

**Senator WHITEAKER:** You talk in your submission about the specific targeting of trade unions. I think you phrased it as 'a deliberate dismantling of independent trade unions and worker organisations'. Could you expand a little bit on what you mean by that and perhaps provide us with some examples?

Mr Singh : Sure. To summarise what we said in our submission, not only is the dismantling of trade union structures curtailing rights; in fact, there are no rights for workers in Myanmar. That is reflected in the arbitrary arrests of union leaders and members. I don't have the stats on me right now, but I can take on notice to provide you some stats. But the sheer volume of these arrests, the detaining of union leaders—I just mentioned in my opening statement the execution of trade unionists, so the extent of the violations of workers' rights is very evident.

Response: *The military regime in Myanmar is actively orchestrating a dangerous and unacceptable attack on independent trade unions. The state administration council (SAC) has created a parallel and illegitimate trade union structure to undermine the legitimate trade union movement.*

*Global Union Federation, IndustriALL on 7 February 2026 released a statement<sup>1</sup> highlighting the that the SAC is promoting the Myanmar Labour Confederation (MLC), a state-backed body designed to replace independent unions like CTUM and IWFM. You can read the full statement here: [Myanmar: the military regime's dangerous attack on independent trade unions - industriall-union](#)*

**Senator WHITEAKER:** I wonder if you might have any comments to make on the specific impacts on women workers in Myanmar. You talk in your submission about gender based violence, so I thought it might be useful for us to have some information on the record about that.

Mr Singh : I will take on notice to come back with some stats on that, but what I want to cover off is the sheer fact about the arresting and detaining of workers. If I go back to the Human Rights Watch report of 2025, 5,700 women have been arrested and 570 children. The rights at work for workers are gone, let alone the rights for women, and the attack is severe. But, if you allow me to take that on notice, I will definitely provide you with some stats and cases.

Response: *I kindly refer you to the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner's "Courage amid Crisis: Gendered impacts of the coup and the pursuit of gender equality in Myanmar" Report<sup>2</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> [Myanmar: the military regime's dangerous attack on independent trade unions - industriall-union](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Microsoft Word - A\\_HRC\\_56\\_CRP.8 \(FINAL\).docx](#)

*In addition, 4 years on from the military coup, the ITUC-AP<sup>3</sup> highlighted the following human rights violations and atrocities in Myanmar:*

### *1. Attacks and Killings*

- *6,182 killed, including:*
  - *1,373 women*
  - *704 children*
- *2,000 killed in junta custody*
  - *365 shot in the head*
  - *215 burned alive*
- *Beheadings, dismemberment, and body mutilation are common.*

### *2. Indiscriminate Violence*

- *Over 100,000 homes burned, mainly in Sagaing Region.*
- *154 attacks on schools and hospitals.*
- *More than 1,300 airstrikes between June–September 2024.*

### *3. Arrests and Detentions*

- *28,261 arrested, including:*
  - *5,848 women*
  - *592 children*
- *21,348 remain detained*
- *10,021 sentenced*
  - *168 death penalties issued*
  - *44 death sentences given in absentia*
- *22 political prisoners died in 2024 due to lack of medical care.*
- *Torture, mistreatment, and sexual violence against women and LGBTI persons reported in detention sites.*

### *4. Forced Displacement*

- *149,000 refugees have fled to neighbouring countries since February 2021.*

---

<sup>3</sup> [For Democracy in Myanmar - International Trade Union Confederation](#)

- 1,183,300 refugees and asylum-seekers in neighbouring countries as of 30 November 2024.
- 3,206,800 internally displaced people (IDPs) within Myanmar since 1 February 2021.

*The Communication Head of CTUM, Khine Thinzar Aye was tortured and sexually abused in 2022 during military interrogation.*

**Senator DEAN SMITH:** What commitments have been given to you by the foreign affairs minister or the Australian government more generally in terms of greater humanitarian assistance, tightening of sanctions loopholes and what decisive action it will take in regard to aviation fuel imports into Myanmar?

Mr Singh : As I said, we have written to the foreign affairs minister. I can take that on notice because I'm not aware of a response that has come through.

Response: *On 17 October 2025, the Australian Foreign Affairs Ministers wrote to the ACTU with the following:*

*“Australia funds a range of partners in Myanmar, including the UN, international NGOs, local NGOs and civil society organisations and the Red Cross Movement. Our partners deliver much-needed assistance to people, often working with local organisations in hard-to-reach areas. We take proactive steps to ensure that our assistance is not diverted to the regime and does not legitimise nor give credibility to the regime.”*

*Australian businesses are expected to act responsibly and to consider the human rights impacts of their operations and supply chains. Businesses are obliged to comply with Australian laws, including sanctions law, in their operations. The Australian Government endorses and promotes the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and we encourage businesses to apply the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in their operations in Australia and abroad.*

*We have imposed targeted sanctions on members of Myanmar's military regime, as well as on commercial entities in Myanmar with direct links to the regime. These include three companies that provide jet fuel to the Myanmar military (Asia Sun Group, Asian Sun Trading Co Ltd and Cargo Link Petroleum Co Ltd). We keep our sanctions towards Myanmar under review, but do not speculate on future sanctions listings.”*