

Testimony of Kin W. Moy
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs
House Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia and Nonproliferation
February 17, 2022

Mr. Chairman, members of the Asia Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to speak with you today. And thank you for your continued attention to the grave situation in Burma, particularly since the Burmese military carried out its coup d'état just over one year ago.

In the year following the coup, the total damage the Burmese military has inflicted on innocent people in the country is incalculable, but I would like to share a few numbers to demonstrate the devastation it has wrought. Credible sources indicate the military has killed more than 1,500 people in Burma – including at least 117 children – and those are only the deaths that have been verified. The number is likely much larger. The regime has arrested at least 12,000 people and more than 9,000 of them remain in detention. There are numerous reports of the Burmese military committing torture and sexual violence against those in detention. More than 400,000 have been forced to flee their homes and are internally displaced, while others are seeking refuge in neighboring countries. The World Bank estimates the economy has contracted by 18 percent, and the United Nations Development Program estimates nearly half of Burma's population will live below the poverty line this year.

The numbers are bleak, and the Burmese military's determination to employ horrific violence shows no signs of abating. We were appalled by the Christmas Massacre, in which the military killed and burned 35 people, including two Save the Children staff members. This is the same force that committed ethnic cleansing and other atrocities against Rohingya in 2017. Military units continue to carry out atrocities across the country and prevent the flow of humanitarian assistance to people in need.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to spend a few minutes detailing how the Administration is grappling with this situation, including our efforts to: pressure the regime to immediately cease the violence; allow unhindered humanitarian access; release those unjustly detained by the military – including wrongfully detained U.S. citizen Kyaw Htay Oo; ensure those responsible for atrocities and other human rights abuses are held to account; and swiftly return Burma towards a path to inclusive democracy.

Immediately after the military detained Burma's elected leaders, the State Department acted quickly to assess that the military carried out a coup d'état, and President Biden issued an Executive Order Blocking Property with Respect to the Situation in Burma shortly thereafter. The executive order authorizes sanctions in connection with the coup, including on individuals and entities responsible for undermining democratic institutions in Burma and on certain of their family members. We have used this authority to apply targeted sanctions to 65 individuals and sanctioned or placed export controls on 26 entities to date. These include top military commanders, senior officials of the regime, and their family members, as well as entities that generate revenue for the military and its leaders, and cronies that are involved in the military's procurement of weapons. In addition, the U.S. government took steps to prevent the generals from improperly having access to the \$1 billion in Burmese government funds held in the United States.

The State Department continues to work with the Treasury Department and other interagency partners to identify and assess additional sanctions, as well as other actions to restrict revenue to the regime. A top consideration when carrying out targeted sanctions is to ensure we are not exacerbating the humanitarian crisis on the ground or increasing poverty for the people of Burma.

We have closely coordinated all of our actions, including sanctions, with our allies and partners to present a united front in the international community. We regularly consult with our partners in capitals across the world, and the United States remains a leading voice in driving international policy on Burma. Collectively, we have issued numerous joint statements with our allies and partners. Most recently, Secretary Blinken co-signed a joint statement with 35 other countries to mark one year since the coup, which included a call for an end to arms sales and transfers to the regime. This coordination has severely limited the regime's international space.

The United Nations General Assembly also has called on states to prevent the flow of arms into Burma and our colleagues at the U.S. Mission to the UN similarly push for action there. The United Nations has established, and the Administration is supporting, the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar to lay a robust foundation for criminal accountability efforts that may become available. Since the coup, the UN Security Council has met seven times to discuss the situation in Burma, including to hear briefings by the UN and ASEAN special envoys, and has publicly called for an end to the violence, a peaceful resolution to the crisis, and unhindered access for the delivery of life-saving humanitarian

aid. Outside of the United Nations, senior State Department officials are in regular contact with their ASEAN counterparts, and we value the role of ASEAN centrality, as well as efforts by individual member states, in promoting a peaceful resolution to the crisis and providing much needed support to the people of Burma. We urge ASEAN to continue to hold the regime accountable to the Five-Point Consensus.

We also are in regular contact with the “National Unity Government” and other representatives from the pro-democracy movement as we continue to support all in Burma—civil society, independent media, human rights defenders, and others—seeking to restore their country’s democratic path.

As Representative Chabot has noted, Burma faces both a political crisis and a humanitarian crisis, on top of a myriad of economic and other challenges. I will defer to USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator Craig Hart on the details of our efforts to mitigate the humanitarian crisis, but I would like to highlight the ongoing work to support vulnerable populations with Congress’s support. In total in fiscal year 2021, the U.S. government provided more than \$434 million in humanitarian assistance for those affected by ongoing violence, including those internally displaced in Burma, refugees from Burma in the region, and communities hosting refugees from Burma. We continue to work with our partners in the region to seek additional ways to provide assistance to the people of Burma, including across its borders.

Again, I thank you for your time this morning and I look forward to your questions.