

I have been involved in human rights issues in Myanmar since 1999. I was one of the three International Expert members leading the UN Human Rights Council's Independent International Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar from 2017 to 2019. When the coup began, I joined with two other former UN experts in establishing the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar.

In an article I had published recently, I listed eight steps Australia should take in response to the coup:

1. Suspend Australia-Myanmar military cooperation: the program is very small, only worth a few hundred thousand dollars a year, but the generals have loved the legitimacy and acceptance it has given them and the travel opportunities.
2. Impose sanctions on all members of the State Administrative Council (the junta's ruling body): only a couple of them are sanctioned to date, not including the Commander-in-Chief and his deputy.
3. Announce that it will take active steps to encourage Australian companies and companies operating in Australia not to enter or continue business arrangements with Myanmar military owned or controlled enterprises and with Myanmar state owned enterprises: Myanmar Economic Corporation and Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited are the two largest military owned conglomerates, with scores of identified subsidiaries. Start with all of them. In addition, state owned enterprises, including the Ministry of Gas and Energy, are now effectively under military control and so should be included in boycotts.
4. Announce that it will treat the arrest of Sean Turnell as 'hostage diplomacy' and seek the support of international partners in the anti-hostage diplomacy campaign to secure his release: the Australian Government says that it will not be blackmailed through hostage diplomacy. It needs to act on that.
5. Join Canada and the Netherlands in supporting Gambia's action in the International Court of Justice: Myanmar is defending a case of genocide based on its persecution of the Rohingya. Gambia brought the case and Canada and the Netherlands have joined it to support Gambia. Australia should too.
6. Join initiatives (collaborative action, statements, meetings and the like) of like-minded states (Canada, EU, New Zealand, UK, US) in international forums, in Myanmar itself and elsewhere: Australia has been noticeably absent from a number of initiatives and statements of like-minded states. This is embarrassing to us and offers a little comfort to the generals.
7. Pressure ASEAN to take firm action to (1) restrain the military to prevent a massacre, (2) convene a meeting of all the principal actors and (3) seek a resolution of the situation: there are now a number of significant actors in Myanmar, not only the military and not only the NLD but also several new bodies and coalitions, including the Committee Representing the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (the national parliament), the ethnic organisations' negotiating committee, the Civil Disobedience Movement and

the General Strike Committee. Australia should be encouraging ASEAN to talk with them all to explore ways forward.

8. Work with the USA, as President of the Security Council in March 2021, to take an initiative during its presidency to activate the Security Council to seek a resolution of the situation in Myanmar, with all options for international action on the table except military intervention.