

I have been researching politics and transitional justice issues in Myanmar since 2008. I have lived and worked in the country on and off since late 2012. I work with a number of civil society and grassroots organisations as a consultant and teacher, am involved in community development in a number of states/regions and am the co-director of a small environmental training institute, established in 2019 in southern Rakhine State. I apply a political economy analysis to Myanmar and am well published in this field. The Australian government was pitifully slow to respond to the coup in Myanmar and this public hearing is a positive move. As we are all aware, the situation is deteriorating rapidly, and this will come none too soon. My analysis of the situation is as below:

"The coup in Myanmar is a result of centralisation of power and populist politics with Aung San Suu Kyi setting herself up as 'a queen', sidelining ethnic and marginalised groups. The National League for Democracy became an easy target for General Min Aung Hlaing and his cronies, whose personal aspirations were being undermined in the transition to democracy. The *Tatmadaw* have no intention of holding fair or free elections but will remain in power, buoyed by support from China and Russia. We know that sanctions are ultimately ineffective against dictators and platitudes do not stop them killing. What is required is financial and political support of civil society/ethnic groups, in particular emerging youth leaders central to the democracy movement. They require resources and training in politics to decentralise power, build a cohesive and more representative body politic and provide social and material capital to the 'people', bypassing the military."