



MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR JUST PEACE IN MYANMAR.

Sunday 30 April, 5pm (AEST)

Collins St. Baptist Church, 174 Collins St. Melbourne.

In love and sorrow, we the diverse people of faith communities in Australia, will gather to express our concern for and solidarity with the courageous people of Myanmar on April 30th.

This ecumenical and interfaith service is organised by a range of faith and community leaders and people including members of Christian, Buddhist, Muslim traditions and peace organisations, and members of the Chin, Kachin, Karen, Pwo Karen, Karenni and Burmese communities here in Melbourne. We are coming together (in person and across livestream) to pray, meditate, provide humanitarian support and increase our advocacy for the long-suffering people of Myanmar.

There were already enough reasons to be deeply concerned with the three years of brutality experienced since the military coup, and now there are even more.

After years of cruelty to their own people (whose safety it is their duty to protect), just after Easter, the Myanmar junta's airforce dropped multiple bombs on a civilian gathering of several hundred people in Sagaing Region while attack helicopters strafed the crowd. Later the same day jet fighters returned to kill anyone left.

The scale of the death toll and trauma from this latest intentional cruelty is as yet unknown though we know innocent children and families are confirmed amongst the casualties.

In conveying the awful news, Dr. Tun Aung Shwe, Representative to Australia of the National Unity Government of the Union of Myanmar, restated the basic truths and dire urgency for greater responses to end this.

"The aim of the regime may be to consolidate their power through death and destruction. They have not and will not succeed."

We are committed to achieving a Myanmar, as Dr. Tun affirms, in which such atrocities cannot occur and in which people feel safe, and are democratically free.

In our songs, prayers and reflections of a loving faith, blessed by the hospitality of our hosts, we will affirm together our journey towards a just and a beautiful peace for Myanmar. The spirit in which



we prepare to gather is captured in the following quotes from contributors to this National Day of Prayer for Just Peace in Myanmar.

“The yearning of our hearts is that those with power to end the violence will do so. That those who know this is wrong, perhaps some of the military, will walk away from the company of the perpetrators.” [Rev Meewon Yang, Multicultural Consultant, Baptist Union of Victoria].

“We pray that we may imagine ourselves and also current perpetrators of violence soon as nation-builders, forgiven and free together to help repair the damage done in these years.” [Bishop Phillip Huggins, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture].

“We pray on 30 April in Collins St. Baptist Church, that our own hearts are completely free of hate and enmity. Yes, so that what now seems unlikely can become possible. When we play and share our songs, this tells us it can be!” [Musician from Myanmar].

“Compassion is the unifying essence of our faith traditions. It means we should never do to anyone else, under any circumstances, what we would not want done to us.” [young person from Myanmar].

“The deep wisdom of our living faith traditions points to a loving, unifying consciousness which can abide in us all. This deep compassionate wisdom inspires us as we look at the faces of little children who depend on us for safety and as we pray for those who carry love’s grief into each new day, after tragic family bereavements. Such suffering must cease!” [person from Myanmar].

“We will also be praying that the international community will increase pressure on the military junta to step aside and allow for a genuine democracy to emerge that will respect the wellbeing of all people in Myanmar.” [Dr Mark Zirnsak, Senior Social Justice Advocate, Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania].

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Global Time Zones:

Yangon: 1.30 pm (UTC +6.30)

Bangkok, Jakarta, Phnom Penh, Hanoi: 2.00 pm (UTC +7)

Kuala Lumpur, Manila: 3.00 pm (UTC + 8)

Seoul, Tokyo: 4.00 pm (UTC +9)

Auckland: 7.00 pm (UTC + 12)

London: 8.00 am (UTC + 1)

Brussels, Western Europe: 9.00 am (UTC +2)

Nairobi: 10.00 am (UTC +3)