



BURMA: Joint Letter from Faith Leaders to President Biden Calling for Sanctions on Companies Supplying the Burmese Military with Jet Fuel

May 4, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 200500

Dear President Biden,

We are writing to urge the U.S. government to demonstrate greater international leadership, coordination, and strategic influence in halting ongoing atrocities in Burma.

As people of faith, we affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person and strive toward a world in which everyone can experience peace, justice, and liberty. Our sacred values demand that we act to protect the lives and human rights of the many people of Burma.

The U.S. government is uniquely positioned to lead the international community to have a significant impact in the region. The United States could impose targeted sanctions that would cut off the junta's access to funds and severely limit the dictatorship's access to financial resources.

The most recent round of U.S. sanctions, however, is unlikely to accomplish this goal. The sanctions targeting Asia Sun and others are unlikely to have a significant impact on the junta's ability to import jet fuel. This is especially true when solely targeting Burma-based entities, as junta allies can easily create new proxy companies that can then continue to import fuel without the sellers violating sanctions.

We urge you to prioritize impact over posturing in your sanctions regime, specifically by doing the following:

1. Sanction international companies selling jet fuel to the junta. Unlike the small Burma buyers that are easily replaced, the sellers are major international entities that would be seriously harmed by sanctions.
2. Prohibit companies from providing shipping insurance or shipping services to companies selling jet fuel to the junta. Without insurance, companies will not load cargo onto ships and ports will not allow them to dock. This would be the most effective and direct way for the United States to disrupt the flow of jet fuel into Burma.
3. Impose sanctions on the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) to impact one of their largest revenue streams, which funds the junta's campaign of violence against the people of Burma

The people living under a violent, unelected regime in Burma need more than toothless sanctions and farcical announcements. They risk their lives daily to protect their community from harm. They would benefit from targeted sanctions with fewer loopholes, harsher penalties, and stronger enforcement, while ensuring access to humanitarian aid directly to those working with the impacted community.

The United States has a moral obligation to end human rights violations in Burma. Doing business with the Burmese junta is nothing short of funding genocide, mass atrocities, displacement, and the oppression of hundreds of thousands of civilians. If the United States chooses not to implement policies that could end this violence, the United States will be abetting genocide. Taking concrete action in the form of economic sanctions sends a clear and resounding message: **We will not be complicit in the mass violence and death perpetuated by the junta.** As people of faith, we urge you to take action now.

Also CC: Secretary Blinken, Counselor Chollet, National Security Council

Sincerely,

1. Cantor/Chaplain Michael Zoosman "L"chaim! Jews Against the Death Penalty"
2. Dr. Jeff Woods, American Baptist Churches USA
3. Rev. Dr. Scott Stearman Baptist World Alliance / Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
4. Rev. Dr. Roy Medley, Burma Advocacy Group
5. Rev. Florence Li, Burma Refugee Commission, ABCUSA
6. Rev. Saw Ler Htoo, Calvary Burmese Church
7. Rabbi Barry Block, Central Conference of American Rabbis
8. Rev. Peggy Clarke, Community Church of New York
9. Rev. Deanna Vandiver, Ever Unfolding
10. Rev. Marty Pelham, First Universalist Church in Rockland
11. Rabbi Eliot Baskin, Hope Havura
12. Rabbi Binyamin Biber, Humanist Chaplaincy at American University
13. Mrs. Amber Maze, Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council
14. Cantor Linda Shivers, Institute for Jewish Spirituality
15. Mr. Michael Kuper, Jewish Community Relations Council/American Jewish Committee of Detroit
16. Mrs. Serena Oberstein, Jewish World Watch
17. Dr. Muhammad Jabbar, Justice for all
18. Rev. Dr. Tu Lamung, Kachin American Baptist Association
19. Rev. Ah Le, Kachin Baptist Churches USA
20. Rabbi Lauren Grabelle Herrmann
21. Cantor Sheri Allen, Makom Shelanu Congregation
22. Rev. Dr. May May Latt, Milwaukee Myanmar Christian Church
23. Rev. Henry Lyan, Peace and Justice Committee of CBCUSA
24. Rabbi David Wirtschafter, Temple Adath Israel of Lexington KY
25. Rabbi David Gelfand, Temple Israel of the City of New York
26. Cantor Anita Schubert, Temple Torat Emet, Boynton Beach, FL

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