

Written evidence from U.S. Campaign for Burma and 81 Diaspora Organizations (MYA0033)

The United States Campaign for Burma (USCB) is a U.S.-based membership organization dedicated to empowering grassroots activists around the world to rally for human rights and bring an end to the military dictatorship in Burma/Myanmar. Through public education, leadership development initiatives, conferences, and advocacy campaigns at the local, national, and international levels, USCB partners with our global supporters, including thousands of Burmese dissidents-in-exile, to promote freedom, democracy, and human rights in Burma/Myanmar and raise awareness about the egregious human rights violations committed by Myanmar's military regime. This submission is on behalf of Burma's 81 ethnic diaspora and solidarity organizations from 13 countries, as listed below.

Summary/Recommendations

- The United Kingdom (UK) should sanction Myanmar's military leaders, military-owned companies, including Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE), and the military's business associates, to include Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise.
- The UK should intervene in the matter of *The Gambia v. Myanmar* before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to help ensure justice and hold the military accountable.
- As the Penholder on Myanmar at the UN Security Council, the UK must do more to overcome the political disagreements paralyzing the Security Council and catalyze a meaningful, comprehensive, and multi-faceted international response to the crisis, including by drafting and immediately bringing to a vote a Security Council resolution to end the violence in Myanmar, refer Myanmar to the International Criminal Court (ICC), and impose an arms embargo.
- Humanitarian aid is crucial and the UK should support efforts to reach Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees with critical food and medical assistance.
- The UK should increase dialogue with ASEAN to help the region understand what its neighbors in Myanmar are facing, stress the role peace plays in regional economic stability, and encourage stronger action from ASEAN to execute the five-point consensus reached at the April Emergency Summit.
- Upholding the norm of non-refoulement should be a priority in discussions with Myanmar's neighbors to help end pushbacks and increase protection for those fleeing violence.

Sanctions and Pressures

1. We, the ethnic diaspora of Burma, recognize the UK's steps to sanction Myanmar's military leaders and military-owned companies that fund the regime. While sanctioning Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC) and Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited (MEHL) helps to limit the financial resources of the military, we believe further action is required to financially cut off the regime as one strategy to limit their violent campaign against people across Myanmar.
2. UK Parliament should increase sanctions against the military to include MOGE, as well as all high-ranking military officials and their cronies. Military leadership and their partners enrich themselves by using force

and violence to gain control of the natural resources of the country, which should be owned by and provide benefit to the people.

3. By cutting off military access to financial resources, the military will be unable to continue buying the weapons that it is using to target peaceful civilians. Limiting the military's financial resources may also result in more defections of soldiers.

Addressing Ongoing Military Violence

4. The military continues to act with impunity due to inaction by the international community. We believe that to end violence and support justice and redress for the victims of military abuses in Myanmar, the world must send a strong message that the continued mass atrocities, war crimes, and genocide will no longer be tolerated. The military is emboldened by years of inaction; now is the time to act.
5. The UK should intervene in *The Gambia v. Myanmar* at the ICJ, a supportive measure already taken by Canada and The Kingdom of the Netherlands. If the case is successful at the ICJ, the military will not only be held accountable, but they will think twice about committing human rights violations in the future. This action will benefit not only the Rohingya, but all people across Myanmar who face similar abuses such as rape, torture, and destruction of property.
6. Seeking justice means holding perpetrators accountable for their war crimes and crimes against humanity. We believe a referral of Myanmar to the ICC will also serve to bring about justice in Myanmar and give victims an important platform to share their stories. Redress for civilians will not be possible without existing mechanisms for justice being utilized to the fullest extent and/or the formation of an ad hoc international tribunal.
7. In addition to efforts to seek justice, the UK should support humanitarian efforts across Myanmar to provide for civilians impacted by the armed conflict. Food, medicine, and medical care are in short supply across the country. The UN World Food Programme estimates up to 3.4 million additional people will become food insecure by the end of October 2021 if action is not taken.¹ This includes the estimated 20,000 internally displaced persons² created since the coup. The Ethnic Health Committee requests international support in order for those in border regions to receive necessary medical assistance, which is particularly critical during the time of COVID-19.³

International and Regional Actions

8. As the Penholder on Myanmar at the UN Security Council, the UK has a great responsibility to address the actions in Myanmar. There have been no UNSC resolutions since the coup and the Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2021/5) on 10 March 2021 condemning the coup has done nothing to stop the military's violent

¹ <https://www.wfp.org/publications/myanmar-analysis-economic-fallout-and-food-insecurity-wake-takeover-2021>

² <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNICEF%20Myanmar%20Humanitarian%20Situation%20Report%20No.%202%20-%2026%20March%20-%2028%20April%202021.pdf>

³ <https://www.facebook.com/uscampaignforburma/posts/10159356004735948>

campaign against its people. As of 18 May 2021, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners reports 805 people have been confirmed killed since the coup began.⁴ We believe now is the time for action and the UK should put pen to paper and develop resolutions for UNSC consideration that call for action on Myanmar.

