

A Submission to the Public Hearing on Myanmar - 13 April 2001 by the Foreign Affairs and Aid Subcommittee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade.

This submission is sent in support of the submission by the National Council of Churches signed by Bishop Philip Huggins as President.

The Myanmar coup d'état of 1 February has been a disaster and will continue to be so. Protests involve huge numbers of people from every sector and occur right across the country. The non-violent civil disobedience movement has crippled both private and public sectors. The violence of the security forces towards their own people is brutal, lethal and inhumane. Soldiers beat, kick and shoot at people indiscriminately; snipers aim for head and chest. Over five hundred civilians, including children, have been murdered in the first two months. All this has sent Myanmar into social, economic and political chaos.

Neither side will back down and neither side, protestors or regime, will win any time soon. Greater civil strife, greater suffering, economic collapse and a severe humanitarian crisis are the most predictable outcomes. Refugee numbers into Thailand, India and possibly Malaysia will increase. Humanitarian and development needs through this coming year will be huge.

Even the targeted sanctions only scratch the skin, since the junta has the promise of ample armaments from Russia and is **bankrolled by the illicit incomes from narcotics produced in Myanmar and by plundering Myanmar's own natural resources. Methamphetamines produced in Myanmar, that help to bankroll the Tatmadaw, find their principal market and destructive effect in Australia. If anything, international cooperation for sanctions should target these mafia like actions that give financial security to the generals.**

Myanmar is sliding towards becoming a failed state. This will have an immense impact on the integrity of ASEAN. At the same time ASEAN and other Asian states have the capacity to intervene and negotiate. **Australia can work with the ASEAN members to urge that no foreign entity should recognise this regime.**

Submitted by Denise Nichols OAM on behalf of a concerned Myanmar resident whose identity is withheld due to security concerns but further information can be provided on request.

Signed: *Denise Nichols*

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This submission has been compiled by members of a Christian Community in Myanmar and is sent in support of the submission by the National Council of Churches signed by Bishop Philip Huggins as President.

The signatory of the submission is withheld due to security concerns but further information can be provided on request.

We would like to request you to raise matters to speak out on behalf of Myanmar people.

1. Myanmar Civilians are facing savage attacks and brutal crack-downs by Military and police forces at day time, and also violent raids by them at night during curfew hours. Our lives are in danger and insecure: children, young people, adults, volunteers, activists are killed by Military and police forces daily. We need "HELP" from the international community.

We ask the Australian Government to:

2. Stop all financial support to the Junta Military Council and sanction all Military businesses Stop giving visa or extension visa to Military families who are in Australia.
 3. PLEASE provide humanitarian action to vulnerable people/community affected by the coup.
 4. Take a stronger role in Asian Pacific region to pressure **Thailand, India, China**, to give shelter to and welcome displaced people from Myanmar.
 5. Recognize and work together with **CRPH**(Committee Representing Pyihtaungsu Hlutaw) for Myanmar affairs in the future.
 6. Support **women's groups** who are working underground to support families/ widows who have lost family members during the crack-down on strike. Women are thriving and surviving together with the community to resist the Coup in every way.
 7. Support **young people** who are active and very enthusiastic, and are sacrificing their lives in the resistance movement to save Myanmar from the Coup. They play a leading role in the strike, in CDM support, and in networking with young people groups from ASEAN.
- Stand more strongly in solidarity with the people of Myanmar. 90% of Myanmar population is resisting the Coup. In this movement, all ages, ethnics, religious groups, community groups are solidarity in one purpose of opposition to reject the Coup. Bearing one another's burdens is the way of Christ's life and Christian life.

Signed:

Denise Nichols

Denise Nichols OAM, [REDACTED]