



Australian Government

Australian Government response to the
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee
report:

Democracy and human rights in Myanmar

SEPTEMBER 2026

Introduction

The Australian Government welcomes the opportunity to respond to the report of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee ('the Committee') on its inquiry into Democracy and human rights in Myanmar.

The Government remains deeply concerned by the ongoing crisis in Myanmar. Since 1 February 2021, the people of Myanmar have endured escalating violence, widespread human rights violations and severe humanitarian suffering.

This crisis, caused by the coup, continues unabated. In 2026, an estimated 16.2 million people will require lifesaving humanitarian assistance, and over 4 million people are internally displaced due to ongoing conflict. The economy has contracted significantly, and transnational and serious organised crime has flourished, threatening regional stability.

Australia has consistently condemned the regime's brutal and ongoing atrocities against the people of Myanmar, and we will continue to judge the Myanmar military by its actions. We continue to support ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus as the framework for addressing the situation in Myanmar and urge for its full implementation.

The Government is working with international partners to respond to human trafficking, people smuggling, and other transnational crime threats arising from the Myanmar crisis, including online scam operations, drug trafficking, and illicit financing.

The Government remains committed to supporting the people of Myanmar through the provision of development and humanitarian assistance, and stands ready to support genuine efforts to alleviate suffering, improve economic and social conditions, and advance a lasting resolution to the ongoing crisis. We stand with the people of Myanmar, and share their ambitions for a better future.

The Government recognises and appreciates the work of the Committee. The report is comprehensive and detailed, with 11 recommendations.

The Government has carefully considered the report and:

- accepts Recommendation 11 in principle
- partially accepts Recommendations 2 and 7
- does not accept Recommendation 10; and
- notes Recommendations 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9.

Response to the recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- maintain its clear and principled objection to the continuing military rule of Myanmar and its rejection of the 2025–26 elections and attempts to use the 'sham' elections to build a cloak of respectability for the military regime; and
- actively object to any attempts to legitimise the military regime, normalise military rule and the acceptance of Myanmar into diplomatic, parliamentary and regional or multilateral forums.

Response:

The Government notes this recommendation.

On 1 February 2026, the fifth anniversary of the coup, the Minister for Foreign Affairs issued a statement noting that the crisis in Myanmar continued unabated and that the people of Myanmar had endured escalating violence, widespread human rights violations and severe humanitarian suffering. The statement also noted that elections were not free, fair or inclusive.

The Government has consistently maintained that a genuine path to peace requires an end to violence, the release of all those unjustly detained and inclusive dialogue between all Myanmar stakeholders. Australia condemns ongoing atrocities against the people of Myanmar and will continue to judge the Myanmar authorities by their actions. Australia's diplomatic engagement is calibrated to that which is necessary to pursue our national interests. Australia continues to support ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus as the framework for addressing the crisis in Myanmar and urge for its full implementation.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- more regularly state its ongoing concern about the conflict in Myanmar and continue to draw attention to the sustained repression, violence, and human rights abuses perpetrated by the military regime;
- recognise that continued conflict in Myanmar is now entering a new and more complex phase as it evolves from not just a humanitarian challenge to a strategic one, recognising the challenge now intersects with regional security, migration pressures and transnational crime networks; and
- maintain its policy of avoiding direct engagement with the military regime.

Response:

The Government partially accepts this recommendation.

Australia regularly raises its concerns about the conflict in Myanmar, in public statements and in bilateral and multilateral fora, including the United Nations and the UN Human Rights Council. We will continue to draw attention to the sustained repression, violence and human rights abuses.

Recent examples of our regular statements include:

- on 25 August 2026, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) issued and joined statements marking the ninth anniversary of attacks against Rohingyas
- on 6 May and 22 April 2026, DFAT issued statements via social media calling for the unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi and the release of all prisoners who remain unjustly detained
- on 1 February 2026 – the fifth anniversary of the coup – the Minister for Foreign Affairs issued a statement reiterating Australia’s concerns about the crisis, condemning the atrocities against the people of Myanmar, and reaffirming Australia’s expectations and pathway for its peaceful resolution
- on 10 December 2025 – Human Rights Day – DFAT issued a statement which condemned the Myanmar military regime’s widespread human rights abuses and violations.

Australia recognises the interlinkages of conflict in Myanmar with regional security, migration pressures, and transnational crime networks. Consistent with the statement issued by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on 1 February 2026, the Government acknowledges that transnational and serious organised crime has flourished as a result of the crisis, threatening regional stability.

Australia’s diplomatic engagement is calibrated to that which is necessary to pursue our national interests.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work towards aligning its Myanmar-related sanctions with key allies such as the United States of America.

Response:

The Government notes this recommendation.

The Australian Government engages regularly with likeminded partners on sanctions, including the United States of America, however precise listing criteria and requirements vary between countries. Decisions to impose sanctions are carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. Australia keeps its sanctions towards Myanmar under regular review.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government impose sanctions against Myanmar's Central Bank and other banks controlled by the military regime in Myanmar.

Response:

The Government notes this recommendation.

The Australian Government has imposed sanctions on 21 individuals and 7 entities under the Myanmar sanctions framework. These are contained in the publicly available Consolidated List, which is kept and maintained by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

On 1 February 2023, Australia imposed autonomous sanctions on those directly responsible for the military coup and ongoing repression and violence in Myanmar, targeting 16 members of the previous State Administration Council and two Myanmar military-controlled entities: Myanmar Economic Public Holdings Ltd and Myanmar Economic Corporation.

On 1 February 2024, the Government imposed further targeted sanctions, including on two regime-controlled banks that enable the purchase of arms and materiel: Myanma Foreign Trade Bank, and Myanma Investment and Commercial Bank.