9. An international arms embargo is needed in order to stop the military's access to weapons. This strategy is supported by over 200 civil society organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and international nongovernmental organizations, and will help stop the violent campaigns seen across the country.⁵ There is evidence of attacks on Chin⁶, Karen⁷, Kachin⁸, and Shan⁹ states.
10. We ask that the UK coordinate with the US and other European Union counterparts to develop support for international action. Strength in numbers from like-minded states will allow for tangible actions.
11. As an ASEAN Dialogue Partner, the UK can play an important role in helping ASEAN understand the current situation in Myanmar and look at the reality of what their neighbors are suffering under the military. Regional economic stability is under threat during a time when the pandemic has already created poor economic conditions in the region. ASEAN leaders should recognize that if they work with the people of Myanmar, and not the military, everyone will benefit as there is greater opportunity when peace exists.
12. We also encourage UK dialogue with Myanmar's border countries regarding the right to seek protection and the international prohibition against refoulement. Thailand, Laos, China, India, and Bangladesh should open their borders for those fleeing violence and allow for UNHCR and others to help take in refugees. Reports confirm that Thai officials pushed villagers fleeing military airstrikes back across the border to Myanmar, as part of a broader policy to block new arrivals. Over 10,000 have fled¹⁰ Myanmar and we ask the UK to call on neighboring countries to end pushbacks.
13. We urge the UK to take strong and concerted action on multiple fronts, including: imposing targeted economic sanctions against a broad range of actors; coordinating international and regional action, including a global arms embargo; ensuring international and regional accountability for the military's gross human rights violations; and spearheading decisive action at the Security Council.

Supporting Organizations from Burma's Ethnic Diaspora

⁴ https://aappb.org/?fbclid=IwAR23brUTmK0a2BIsW5DxKNnc_pjmIpSA6t6HJJj5XFex58709--odAvI0eo

⁵ <https://uscampaignforburma.wordpress.com/2021/05/05/global-civil-society-statement-on-myanmar/>

⁶ <https://www.myanmar-now.org/en/news/junta-sends-reinforcements-to-mindat-by-helicopter-seizing-town>

⁷ <https://www.myanmar-now.org/en/news/airstrikes-continue-after-kia-shoots-down-junta-helicopter-in-momauk>

⁸ <https://www.myanmar-now.org/en/news/one-dead-three-injured-in-military-shootings-in-namti>

⁹ <https://www.myanmar-now.org/en/news/myanmar-military-artillery-shells-explode-near-shan-idp-camps>

¹⁰ <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-refugee-emergency-10-may-2021>

Albany Karen Community, USA
 American Baptist Churches USA
 Arakan Institute for Peace and Development, USA
 Arakan Rohingya Union, USA
 Burma Task Force, USA
 Calgary Karen Community Association (CKCA), Canada
 California Shan Society, USA
 Canadian Rohingya Development Initiative
 Chin Community of Washington, DC Area, USA
 Dallas Ft. Worth Karen community, TX, USA
 Dallas Karen Baptist Church, TX, USA
 DEEKU, the Karenni Community, USA
 Edmonton Karen Community Youth Organization
 European Karen Network
 Finland Karen Culture Association, Finland
 Global Movement for Myanmar Democracy
 International Karen Organisation, Australia
 Justice for All, USA
 Kachin National Organization USA
 Kansas Karenni community, KS, USA
 Karen American Association of Wisconsin, USA
 Karen Association of Huron, SD, USA
 Karen Community in Netherlands
 Karen Community of Akron, OH, USA
 Karen Community of Canada (KCC)
 Karen Community of Czech Republic
 Karen Community of Finland
 Karen Community of Hamilton, Canada
 Karen Community of Iowa, IA, USA
 Karen Community of Ireland
 Karen Community of Israel
 Karen Community of Kansas City, KS & MO, USA
 Karen Community of Kitchener & Waterloo, Canada
 Karen Community of Leamington, Canada
 Karen Community of Lethbridge, Canada
 Karen Community of London, Canada
 Karen Community of Minnesota, MN, USA
 Karen Community of North Carolina, NC, USA
 Karen Community of Norway
 Karen Community of Ottawa, Canada
 Karen Community of Regina, Canada

Karen community of Rochestet, Canada
 Karen Community of Rock Island, IL, USA
 Karen Community of Saskatoon, Canada
 Karen Community of Syracuse, USA
 Karen Community of Thunderbay, Canada
 Karen Community of Toronto, Canada
 Karen Community of Windsor, Canada
 Karen Community of Winnipeg, Canada
 Karen Community Society of British Columbia, Canada
 Karen Organization of America, USA
 Karen Swedish Community (KSC), Sweden
 Karen Thai Group, Thailand
 Karen Youth Education Pathways, Washington, DC
 Karen Youth Networks
 Karen Youth of Norway
 Karen Youth of Toronto, Canada
 Karen Youth Organization, Thailand
 Karenni American Association, St. Paul, MN, USA
 Karenni Community of Bowling Green, KY, USA
 Karenni community of Des Moines, IA, USA
 Karenni Community of Georgia, GA, USA
 Karenni community of Indianapolis, IN, USA
 Karenni Community of Massachusetts, MA, USA
 Karenni community of Minnesota, MN, USA
 Karenni Community of Missouri, MO, USA
 Karenni Community of New York, NY, USA
 Karenni Community of North Carolina, NC, USA
 Karenni Community of Portland, OR, USA
 Karenni Community of Taxes, TX, USA
 Karenni Community of Wisconsin, WI, USA
 Karenni Society of Minnesota, MN, USA
 Korea Karen Organization
 Korea Karen Youth Organization
 Oversea Karen Organization Japan
 Rohingya American Society (RAS), Milwaukee, WI, USA
 Rohingya Cultural Center of Chicago, IL, USA
 Rohingya Society of Greater Nashua, NH, USA
 The Burmese Rohingya Association of North America
 United States Campaign for Burma
 Utica Karen Community, USA
 World Rohingya Organization, Jackson Height, NY, USA

May 2021