

BURMA: Open Letter from Ethnic Karen to President Biden and President Macron to Sanction Gas Revenue, 67 Organizations from 17 Countries

President Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 200500

President Emmanuel Macron
President of the Republic of France
Palais de l'Élysée
55 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré
75008 Paris, France

Re: Ethnic Karen Communities Worldwide Calling to Sanction Gas Revenue to the Burmese military.

January 13, 2022

Dear President Biden and President Macron,

We are writing to you on behalf of ethnic Karen communities worldwide to call on you to sanction gas revenue to the Burmese military.

We are extremely disappointed that almost a year on from the attempted military coup, you are still allowing companies from America and France to pay gas revenue to the Burmese military. The hundreds of millions of dollars provided to the Burmese military by companies from your countries are being used to buy the bombs and bullets being used against our people. They are funding war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Since the military coup, more than 300,000 people have been forced to flee their homes because of attacks and threats by the Burmese military. The majority of these people are from ethnic states, including around 85,000 in Karen State.

We welcome the sanctions introduced by the USA and European Union (EU) so far. It is vital that you continue with regular rounds of new sanctions to systematically cut revenue to the military. However, failing to take action on one of the single biggest sources of revenue to the military is neither an effective or credible policy option.

As long as American and French companies continue to fund the military, your countries are complicit in the human rights violations committed by the Burmese military. You are helping to facilitate the purchase of military equipment by providing the funds required to do so.

You impose arms embargoes but at the same time provide the Burmese military with money which they can purchase arms from Russia, China, India and other countries. This makes absolutely no sense.

A wide range of proposals have been put forward by different civil society organisations for ways in which gas revenue can be stopped. Whatever the challenges, you must find a way to impose sanctions to stop gas revenue reaching the military. The price of your inaction and indecision is being paid for with the lives and suffering of our people.

It is not a credible option to continue to condemn airstrikes, massacres and other human rights violations which your companies have helped to fund.

For decades your countries largely stood by, failing to hold the military to account for its violations of international law, including war crimes and crimes against humanity against Karen people. You helped create a sense of impunity which led the military to believe it can keep committing these human rights violations, encouraging more attacks and the military coup.

Please do not let us down again now. What we ask is very little. It will have no significant impact on your own country's economies. We simply want you to stop funding our oppressor. Stop funding human rights violations. Sanction gas revenue now.

Your sincerely,

1. International Karen Organisation
2. European Karen Network
3. Albany Karen Community, USA
4. Australia Karen Organisation
5. Ayeyawaddy Karen Youth, Burma
6. Calgary Karen Community Association, Canada
7. California Karen Youth Connection, USA
8. Denmark Karen Organization
9. Dooplaya Karen Community Development Group, Burma
10. Edmonton Karen Community Youth Organization, Canada
11. Finland Karen Culture Association
12. IKO Women Department
13. Karen American Association of Wisconsin, USA
14. Karen Association of Huron, SD, USA
15. Karen Community Association UK
16. Karen Community in Norway
17. Karen Community in The Netherlands
18. Karen Community Korea
19. Karen Community of Akron, OH, USA
20. Karen Community of Canada
21. Karen Community of Czech Republic
22. Karen Community of Finland
23. Karen Community of Hamilton, Canada
24. Karen Community of Iowa, USA
25. Karen Community of Ireland
26. Karen Community of Israel
27. Karen Community of Kansas City (KS & MO), USA
28. Karen Community of Kitchener & Waterloo, Canada
29. Karen Community of Leamington, Canada
30. Karen Community of Lethbridge, Canada
31. Karen Community of London, Canada

32. Karen community of Minnesota, USA
33. Karen Community of North Carolina, USA
34. Karen Community in Norway
35. Karen Community of Ottawa, Canada
36. Karen Community of Regina, Canada
37. Karen Community of Saskatoon, Canada
38. Karen community of Syracuse, USA
39. Karen Community of Thunderbay, Canada
40. Karen Community of Toronto, Canada
41. Karen Community of Windsor, Canada
42. Karen Community of Winnipeg, Canada
43. Karen Community Society of British Columbia, Canada
44. Karen Environmental and Social Action Network, Burma/Thailand
45. Karen Finland Culture Association, Finland
46. Karen Human Rights Group, Burma
47. Karen Organization of America, USA
48. Karen Organization of Illinois, USA
49. Karen Organization of San Diego, USA
50. Karen Peace Support Network, Burma
51. Karen Student Network Group, Burma/Thailand
52. Karen Swedish Community
53. Karen Teacher Working Group, Burma/Thailand
54. Karen Thai Group, Thailand
55. Karen Women's Organization, Burma
56. Karen Youth - Rangoon, Burma
57. Karen Youth Education Pathways, USA
58. Karen Youth Network, Burma
59. Karen Youth of Norway
60. Karen Youth Organization, Burma
61. Karen Youth UK
62. KNU Concerned Group, Burma
63. Korea Karen Organization
64. Korea Karen Youth Organization
65. New Zealand Karen Association
66. Oversea Karen Organization Japan
67. Utica Karen Community, USA