



Senator the Hon Marise Payne
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Women

MC22-002095

Ms Paula Peterson
National Coordinator
Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma
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Dear Ms Peterson

Thank you for your letter regarding the situation in Myanmar and Australia's sanctions regime.

The Australian Government shares your concerns about the deteriorating conditions in Myanmar, including the horrific violence and repression being perpetrated against the people of Myanmar by the military regime. Australia has been a longstanding supporter of Myanmar and its democratic transition, and it has been very concerning to see so much progress reversed.

The Australian Government condemns the serious human rights violations that have been committed by the Myanmar military regime. We are using all channels – bilateral, regional and multilateral – to maintain global attention on the crisis in Myanmar. We have consistently urged the regime to cease attacks against civilians, engage in dialogue, allow the immediate provision of unimpeded humanitarian assistance to the many thousands of people in need, and swiftly return Myanmar to the path of democracy. We have made clear our concerns directly to the regime, in ministerial and embassy statements, and in multilateral fora such as the East Asia Summit, UN Human Rights Council and UN General Assembly.

Australia's autonomous sanctions regime for Myanmar includes targeted sanctions against five individuals with direct responsibility for atrocities in Rakhine State. I continue to keep our sanctions regime under active consideration, and further sanctions have not been ruled out.

The Australian Government has made clear its focus on the importance of stemming the flow of arms to Myanmar in de-escalating violence. We have an arms embargo against Myanmar in place, we strongly support calls for a global arms embargo, and we are leading efforts with partners to encourage those countries providing arms to cease doing so. On 21 March, we reiterated our strong support for a global arms embargo against Myanmar at the 49th session of the UN Human Rights Council. Further, on 27 March, I joined 20 ministerial counterparts to issue a joint statement urging all countries to immediately stop the sale or transfer of arms to Myanmar.

Australia has consistently called for, and remains committed to, accountability for war crimes, human rights violations and abuses, and other violations of international law committed throughout Myanmar. Australia has urged Myanmar to engage and cooperate with international accountability mechanisms, including the International Court of Justice and the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM).

We are deeply troubled by the complex humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. Australia will provide an estimated \$95.5 million in humanitarian and development assistance this financial year to continue our longstanding commitment to supporting the people of Myanmar. This development and humanitarian assistance will prioritise the needs of the most poor and vulnerable, and support the key needs of the people of Myanmar including education, healthcare, COVID-19 support, food and household economic support. Australia does not provide any funding to the regime, and we take proactive steps to ensure that Australian assistance to Myanmar does not legitimise or give direct benefit to the regime.

The Australian Government remains firmly focused on the crisis in Myanmar, and we are committed to doing all we can towards ending the violence and returning Myanmar to the path of democracy.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marise Payne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath the name.

MARISE PAYNE

26 APR 2022