



Christian Conference of Asia

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Statement on attacks by Myanmar military on theological seminary and churches in Kachin and Kayah States

The World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) are greatly disturbed by reports of an attack by the Tatmadaw (Burmese Army) on the Kachin Theological Seminary in Kutkai, Shan State on 3 November 2022, in which artillery fire injured four students in the dormitory. This attack followed a 30 October shelling that partially destroyed a Baptist church and hall in Momauk township, Kachin State.

Subsequently we have also received news that the Sacred Heart of Jesus Cathedral of the Roman Catholic Church in Pekhonn town in Kayah State was hit by the military on 9 November 2022, in the second such attack on this church.

These attacks on churches and related institutions, are emblematic of the deteriorating humanitarian, human rights and political situation in Myanmar following the military coup that overthrew the country's democratically-elected government on 1 February 2021. The lives that many in Myanmar had begun to enjoy following the introduction of democratic reforms have again been destroyed and the country devastated. Armed clashes and attacks are now taking place in each State, region and union territory, and in around 220 out of 330 townships. Myanmar military forces are systematically engaged in committing human rights violations through "clearance operations", combing areas in search of members of armed groups and arresting, torturing, and summarily executing individuals, as well as looting and destroying property. And since the military coup, the poverty rate in Myanmar has climbed to close to 50%, and people throughout the country have been reduced to extreme levels of vulnerability.

The WCC and the CCA have expressed deep concerns over the deteriorating human rights situations in different parts of Myanmar and issued joint letters and statements on 3 February, 4 March and 31 March 2021. The WCC executive committee also issued a statement on 17 November 2021 condemning the ongoing human rights violations in Myanmar.

We reiterate and underscore the concerns previously expressed about the ongoing violence – including sexual and gender-based violence – and brutal attacks by military and security forces.

We renew our calls for the military authorities to hand back the control that they have illegitimately seized, to refrain from excessive use of force against protestors, to respect the

rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, to release all those who have been arbitrarily arrested, denied due process, and who remain in detention, and to allow unconditional and unhindered humanitarian access to all areas and all people affected by conflict and violence.

We appeal to all members of the international community to increase their active solidarity and humanitarian support for the people of Myanmar, and to redouble their advocacy and engagement for justice, peace and the restoration of democracy in Myanmar.

We urge all WCC and CCA member churches and ecumenical partners to scale up their diaconal support and partnership with the churches of Myanmar, as they struggle to meet the increasing needs of their suffering communities.



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General Secretary

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Dr Mathews George Chunnakara
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