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Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee

Topic: FADT References Committee - Democracy and Human Rights in Myanmar - Spoken QoN - Public Hearing
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Senator David Shoebridge

Question

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: There is a very large gap between the breadth of sanctions that have been applied by, for example, the European Union, and the much narrower set of sanctions applied by Australia. That gap is in the financial space, including by failing to sanction the Myanma Economic Bank, which is very much seen as a workaround used by the junta to get financial support, and the complete absence in Australian sanctions of state owned enterprises, which is another critical way the junta supports itself economically. Can you explain why there is such a chasm between the comprehensive sanctions of the EU and the far narrower sanctions of Australia?

Ms Smith: It would, of course, be for my sanctions colleagues to speak in more detail about our sanctions frameworks, but, perhaps, I say that, of course, each country's sanctions frameworks and thresholds work slightly differently. Options that are open to some countries are not necessarily open to all countries. We keep our sanctions settings with respect to Myanmar under very close review, and, as I've said, we're not in a position to speculate about potential sanctions measures, but we do stay in close consultation with our European and other like-minded partners on respective sanctions approaches and work within the frameworks that we have to consider that.

Senator SHOEBRIDGE: Given the time, **if you could provide some further detail explaining the discrepancies on notice, that would be good.** I also note that the parliament recently made very clear amendments so that organs of the state and ones controlled by the state can now be the subject of Australian sanctions. That happened in the context of Iran, but it would also apply to Myanmar. **Can you confirm, on notice, whether or not those amendments by parliament removes any impediments to now sanction state owned enterprises?**

Ms Smith: **I'll take that on notice.**

Answer

Australian's Myanmar sanctions framework allows for the designation of entities that are owned or controlled by the Myanmar military.

Sanctions by international partners are a matter for them.