

The Hon Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Senator the Hon Marise Payne
Minister for Foreign Affairs
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CC:

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
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Senator the Hon Penny Wong
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Mr Dave Sharma MP
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Mr Julian Hill MP
Deputy Chair of the Foreign Affairs and Aid Subcommittee of JSCFADT
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9 April 2021

Dear Prime Minister and Minister Payne,

We, the undersigned groups representing Australian civil society, firmly denounce the 1 February military coup in Myanmar, and call on the Australian Government to take immediate action to restore democracy and support human rights, justice and accountability for the people of Myanmar.

Since the coup, a non-violent nationwide Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) has formed, with millions of people including civil society and human rights groups, trade unions, journalists, and human rights defenders opposing the coup and calling for international economic and political pressure to be placed on the military. The military regime has violently suppressed the peaceful CDM, with 598 civilians killed by military authorities since the coup.

The situation in Myanmar is critical, but despite calls from diaspora groups, civil society and responsible businesses for the Australian Government to take urgent action to support a return to democratic rule, Australia is lagging behind other western governments in its response to the Myanmar coup. Australia must use its middle power status and leadership role in the region to call for strong action against the military regime.

In particular, the Australian Government must:

- Enact sanctions against the military, its leaders and its business interests and business partners. This must include military conglomerates MEC and MEHL and national oil and gas company, MOGE.
- Recognise the CRPH (Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw), the representative body of the democratically elected Myanmar MPs.

- Use all diplomatic leverage and influence to ensure rule of law is upheld and a return to democratic norms, civilian led government and the immediate release of those men and women detained including journalists, civil society activists and MPs.
- Support accountability mechanisms and proceedings including at the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court.
- Encourage other UN member countries to agree upon a global arms embargo that prohibits supplying weapons to Myanmar.
- Provide extension of visas to all people from Myanmar living in Australia, provide protection visas to students and others unable to return, including stateless Rohingya refugees, and to prioritise people forced to seek asylum from Myanmar as refugees in Australia's refugee intake.
- Allocate ODA to Myanmar to support local civil society organisations, including humanitarian assistance to those affected by the civil unrest and violence in ethnic states and border regions.

Gas revenues are one of the most significant sources of foreign currency for the Myanmar government and the extractives sector has historically propped up the Myanmar military. Given the extensive business interests of the coup leader Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and the military, any Australian company currently doing business in Myanmar is at risk of legitimising the coup and funding the military regime. Australian companies doing business in Myanmar must:

- Rule out any financial and in-kind payments flowing to the Myanmar military, their economic interests and business partners.
- Immediately divest from any relationships with military owned, controlled or linked business and organisations. This includes state owned enterprises now under the control of the military.
- Temporarily suspend operations, including any mining and gas exploration activities, in Myanmar and call on the Myanmar military to allow a return to democratic norms and a civilian led government.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Myanmar and their civil society organisations, trade unions, journalists, and human rights activists in their defence of democracy, human rights and peace. We welcome the Foreign Affairs and Aid Subcommittee's public hearing on the military coup on Myanmar, and look forward to strong recommendations regarding action the Australian Government and Australian businesses should take to support a return to stability and democracy.



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