



Rt. Hon Dominic Raab MP
The Foreign Secretary
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

3 June 2021

Dear Dominic,

The situation in Myanmar is deteriorating rapidly. In recent days, the military regime has escalated their daily cycle of atrocities perpetrated against civilians across Myanmar, with airstrikes in Kayah (Karenni) State.

On Monday afternoon (May 31st), the Myanmar military regime launched airstrikes in Kayah for the first time since the 1 February coup. Two helicopters opened fire in Demoso Township, this was followed by heavy artillery shelling, marking a rapid escalation of violence in the state.

70,000 civilians have already been displaced, fleeing to camps rapidly set up by local communities. The situation for these IDPs has been dire; they are in urgent need of food, medicine and other essentials. Hiding in the jungle they are also facing seasonal monsoons that are washing away camps.

We welcome the UK Government's imposition of sanctions against regime leaders; the decision to review aid programmes in Myanmar; the condemnation of the killing of peaceful protestors, and the unlawful detention of political and civil society leaders. However, this is not enough.

Airstrikes – also used to attack and besiege the Chin state town of Mindat last month – accompanied by the use of heavy artillery weapons, represent a serious escalation of the violence. In addition to the estimated 70,000 people who have been displaced in Kayah state, tens of thousands of others in Shan, Chin, Karen and Rakhine States have been displaced and are also in desperate need of food, medicine and humanitarian aid. However, humanitarian access is being prevented by the blocking and destruction by the military of roads and bridges to besieged areas. Regime forces have also cut off access to entrances into Kayah State from Shan State to the north, and transport to Loikaw has now also been cut off, with bridges destroyed and roads blockaded, further hindering any transport of supplies.

The lack of response by the international community is increasing the danger of civil war. The constant threat of military raids, arrests, torture and killings has pushed communities to take up arms.

Dr. Sasa, Spokesperson and Minister for International Cooperation for the National Unity Government said yesterday. *"The people of Myanmar have been left with no other choice. They just have no other option left. It is just the beginning. The situation will become out of control.....The whole country is on the road to civil war."*

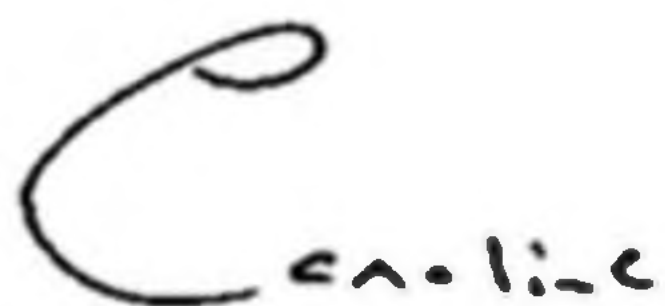
It is time to take urgent action, not just for the people of Myanmar but for the stability of the region.

We urge the British government:

- to recognise the National Unity Government (NUG), who are the democratically-elected leaders of Myanmar, and who have promised to enshrine the rights of the country's ethnic communities. Last week, a NUG representative expressed acute disappointment at Britain's failure to recognise the NUG: *"The junta is dismantling an elected government by genocidal actions and policies. Not recognising the NUG is a rejection of the will of the people of Myanmar. It is a betrayal of democracy. When will the world stop the military generals before they commit another genocide?"*
- to provide emergency cross-border humanitarian aid.
- to increase pressure for a global arms embargo to cut off the flow of weapons to this brutal regime.
- to intensify diplomatic pressure at the United Nations Security Council to establish an accountability mechanism to bring the perpetrators of atrocities to justice.
- to increase pressure on the military regime to stop its reign of terror.
- to impose more targeted sanctions against military enterprises and a global arms embargo.

Whilst the UK has taken some positive initial steps, we urge the Government to implement the above suggestions as a matter of great urgency. It is only thereby that stability can be restored; that civil war might be prevented; and that the best opportunity in 70 years for peace, justice, freedom and democracy for all the people of Myanmar might finally be achieved.

With best wishes,



The Baroness Cox

Lord Alton of Liverpool

Lord Bishop of Coventry

Valerie Vaz MP

Baroness Nye

Mohammad Yasin MP