
10. Alliance for Democracy in Myanmar.
11. Alliance of Students' Union – Yangon (ASU-Yangon)
12. Anti-coup Forces Coordination Committee (ACFCC -Mandalay)
13. Anti-Junta Alliance Yangon-AJAY
14. Arakan CSO Network
15. Association of Human Rights Defenders and Promoters
16. Athan - Freedom of Expression Activist Organization
17. Ayeyarwaddy Journalists Society - AJS
18. Ayeyarwaddy West Development Organisation AWDO Minbu
19. Ayeyarwaddy West Development Organisation.AWDO (Nagphe)
20. Basic Education General Strike Committee (BEGSC)
21. Basic Education Students & Youths Association (BESYA) \_အခြေခံပညာ

ကျောင်းသား လူငယ်များ အစည်းအရုံး (အကလ)

22. Basic Education Worker Unions - Steering Committee (BEWU-SC)
23. Blood Money Campaign
24. Burma Civil War Museum
25. Burma Human Rights Network
26. Burmese Women's Union
27. CAN-Myanmar
28. CDM Medical Network (CDMMN)
29. Chanmyatharzi Township People's Strike
30. Chaung Oo Township Youth Strike Committee
31. Chindwin (West) Villages Women Strike
32. Civil Information Network (CIN)
33. Civil Society Organizations Coordination Committee (Monywa)
34. Co-operative University Mandalay Students' Strike
35. Coalition Strike Committee – Dawei
36. Daung Sitthe Strike
37. Dawei ( Ashaetau) Women Strike
38. Dawei Youths Revolutionary Movement Strike Committee
39. Defend Myanmar Democracy
40. Delta News Agency
41. Delta Youth Initiative
42. Democracy Movement Strike Committee(Dawei)
43. Democracy, Peace and Women's Organization
44. Democratic Youth Council
45. Depayin Township Revolution Steering Committee
46. Depayin Women Strike
47. Equality Myanmar
48. Ethnic Youth General Strike Committee (Mandalay)
49. Federal Corner
50. Former Political Prisoners and New Generation Group – Monywa
51. Free Rohingya Coalition
52. Future Light Center
53. Future Thanlwin
54. Gangaw Women Strike
55. General Strike Collaboration Committee (GSCC)

56. General Strike Committee of Basic and Higher Education (GSCBHE)
57. General Strike Committee of Nationalities -GSCN
58. Generation Wave
59. Grass-root People
60. Human Rights Educators Network
61. Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM)
62. Industries Strike
63. JMC Inn Lay
64. Justice for Myanmar
65. Kachin Gender Star Group
66. Kachin Student Union
67. Kachin Women Network
68. Kachin Women's Association Thailand
69. Kalay Township Strike Force
70. Kalay Women Strike
71. Kanpetlet Land Development Organization
72. Karen Human Rights Group
73. Karen Peace Support Network
74. Kayan Rescuse Committee KRC
75. Keng Tung Youth
76. Kyain Seikgyi Spring Revolution Leading Committee
77. Kyauktada Strike Committee
78. Latpadaung Region Strike Committee
79. Legal Aid for Human Rights
80. Let's Help Each Other
81. LGBT Alliance
82. LGBT Alliance Myanmar (Kalay Region)
83. LGBT Alliance Myanmar (Kyaukse Region)
84. LGBT Community Yangon
85. LGBT Union – Mandalay
86. Los Angeles Myanmar Movement (LA2M)
87. Magway People's Revolution Committee
88. Maharaungmyay Township People's Strike
89. Mandalay University Students' Strike
90. Mandalay Alliance Coalition Strike
91. Mandalay Medical Family (MFM)
92. Mandalay Regional Youth Association - Revolutionary Core Group
93. Mandalay Strike Force (MSF)
94. Mandalay Women Strike
95. Mandalay Youth Strike
96. Mandalay-based People's Strike
97. Mandalay-Based University Students' Unions (MDY\_SUs)
98. MayMyo Strike Force
99. Metta Campaign
100. Min Hla farmers Group
101. Minbu Farmers Group
102. Minority Affairs Institute (MAI Myanmar)
103. Monywa LGBT Strike
104. Monywa People's Strike Steering Committee
105. Monywa Women Strike

106. Monywa-Amyint Road Strike Leading Committee
107. Monywa-Amyint Road Women Strike
108. Multi-Religions Strike
109. Mya Taung Strike
110. Myanmar Cultural Research Society
111. Myanmar Institute of Information Technology Students' Strike
112. Myanmar Labor Alliance (MLA)
113. Myanmar People Alliance (Shan State)
114. Myaung Youth Network
115. MyaYar Knowledge Tree
116. Myingyan Civillian Movement Committee
117. National League for Democracy (Monywa Township)
118. Network for Human Rights Documentation - Burma (ND-Burma)
119. Network of University Student Unions – Monywa
120. No.12 Basic Education Branch High School ( Maharaungmyay) Students' Union
121. NRFF - New Rehmonnya Federated Force
122. Nyan Lynn Thit Analytica
123. Open Development Foundation
124. Oway Institute
125. Pale Township People's Strike Steering Committee
126. PFLAG-Myanmar
127. Progressive Voice
128. Pwintphyu Development Organisation
129. Pyi Gyi Tagon Strike Force
130. Rangoon Scout Network – RSN
131. Representative Committee of University Teacher Associations (RC of UTAs)
132. Rural Community Development Society
133. Salingyi Subcommittee
134. Samgha Sammaga-Mandalay
135. Save and Care Organization for Ethnic Women at Border Areas
136. Seinpann Strike
137. Shan MATA
138. Shwe Pan Kone People`s Strike Steering Committee
139. Sisters 2 Sisters
140. Sitt Nyein Pann Foundation
141. Southern Dragon Myanmar
142. Southern Monitor
143. Southern Youth Development Organization
144. Spring Friends
145. Spring Sprouts
146. Spring Traveller
147. Student Voice
148. Synergy - Social Harmony Organization
149. Ta Mar Institute of Development
150. Ta`ang Women`s Organization
151. Tanintharyi MATA
152. Taze Strike Commitee
153. Taze Women Strike
154. Thakhin Kodaw Mhine Peace Network (Monywa)

155. Thayat Chaung Women Strike
156. The 88 Generation Peace and Open Society (Monywa)
157. Twitter Team for Revolution (TTFR)
158. University Students' Unions Alumni Force
159. Volunteers in Myanmar
160. Wetlet Revolution Leading Committee
161. Wetlet Twonship Women Strike
162. White Coat Society Yangon (WCSY)
163. Women Advocacy Coalition- Myanmar
164. Women Alliance Burma (WAB)
165. Women's League of Burma
166. Yadanabon University Students' Union ( YDNBUSU)
167. Yangon Women Strike
168. Yasakyo Township People`s Strike Steering Committee
169. Yinmarpin and Salingyi All Villages Strike Committee
170. တကသ ကျောင်းသားဟောင်းများ အင်အားစု
171. ဒို့မြေကွန်ရက် - LIOH
172. ပဉ္စမမဏ္ဍိုင်
173. ပွင့်ဖြူလယ်ယာမြေကွန်ရက်
174. မျက်မှောက်ခေတ်
175. မျိုးဆက်-Generations
176. မြန်မာ့မွတ်စလင် အစည်းအရုံး (BMA)
177. ယောဒေသစစ်ဘေးရှောင်ကူညီရေးအဖွဲ့
178. ရုန်းကန်သံ