

WCC Workshop Synopsis

Seeking Justice and Peace in Myanmar (Burma)

In the 74 years since Myanmar (Burma) gained independence in 1948, fifty-five years has been under the rule of a military dictatorship. The country experienced a brief period of freedom under civilian rule from 1948-1962 and in 2015-2020 under the leadership of Aung San Suu Kyi, only to have it taken away by a military coup in February 2021. This workshop will give a brief overview of Myanmar and its history of human rights abuses with personal stories. It will provide practical ways on how to advocate for the country at a national and international level in order to help bring about freedom, democracy, reconciliation, peace and justice in Myanmar.

The workshop seeks to connect participants of the wider church to the struggle of our brothers and sisters in Myanmar. Since the military coup in 2021, there has been widespread protests and resistance. While the military response to the protests has been brutal, the majority of the people refused to be cowed as they do not wish to go back to living under a military dictatorship. There is widespread support in the country for a National Unity Government. Participants will learn how they can come along side this movement seeking to form an inclusive government supported by all ethnic groups. For this movement to succeed it needs friends and allies from around the world to help advocate for a peaceful, democratically elected and unified government at the UN and other international bodies like ASEAN and the EU.

The workshop will be led by leaders from the American Baptist Churches USA which has a history of 200 years of relationship with the people of Myanmar (Burma). The workshop will include indigenous leaders including one from a refugee camp in Thailand who will give witness to suffering of the people of Myanmar.

Keywords: Reconciliation, peace, justice, humanitarian safeguards, human rights, national unity government, human rights abuses, torture, ethnic discrimination, refugees, IDPs-internally displaced people, ethnic minority, military dictatorship, UN, ASEAN, asylum seekers, humanitarian aid, cross-border aid, Rohingya, war crimes, genocide, forced displacement, forced labor, rape, poverty, hunger, vulnerable populations, Myanmar, Burma, sanctions.

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