



အိန္ဒြေလယာကဉ်ဒီကလုင်ကရု Australian Karen Organisation

ABN 43 759 263 249

Incorporated in Victoria

8 March 2021

The Hon Senator Marise Payne
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Level 3 North Wing, 2-12 Macquarie Street
Parramatta NSW 2150

Email: foreign.minister@dfat.gov.au

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the Australian Karen Organisation (AKO Inc.), I would like to draw your attention to the Myanmar Military Coup on 1 February 2021 in Myanmar. The entire population of Myanmar has condemned the Myanmar Military Coup, and called for the immediate release of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, President U Win Myint and all detainees since 2 February 2021.

As you may be aware, the Myanmar Military's overthrow of democratically elected NLD Government has prompted widespread street demonstrations in Myanmar and over many overseas countries like Australia. According to reliable information provided to United Nations Security Council, Myanmar security forces have unlawfully killed approximately 50 unarmed protesters, including at least five children, in more than ten cities on different days since the Coup on 1 February 2021.

In addition, at least 38 protesters were reportedly killed by Myanmar security forces on 3 March 2021 and numerous protesters have been injured. A total of 1,498 protesters have been arrested, charged or sentenced in relation to the Military Coup.

As the scale of the violence continues to increase, seemingly as part of a systematic, centralised policy to use lethal force against peaceful protesters, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that Myanmar's security forces are perpetrating crimes against humanity.

We accordingly urge the Australian Government to:

- Endorse the recognition of a Committee Representing Pyidangsu Htuttaw (CRPH) – the national legislative body of democratically elected representatives formed on 5 February 2021 following the Coup.
- Support the “Responsibility to Protect” (R2P) being upheld in accordance with the UN Chapter and in cooperation with relevant regional organisations, to help protect people of Myanmar from further human rights violations.

- Urgently and comprehensively assist the national Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) which has erupted nationally in opposition to the Military Coup. All forms of practical and diplomatic assistance should be offered to this Movement via the Australian Embassy in Yangon.
- Implement extensive economic sanctions to stop any and all revenue to the Military. Such sanctions should also apply to family members of senior military leaders who are residing in Australia.
- Immediately call on Australian businesses in Myanmar to suspend operations and refrain from any relationships with Military owned, controlled or linked businesses and organisations, including (so long as the Military controls the Government) State owned enterprises.
- Provide urgent humanitarian aid assistance to internally displaced people who are in forced displacement by Myanmar Military offensives in all Karen, Kachin, Arakanese and Shan ethnic areas of Myanmar.

We welcome the Australian Government's suspension and limiting of the bilateral Defense Cooperation Program with Myanmar's Military. We are also grateful of the Government's redirecting of humanitarian aid towards Rohingyas and other vulnerable ethnic groups in avoiding Myanmar Government bodies.

Yours sincerely,

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