

Liberation Annual General Meeting 2021: Liberation Statements and Draft motions



Liberation Statement 1 - Solidarity with People of Myanmar

The mass upsurge in Myanmar against the military takeover has engaged people from all walks of life, who have been out on the streets in recent weeks protesting against the brutal suppression of democracy.

The Tatmadaw (Myanmar armed forces) staged the coup on 1st February, the day the new parliament was to open, after the general election in November 2020.

The election had resulted in a landslide victory for the Aung San Suu Kyi-led National League for Democracy (NLD). However, the army declared the results to be illegal and deposed President Win Myint and State Counsellor Suu Kyi. They and other NLD leaders have been arrested and detained.

The armed forces had ruled Myanmar for decades since the military coup of 1962. The movement for democracy achieved a breakthrough in 1981 but it was brutally crushed by the army. Suu Kyi was put under house arrest for sixteen long years.

After much pressure, the army conceded some powers, and a hybrid democratic system was put in place based on the 2008 Constitution adopted by the army. Under this system, the army still held key powers; 25 per cent of the seats in the two houses of parliament were reserved for military nominees.

For the first time, in 2015, the NLD contested the elections, winning over 80 per cent of the seats in the two houses. Suu Kyi could not assume the post of head of government, the constitution barring anyone with a foreign spouse from holding that office, so she was made a State Counsellor and was the de facto prime minister.

In the 8th November 2020 general election, the NLD improved its position by winning 258 out of the 310 seats in the House of Representatives and 138 of the 168 seats in the House of Nationalities. The military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) only gained 26 seats and 5.9 per cent of the vote in the lower house.

Frustrated by this result, the armed forces declared an emergency under a constitutional provision and said it would last for one year after which fresh elections would be held.

The vested interests exercising political and economic power through the armed forces' elite were getting threatened by the growing electoral legitimacy of the NLD and its leader.

The higher echelons of the armed forces have built up a powerful network of patronage and business interests in the country. Some of the lucrative sectors like precious gems, timber and mineral resources are controlled and plundered by enterprises run by generals and former members of the officer corps.

The armed forces had thought that the USDP would gain enough strength to checkmate the NLD and Aung Suu Kyi, not expecting that, in both the 2015 and 2020 elections, the NLD scored over 80 per cent of the seats in the non-military sector.

That the armed forces are completely isolated from the people has become evident in the recent protests. Significantly, the bulk of civil servants, health workers, power sector employees and railway workers have joined the mass protests and gone on strike.

Faced with the growing protests, the police and the army are now resorting to repressive tactics including firing on peaceful protestors. Hundreds have already been arrested and put in jail.

The return of military rule clearly further threatens the position of the Rohingya population in Myanmar, stripped of their citizenship and subject to human rights abuses since the push in the late 1970's to expel them from Myanmar.

In giving our full backing to the progressive campaign for the return of democracy in Myanmar Liberation will:-

- encourage progressive MPs to find ways to promote the return to democracy in Myanmar;
- call for an end to military rule and the restoration of democracy;
- demand the release of all detainees; and
- call for the safeguarding of the lives, human and democratic rights, and livelihoods of the Rohingya population as well as the state recognised ethnic minority groups like the Chin and Kachins in Myanmar.

In an impressive show of solidarity the people of Myanmar are bravely facing the might of the military. For decades, the people of Myanmar were under the brutal heel of a military dictatorship. They have now resolved not to allow this to happen again. They deserve our ongoing support and solidarity.

Motion 1 : IRAQ

Liberation AGM notes that:

- The structural crisis gripping Iraq, that led to the eruption of the Uprising on 1st October 2019, continues. It lies in the policies pursued by the ruling political blocs that perpetuate the sectarian-ethnic quota system installed after the US occupation in 2003. The Uprising's demands for radical reform and change remain unfulfilled.

The AGM, therefore, resolves to:

- Call on the Iraqi government to investigate the killing of more than 700 young protesters during the Uprising, and the assassination and "disappearance" of civil activists, and to bring the criminals to justice.
- Support the legitimate demands for free and fair early elections with effective UN supervision.
- Demand immediate halt to vicious attacks by the security forces and militias on peaceful protesters.
- Condemn ISIS terrorist attacks targeting civilians and workers, including the bombing in Baghdad on 21 January 2021 which killed 32 people.
- Call for an end to foreign interference in Iraq's internal affairs, including Turkish military aggression in Iraqi Kurdistan and Iranian support for militias.
- Support the struggle of civil democratic forces to defeat political sectarianism and corruption, and achieve a democratic civil state based on citizenship and social justice.

Proposer: Hashim Ali, Iraqi Democratic Movement/UK

Seconder : Thikra Ali

Motion 2: IRAN

Liberation notes with concern that:

- Since 2017 US-Iran relations have been marked by threats and retaliatory actions emanating from both sides.
- The US Trump administration initiated a policy of "maximum pressure" and sanctions on Iran which has had a catastrophic economic and social impact, devastating the lives of millions of working people and their families.
- The Trump administration unilaterally withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), an internationally agreed nuclear deal endorsed by the UN Security Council and the EU.
- The theocratic regime in Iran has exploited external threats, especially by the US, to intensify its campaign of suppression against trade unionists and civil rights activists and an increasingly dissatisfied population.

Liberation therefore resolves to:

- Campaign for the British government to pursue foreign policy initiatives promoting peace, conflict resolution and social and economic development in Iran.
- Support international efforts aimed at constructive dialogue between all concerned sides leading to the revival of the JCPOA.
- Continue to support CODIR's campaign for peace, human and democratic rights, and social justice in Iran.
- Oppose the balkanisation, under any pretext whatsoever, of Iran and its Middle Eastern neighbours.

Proposer: Jamshid Ahmadi, CODIR

Secunder: Ararat Ratoosi

Motion 3: CALL FOR IMMEDIATE END TO BRITISH OCCUPATION OF THE CHAGOS ISLANDS

Liberation notes with concern:

- the continuing British colonial occupation of the Chagos Islands, a territory of the Republic of Mauritius and last remaining foreign colony on African soil, in defiance of the UN International Court of Justice ruling of February 2019, adopted by the UN General Assembly,
- that Britain, which forcibly ejected the Islands' entire population, has for five decades consistently prevented their return,
- the ongoing British civil and military presence in the archipelago
- the continuing permission Britain extends to the US government to maintain its strategic military base on the island of Diego Garcia, thus providing a hub for launching hostile interventions in the Middle East, surveillance activity throughout the Indian subcontinent and South East Asia, and control of vital oil routes across the Indian Ocean.

Liberation will therefore campaign for the British government to:

1. Close all civil and military installations on the Islands,
2. Return the Chagos Islands to Mauritius,
3. Remove all post 1965 contaminants and restore the environment to one supportive of a healthy and prosperous community,
4. Repatriate all Chagossians who wish to return,
5. Provide full compensation to all those forcibly displaced - for unlawful expulsion, enforced exile and all other resultant damages.

Proposer: Liz Payne, CODIR

Secunder: Murad Qureshi

Updated 08.03.2021