Statement on International Workers' Day (May Day)

1 May 2023

Labour Day, also known as International Workers' Day, is an important occasion to celebrate and recognize the contributions of workers around the world. In Myanmar, Labour Day is celebrated on May 1st each year, and it holds great significance for the country's workforce.

The first May Day celebration in Myanmar started in 1938, when workers went on strike against the British-owned Burmah Oil Company (BOC) in Yenanchaung, in the central region of Myanmar, before the country's independence. The strikes were part of a larger movement known as the "Revolution of 1300", named after the year in the Myanmar Calendar. After Myanmar gained independence, Labour Day was designated a "national holiday".

Before the military coup in 2021, Labour Day was celebrated with the labour ministry, business leaders, and representatives from international organizations attending ceremonies. Workers from various industries would rally in the industrial zones and march to demand their rights. Since the coup, these celebrations have not been possible. But workers have continued to organize and resist: garment workers went on strike despite police and military intervention, and delivery riders organized themselves for collective action.

We also want to take this opportunity to thank those workers who participated in Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and stood firm against the genocidal military and refused to work under the terrorist dictatorship. In fact, peaceful acts of protest such as the CDM are much more powerful than the genocidal military's acts of terrorism against the civilian's population of Myanmar. Because of these heroes, the brave and courageous workers who participate in the CDM, our revolution has gained momentum and we are headed down the path of success. They are no more and no less than the heroes of peace and the vanguard of our freedoms and federal democracy for ALL the people of Myanmar.

Labour Day is an important occasion to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Myanmar's workers and to renew our commitment to fighting for better working conditions and workers' rights. It is a day to celebrate the achievements of workers and to recommit to the ongoing struggle for labour rights, even in the face of challenges and obstacles.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sasa
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