



The Honourable Nanaia Mahuta
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Freeport Parliament
Private Bag 18 888
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160

E n.mahuta@ministers.govt.nz

17 February 2020

Dear Minister

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand is deeply concerned at the military coup that took place in Myanmar on 1 February. We applaud the New Zealand Government's statement condemning the coup, its call for a release of those detained, the announcement that it will refuse to work with the illegal regime and that it has placed a travel ban on its leaders.

It was heartening to see politicians from across the political spectrum at the Rally for Peace and Democracy in Myanmar in Parliament grounds on 9 February, and to have the Minister of Foreign Affairs speaking in support of democracy in Myanmar.

News from Myanmar continues to cause great concern, with reports of ongoing imprisonment of political leaders and those protesting the coup, arrests being made under cover of darkness, escalating violence, and reports of the internet being shut down.

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand has a partnership with the Presbyterian Church in Myanmar and is in regular contact with its leaders, monitoring conditions in Myanmar and pledging our ongoing support. The events in Myanmar profoundly affect people we know personally, including New Zealand citizens who have been working in Myanmar, and members of the Chin ethnic community in New Zealand who have family members in Myanmar.

In light of these developments we congratulate the New Zealand Government on its opposition to the military coup and indicate our willingness to share information received from our contacts in Myanmar if required.

We also ask the Government to monitor this crisis closely and use all diplomatic channels to work with the international community in helping seek a peaceful resolution. The people of Myanmar, by an overwhelming majority, elected a democratic Government and need the international community to strengthen its efforts to support them in this time of crisis in their country. Without this international support, there is a grave risk that Myanmar will enter another long period under a military dictatorship, which will be devastating for millions of people within Myanmar, and a huge setback for the democratic movement everywhere.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Fakaofu Kai', enclosed in a light blue rectangular box.

Right Rev Fakaofu Kai

Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand