



BURMA/ Myanmar: “Standing Together Against Tyranny: An Urgent Appeal to Japan and the G7 Nations to Act Against the Myanmar Military Junta”

On. Antonio Tajani
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy

May 15, 2023

Dear Minister On. Antonio Tajani,

Re: Standing Together Against Tyranny: An Urgent Appeal to Japan and the G7 Nations to Act Against the Myanmar Military Junta

As concerned human rights activists representing an alliance of the international civil society organizations, as well as international labor and student unions, we write to bring your attention to the ongoing serious human rights crisis in Myanmar. We urge the G7, particularly Japan, to take action against the military junta's unconstitutional and failed attempt to seize power, which has led to an escalation of violence against the people of Myanmar.

As you may be aware, the situation in Myanmar is dire. Approximately **60,000 civilian homes and structures** have been burned to the ground ¹or otherwise destroyed, and nearly **50% of the population** in Myanmar have fallen into poverty². Furthermore, **17.6 million people** are in dire need of humanitarian assistance³.

While we acknowledge Japan's efforts in presenting a united front with other G7 states and the EU in implementing coordinated sanctions and other economic measures to counter Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, we believe that Japan must also join other G7 Nations in countering the Myanmar military's actions by imposing targeted sanctions on the military junta and its key revenue sources.

¹ <https://mpapress.com/en/news/18540/>

²

<https://www.undp.org/press-releases/myanmar-urban-poverty-rates-set-triple-new-united-nations-survey-findings>

³

https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press1e_000383.html#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Humanitarian%20Response,in%20need%20of%20humanitarian%20assistance.



“The End of Mission Statement” by **Thomas Andrews**⁴ dated 28 April 2023 highlights the urgent need for Japan to impose targeted economic sanctions on the Myanmar military and its key sources of revenue, just as it is doing in response to the crisis in Ukraine. Equipping and sustaining military forces, and procuring armaments, fighter jets and helicopter gunships is expensive. Economic sanctions that deprive the junta of the resources required to operate its war-making machinery would weaken its capacity to attack its people.

Sanctions have been proven to be effective in the past, as they played a role in facilitating the democratic reforms that the junta has now reversed with its failed coup. The people of Myanmar are actively participating in citizen sanctions against the regime by boycotting all products and services related to the junta, and they are calling on international community to join them. It is crucial for the international community to join them in their efforts.

However, to maximize their potential impact, sanctions need to be imposed by all nations that support the people of Myanmar, and they need to be imposed in a focused and coordinated fashion. Regrettably, Japan is the only member of the G7, who has chosen not to impose sanctions. And for those that have imposed sanctions have failed to do so in a way that adds up to a coherent and powerful whole.

It is imperative to emphasize that China and Russia are unabashedly supporting the Myanmar military with arms, aid, and political power. However, the people of Myanmar have a resolute determination to never succumb to military rule again, as evidenced by their armed resistance against the junta. Without the intervention of G7 leaders, particularly Japan, to provide much-needed aid and support to the National Unity Government of Myanmar, the situation in the country will never achieve stability. This instability poses a risk to the entire region and could lead to further economic and security concerns.

Japan and the G7 have a significant interest to fully support Myanmar’s transition to democracy. A democratic and independent Myanmar will not only provide the stability needed to protect Japan’s national interests in Myanmar, but it will also support a free and open Indo-Pacific, which is crucial for maintaining the G7’s relevance and influence in the region. By promoting these values, the G7 can support the region’s economic and political development while maintaining its relevance and influence in an increasingly important part of the world.

Therefore, it is crucial that Japan and G7 take a stronger stance against the military junta in Myanmar. In this regard, we urge Japan to include the following measures in their response:

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<https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/end-mission-statement-thomas-andrews-united-nations-special-rapport-eur-situation-human-rights-myanmar-tokyo-japan-28-april-2023-enjp>



1. **Imposing targeted economic sanctions on the Myanmar military and its key sources of foreign revenue:** As representatives of concerned human rights activists, we demand immediate and decisive action from Japan and all G7 nations to impose targeted economic sanctions on the Myanmar military and its key sources of foreign revenue. It is unacceptable that corporations such as KDDI and Sumitomo continue to partner with military-controlled companies, like the junta-controlled Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications (MPT), which directly fund the junta's oppressive regime and violate the human rights of Myanmar people. Japan must take responsibility and join the international community in standing up for justice and human rights in Myanmar.
2. **Sanctions on Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE):** MOGE is a state-owned enterprise that serves as a crucial source of foreign revenue for the military junta. According to their own report, the junta has claimed that MOGE generated more than *\$800 million (\$2.4 billion annually)* in foreign gas revenue between April and June of 2022⁵. Imposing sanctions on MOGE will cripple the junta's economic foundation, cut off its access to arms, and force the military junta to end its violent campaign against the people of Myanmar.
3. **Enacting a stringent arms embargo and an outright ban on all jet fuel operations that bolster the military regime:** The junta's heinous actions against the people of Myanmar have been fuelled by the influx of arms and jet fuel. By imposing an unwavering ban on all forms of jet fuel operations, spanning from financial and insurance services to logistics, that directly or indirectly support the military junta, Japan can effectively stem the flow of weaponry and aviation fuel to the junta, thereby curtailing their capacity to carry out violent acts.
4. **Denying any form of diplomatic recognition to the military junta:** To demonstrate its unwavering support for democracy, Japan and other G7 Nations must vehemently reject any form of diplomatic recognition for the illegal military junta and its organization. The junta's unconstitutional seizure of power highlights the pressing need to deny legitimacy to their rule. For Japan, this can be achieved through the termination of the Ministry of Defence program⁶, which provides military training to Myanmar personnel, some of whom have been linked to atrocities against civilians. It is essential to recognize that the military has no role in Myanmar's transition to democracy. By taking these decisive steps, Japan can effectively demonstrate its resolute solidarity with the people of Myanmar in their unyielding fight for democratic freedom.
5. **Endorsing actively to help establish a sustainable resolution on Myanmar within the G7:** This resolution should pave the way for a new constitution that enables Myanmar's transition to a genuine federal democracy, inclusive of ethnic diversity. G7 should give their full support to the National Unity Government of Myanmar in their efforts to deliver peace, equality, and justice for all, as well as balanced development and effective, accountable institutions at all levels, to ensure the rule of law is maintained.

⁵ <https://thediomat.com/2022/08/myanmar-junta-trumpets-continuing-flow-of-natural-gas-revenues/>

⁶ <https://www.mod.go.jp/en/myanmar/>



6. **Ensuring full accountability for the military junta's crimes is paramount:** The current military leadership must be swiftly removed from power and held accountable for their egregious violations of human rights. Japan must unequivocally support the people's legitimate government of Myanmar, the National Unity Government, to bring the military under full civilian control and prevent further atrocities.

7. **Rejecting the junta's illegal election is crucial as the junta does not have any legal authority to hold any elections while Myanmar has legitimate government, the National Unity Government, formed based on the result of 2020 elections, voted overwhelmingly by the people of Myanmar:** Japan must unequivocally denounce the military junta's attempt to seize legitimacy through such illegal election and stand with the people of Myanmar in supporting the legitimate National Unity Government. Providing aid including financial, technology and humanitarian aid to the National Unity Government of Myanmar, Ethnic Resistance Organisations (EROs), and other local actors not aligned with the military will be a concrete step towards meeting the needs of the people of Myanmar in these challenging times and helping them achieve their goal to establish a federal democratic union that is free from military tyranny and protect their rights.

In conclusion, all G7 Nations must prioritize human rights and democracy in their foreign policy and use their collective influence to support positive change in the region, as the situation in Myanmar demands urgent and unwavering support to resolve the gross human rights violations perpetrated by the military junta.

We urge G7 to take immediate and robust action to support the calls of the National Unity Government of Myanmar, and the international community to address the ongoing political crisis and serious humanitarian issues in Myanmar. Only through your collective efforts can justice and democracy be restored to Myanmar, and the military held accountable for their heinous crimes. Let us stand together and support the people of Myanmar in their quest for justice and freedom.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Most respectfully,

Myanmar Community in Italy
Italy - Burma Friendship Association
Global Myanmar Spring Revolution

On behalf of the people in **Burma/Myanmar, the Myanmar diasporas communities in JAPAN and around the world, International and Local Civil Society Organizations, Community Based Organizations, Human Rights Organizations, Humanitarian & Charity Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, Strike Committees, Labour, Teachers and Student Unions and their allies all over the world.**