

An Appeal for Democracy and Peace in Myanmar

On Behalf of the Korean Church

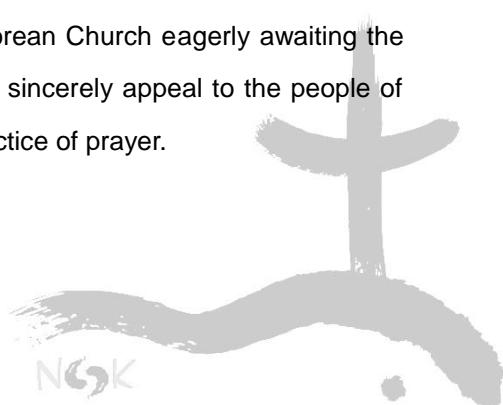
"Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate." (Amos 5:15a)

Since the Myanmar military coup on February 1, we, the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK), have been praying and watching the peaceful but desperate civil disobedience movement spread like wildfire, filled the holy anger of the people of Myanmar. Along with citizens around the world, we are angry over the atrocities and vicious human rights abuses of the military, which suppresses unarmed nonviolent civil actions with indiscriminate assault, gun fire, arson, and detention.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) have issued pastoral letters and joint statements in solidarity with the people of Myanmar protesting against the military, which has trampled on the will of the people for the past 60 years. We, the NCCK, including some of our member churches and institutions, have also issued solidarity letters and statements appealing for the suspension of the murderous suppression of demonstrations, immediate transfer of power to the civilian government, and active intervention by the international community. Nevertheless, as we witness the ever-escalating situation in Myanmar, we have now decided to engage in establishing true democracy and peace in the country. Once again, we gather our determined will and appeal to the Korean Church, the Korean government, and the global religious/civil society for the democratization of Myanmar as shown below.

First, we appeal to the Korean Church and Christians.

Jesus Christ showed us a model of solidarity through prayer. Christians live by the power of prayer, and prayer can change the world. At noon every day during Lent, let's share a one-minute prayer for building a society where murderous suppression of protests in Myanmar ceases immediately, power transfers to civilian authority, and democracy and human rights are respected. During Lent, let's fast for one meal and actively participate in the fundraising campaign to donate money to detainees, refugees, minorities and children. With the Korean Church eagerly awaiting the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who defeated the power of death, we sincerely appeal to the people of Myanmar whose hearts are suffering that we may unite with the practice of prayer.



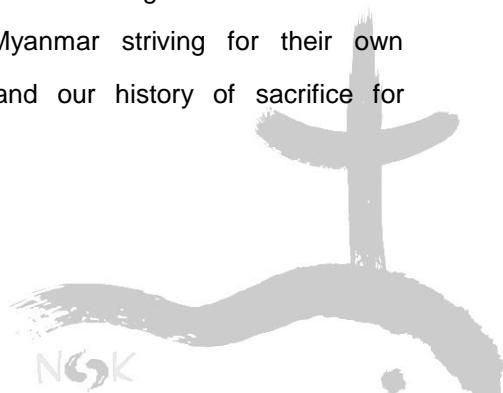
Second, we appeal to the Korean government and Korean corporations.

On February 26, the South Korean National Assembly adopted a resolution condemning the Myanmar military coup and urging them to recover democracy and release detainees. The resolution condemned the military coup and urged the Korean government with the international community to actively engage in the crisis to pressure the military to release Aung San Suu Kyi, withdraw the state of emergency, stop using force against citizens, and restore democracy. We urge the government to respect the resolution and immediately take effective measures to pressure Myanmar's military, and thoroughly monitor South Korea's weapons and anti-protest equipment to keep it from being exported to Myanmar. Also, we sincerely appeal to Korean companies related to military industries. At this moment, the Korean companies' well-intentioned investment and cooperation are returning to Myanmar people as weapons for the military. We appeal for the suspension of partnership and investment in Myanmar's military until their democracy is secure.

Third, we appeal to the international community.

The tyranny and atrocities of Myanmar's military are fundamental challenges to a humane society. Innocent people in Myanmar who love democracy and peace are desperately appealing to the international community. Therefore, we urge the UN Security Council and the General Assembly, by the spirit of the UN's "Responsibility to Protect" principle, to pressure Myanmar's military, which is committing humanitarian crimes in killing its own citizens, and to pass arms embargoes, economic sanctions, and travel bans. The UN Human Rights Council should dispatch a human rights investigation team to monitor and prevent further human rights violations in Myanmar. We urge the Korean government, a member of the UN Human Rights Council, to put forth its best effort to persuade the UNHRC. We appeal to the International Criminal Court for active intervention in Myanmar's military, which has committed crimes against humanity for more than half a century. In particular we urge the Western colonial powers, the United States, China, and other neighboring powers that have used a divide and conquer strategy, perpetuated ethnic conflict, and kept Myanmar under military dictatorship, to lay down their desire to dominate and now actively work to democratize Myanmar.

Korean church members, Korean people, and global citizens who love justice and peace, the people of Myanmar are now appealing to us, just as we have appealed to the global church and the world religious/civil society in years past. The people of Myanmar striving for their own democratization have found inspiration in our past appeals and our history of sacrifice for



democratization in Korea. Now, we should become the eyes and ears, the hands and feet for the people of Myanmar. We should be a haven and a shelter. We believe that God's companionship and solidarity will accompany the people of Myanmar, their bereaved families, those in prison, those who are missing, and those who fight on the streets for democracy, human rights, and for life in this moment. We declare that we will pray and unite in solidarity with the Korean churches and the world's religious/civil society until the day when Myanmar actualizes democracy and respects the value of the people's freedom and human rights.

March 11, 2021

The National Council of Churches in Korea

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