

PRESS RELEASE  
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### **Australian sanctions step in the right direction, with more Myanmar sanctions required**

On the anniversary of the Myanmar military's brutal coup on 1 February 2021 and two years of violence inflicted on the people of Myanmar, Myanmar Campaign Network welcomes the announcement by the Australian government to introduce sanctions against 16 senior military and political leaders, and against two military owned entities.

Australia now joins our democratic allies in sanctioning military conglomerates Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC) and Myanma Economic Holdings LTD (MEHL). We must join the international community in sanctioning the extractive and natural resource sectors by targeting Myanmar Mining Enterprises No.1 and No.2, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, Myanma Gems Enterprise (MGE), Myanma Timber Enterprise (MTE), and Myanmar Pearl Enterprise (MPE) among others.

The UK, US, EU and Canada have issued 543 sanctions on 185 individuals and 180 entities in response to the atrocity crimes against the Rohingya in Rakhine state and since the coup. Sanctions announced today by the US, UK and Canada target human rights abusers, state-owned enterprises, aviation fuel suppliers and the military-appointed Union Election Commission.

Australian sanctions constitute only 4% of the international sanctions response on human rights abuses in Myanmar. The Myanmar Campaign Network encourages the Australian government to continue urgent consideration of further sanctions in line with its international allies.

Daw Zin Mar Aung, Foreign Minister, National Unity Government of Myanmar, said, "As the military has been using its resources to perpetuate the dictatorship, especially killing and suppressing the people, it is necessary for us to cut off the military council's every way of making money."

Charles Santiago, Chairperson, ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights said, "Many of us have been highly frustrated with the passivity shown by Australia in dealing with the Myanmar crisis over the last two years, but this new round of sanctions is a step in the right direction and, hopefully, it heralds a new approach by the Albanese administration. The sanctions on the military conglomerates Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC) and Myanma Economic Holdings Limited (MEHL) are particularly welcome, as they could serve to obstruct the money flows for the junta.

Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States have also imposed new rounds of sanctions on the Myanmar junta coinciding with the second anniversary of the attempted coup staged by Min Aung Hlaing and his men. But much more needs to be done and now these countries should improve their coordination in putting pressure on the junta, beginning with sanctioning the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE). Only the European Union has done so at the moment, and Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US should follow suit.

Yet isolating the junta is not enough. Australia and like-minded democratic countries should also recognize the National Unity Government (NUG), as the legitimate authority in Myanmar, and provide all their support they can, including funding and capacity building initiatives; increase their humanitarian assistance to Myanmar, and open its doors to refugees fleeing the country."

Clancy Moore, CEO of Transparency International Australia said, "The sanctions on with military conglomerates Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC) and Myanma Economic Holdings LTD (MEHL) are good first step as they provide large sources of revenue to the military. Other countries have also sanctioned state-owned enterprises in the lucrative resources sector, including Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) which lines the pockets of the military generals to the tune of more than 1 billion US dollars every year."

Tasneem Roc, Campaign Manager, Myanmar Campaign Network said, "The junta forcibly prevented the democratically elected government from fulfilling its mandate, and looks for international legitimacy by holding sham elections later this

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year. Australia must further show its support for the democratic process and the will of the people by continuing to assess and introduce further sanctions.

Since the coup the death toll of those murdered by the military has risen to over 2,940 people and over 17,572 people have been unlawfully arrested. Over 38,000 civilian properties including places of worship have been destroyed by attacks by the Myanmar military. There are 128 cases of rape and gang rape by military personnel since the coup being investigated by the National Unity Government Ministry of Women Youths and Childrens Affairs.

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*The Myanmar Campaign Network (MCN) is an Australian national coalition formed following the 2021 coup in Myanmar, comprising human rights organisations, international aid NGOs, Myanmar diaspora organisations, trade unions and faith-based organisations. This project is under the auspices of Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA.*

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