

Press Release:

## **2021.04.01 Demonstration for Peace and Democracy in Myanmar** **We demand concrete action by the Japanese government to stop the Myanmar military's violence.**

April 1<sup>st</sup> marks two months since the coup d'état.

On this day, members of Japanese NGOs and religious leaders, together with Myanmar citizens living in Japan, will gather in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to honor the memory of those who have fallen victim to the Myanmar military's violence.

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, thirty-two Japanese civil-society organizations petitioned the Japanese government to sever economic ties with the Myanmar military in order to put a stop to the violence as quickly as possible. The petition also called for suspension of and an investigation into ODA projects being overseen by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), as well as investment and financing projects by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and the government-private sponsored fund, Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corporation for Transport & Urban Development (JOIN). The petition calls for an investigation into the links between Japanese economic aid and Myanmar military businesses, for the results of the investigation to be made public, and for any connections to be dissolved.

As of fiscal year 2018, the Japanese government has provided a large amount of ODA to Myanmar totaling 1.1368 trillion yen in loans, 322.962 billion yen in grant aid, and 98.416 billion yen in technical assistance. The Japanese government has also provided low-interest loans for Japanese companies to begin business in Myanmar.

"We don't want Japan's 'unique role' to be one of supplying funds for projects that potentially finance the bullets that kill civilians in Myanmar. It has been nearly a month since we demanded the investigation. In that month, the death toll has risen every day, but the Japanese government has not made its position on aid clear. The Foreign Minister has said there are no new aid projects, but we are very concerned about the existing projects," said Yuka Kiguchi, Executive Director of Mekong Watch.

"In the last two months alone, more than 500 civilians have been killed. We call on the Japanese government to show solidarity not just with words, but with concrete actions. We express our respect and solidarity with the citizens who continue to call for democratic political participation through nonviolent actions, in spite of the violence they are being subject to. It is my heartfelt wish that they do not have to suffer any more than this," said Mika Edaki, Director of ayus: Network of Buddhists Volunteers on International Cooperation.

This group of civil society organizations will continue to press the Japanese government to sever any sources of funding to the Myanmar military.

Date: April 1, 2021. 18 : 00~18 : 30

Place: In front of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Organizers : Mekong Watch, ayus: Network of Buddhists Volunteers on International Cooperation, FoE Japan, Network Against Japan Arms Trade (NAJAT), Others

Contact: Mekong Watch [info@mekongwatch.org](mailto:info@mekongwatch.org)