



5 February 2021

Sanction Myanmar Military, Not Myanmar People

Justice For Myanmar and Burma Campaign UK are separate independent organisations which have both been calling for international action against the economic interests of the military, in line with the recommendations of the United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar.

We oppose any form of broad, untargeted sanctions against Myanmar which could impact ordinary people. We oppose the withdrawal of trade privileges and preferences, which will impact ordinary people more than the military. We will actively campaign against any such proposed sanctions.

The significant role international companies have in entering into joint ventures and other business arrangements with military companies means that international sanctions against these companies will have an impact on the profits they make for the military and its top generals.

We are fully aware that by themselves, targeted sanctions on the economic interests of the military will not change the behaviour of the military. It is a tactic, not a panacea.

We call for wide-ranging international action against the Myanmar military, starting with targeted sanctions against military-owned and controlled companies and their substantial business associates. We also call for other measures, including diplomatic pressure, international legal pressure, and a global arms embargo.

While we support targeted sanctions on individual members of the military and their families who have misused their power and position to build their own business empires, any such sanctions must be in addition to sanctioning military-owned and controlled companies and their substantial business associates. It is essential that the military as an institution be impacted by targeted international sanctions, not just individual members. This is the only way to help Myanmar move towards democracy.

We welcome reviews of international aid to Myanmar that many countries are undertaking following the coup. It is essential that international aid is not allowed to continue to benefit the military. In addition to reviewing aid going to and through the military regime or benefitting the regime, all donors should introduce policies to ensure that organisations receiving their aid do not spend it on goods and services from military companies. Embassies and UN agencies in Myanmar should do the same.

We call on donors to maintain aid to Myanmar, with priority given to the victims of human rights violations, especially the hundreds of thousands of IDPs and refugees in ethnic regions who have lost everything following military attacks. Aid must be conflict sensitive and human rights-based and never infringe on the rights of ethnic nationalities for self-determination. There should be increased

support for civil society organisations which work on human rights documentation, defence and advocacy. Myanmar's systemic discrimination of ethnic and religious communities must always be considered. Donors must ensure that support does not further entrench Burmanisation. No single person or organisation can speak for all the people of Myanmar. Donors must be open to using different mechanisms for providing support, including cross-border mechanisms.

When we call for action by the international community, it is in support of people in Myanmar who are oppressed and persecuted by the military, who are resisting military control and risking their lives for human rights, democracy, federalism and peace. This struggle is led by the people of Myanmar. However, the people alone cannot bring human rights and democracy to Myanmar without support from the international community, especially as there are ongoing international programs and engagement that benefit the military and embolden their impunity. The international community has an important role to play to change direction and to ensure compliance with international law and norms. A concerted effort must be made by the international community to pressure the military as much as the Myanmar people resist the military.

It is also important to recognise it can take time before the impact of targeted economic sanctions and other measures by the international community become apparent. No-one is expecting that the military will immediately change course the day after targeted economic sanctions are imposed.

The international community must operate on the principle that everything which can be done must be done. All potential points of leverage must be used. No government in the world can claim they have done all they can to help promote human rights and democracy in Myanmar when the people are further oppressed and persecuted, living with the extreme violence of the military.

Justice for Myanmar and Burma Campaign UK will continue to do everything we can to persuade the international community to apply the maximum possible pressure on the military and to take practical actions to support human rights and democracy in Burma, in solidarity with allies around the world.