

Rail workers call to halt trade deal with Myanmar

Rail and Maritime Transport Union media release

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The union representing New Zealand rail workers has spoken up against the deaths of rail workers under the Myanmar military dictatorship.

Rail and Maritime Transport Union General Secretary Wayne Butson says there have been reports of 15 railway workers, mostly union members, being shot at the railway compound at Myitnge near Mandalay, Myanmar, on 14 April 2021.

“The military dictatorship are waging a vicious war against unarmed civilians and workers, and New Zealand needs to do all it can to bring international pressure on them.”

Mr Butson says the RMTU is backing calls by the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions to halt the ratification of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade agreement that includes Myanmar.

He says the Labour Government must place human rights before trade deals, and act accordingly.

Over 700 civilians have been killed in Myanmar since 1 February when the military overthrew the democratically elected Government.

Myanmar rail workers have been involved in strikes as part of a civil disobedience campaign against the military dictatorship, says Mr Butson.

“The military dictatorship is illegitimate and is responsible for mass killings. The RMTU supports the Myanmar pro-democracy movement which includes our fellow rail workers,” says Mr Butson.

Editorial note: The Rail and Maritime Transport Union is an affiliate of the Labour Party.

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