Australia keeps its sanctions towards Myanmar under regular review. We weigh a range of considerations when deciding to impose sanctions; they are one tool at our disposal. The Government does not speculate on potential future sanctions measures.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government seek to disrupt and sanction the supply of jet fuel to the Myanmar junta and government.

Response:

The Government notes this recommendation.

On 1 February 2024, the Government imposed targeted sanctions on five entities to limit the regime's access to funds for arms and military matériel, including jet fuel. This includes three Myanmar-based companies providing jet fuel to the Myanmar military: Asia Sun Group, Asia Sun Trading Co Ltd and Cargo Link Petroleum Co Ltd.

Australia keeps its sanctions on Myanmar under regular review. We weigh a range of considerations when deciding to impose sanctions; they are one tool at our disposal. The Government does not speculate on potential sanction measures.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends the Australian Government supplement its engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations by:

- strengthening engagement through other regional mechanisms such as The Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime; and
- exploring new additional Myanmar-specific regional initiatives with countries such as India.

Response:

The Government notes this recommendation.

The Government is working with international partners to respond to human trafficking, people smuggling, and other transnational crime threats arising from the Myanmar crisis, including online scam operations, drug trafficking, and illicit financing.

As referenced by the Committee, the Bali Process provides a vital regional platform to build capacity, conduct research into emerging trends and coordinate responses across borders (including law enforcement agencies' approaches to detection, prevention, investigation and prosecution) to combat these crime types. Australia co-chairs the Bali Process with Indonesia.

The Bali Process' 2023 Adelaide Strategy for Cooperation identifies priority areas for cooperation, including addressing the proliferation of online scams operations.

Australia also actively engages through ASEAN transnational crime mechanisms. For example, Australia is an important dialogue partner for the Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and the Senior Officials' Meeting on Drug Matters (ASOD). These forums are focused on combatting key regional challenges, including drug trafficking, human trafficking and cybercrime (including cyber scam centres).

Australia supports several ASEAN-focussed initiatives, including the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking Program (\$80 million, 2018-2028), the TRIANGLE labour migration program (\$15m, 2025-30) and the ASEAN-Australia Political Security Partnership (\$11m, 2026-31). Complementing this, Australia also supports broader regional initiatives, including the Mekong-Australia Partnership on Transnational Crime and the Southeast Asia and Pacific Cyber Program.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends the Australian Government:

- prioritise the finalisation and publication of initiatives contained in the announcement of the \$370 million over three years to address the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar and support Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh, including establishing a Civil Society Pooled Fund;
- bring forward of the proposed mid-cycle review of the Australia-Myanmar Development Partnership Plan 2024-2029 to reflect the rapidly increasing humanitarian needs arising in Myanmar and border communities in Thailand, India and Bangladesh;
- prioritise the development of the publication of clear operational principles to guide non-avoidable engagement between development partners and entities associated with the military regime;
- demonstrate how the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade due diligence framework is working to facilitate greater access, flexibility and use of locally led organisations in the delivery of Australia's humanitarian program in Myanmar.

Response:

The Government partially accepts this recommendation.

DFAT is in the process of finalising a range of agreements under the new \$370 million humanitarian package for the people of Myanmar, including displaced Rohingyas and host communities in Bangladesh. Noting the sensitivities and security situation, the Government does not publicise the details of our initiatives in Myanmar or our local implementing partners for their safety. This is at their request.

The Australia-Myanmar Development Partnership Plan and our development programs are subject to ongoing oversight and monitoring to ensure they are appropriate and responsive to immediate changes and shifts in the Myanmar development context. This process is complemented by a mid-cycle review of the Australia-Myanmar Development Partnership Plan 2024-2029 which will be undertaken in the 2026-27 financial year. The review process

will take into consideration longer-term contextual shifts to ensure that our development and humanitarian priorities for Myanmar remain relevant.

Australia's development and humanitarian partners have rigorous processes in place to ensure that funding is delivered appropriately and to intended beneficiaries. This is a fundamental condition of Australia's engagement with them. We take proactive steps to ensure our assistance to Myanmar neither goes to the authorities nor lends them credibility. Noting the sensitivities and security situation in Myanmar, it would not be appropriate to publicise operational details of these processes.

DFAT's due diligence framework establishes important minimum requirements for any implementing partner delivering development cooperation or humanitarian assistance. This framework is one element of the Government's risk management approach to the delivery of official development assistance in the high-risk context of Myanmar.

Locally-led assistance, including work with civil society organisations, remains at the heart of Australia's development assistance program in Myanmar. Australia's humanitarian assistance is delivered through United Nations partners, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and international non-government organisations (INGO). Our implementing partners in Myanmar provide support to many local organisations – in some sectors they are the only entities that can deliver programming, particularly in remote and conflict-affected areas. We prioritise programs that give funding to local downstream partners and support funding for local organisations, including women's groups and organisations for people with disability. While in many cases direct funding is not possible to, or desired by, civil society organisations, most of our programs provide subgrants which include capacity development components and/or funding for local organisations. We will continue to track our support to local organisations through our United Nations and INGO partners, including via funding to subgrantees, depending on local sensitivities.

Recommendation 8

The Committee reiterates the recommendations made in the Committee's report into the Efficacy of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade due diligence framework. In particular, recommendation 1 of that report which urges greater flexibility in Australia's delivery of aid, recognising that locally led organisations can often better deliver aid in conflict situations.

Response:

The Government notes this recommendation.

The Government recognises the key role that locally-led organisations can play in delivering humanitarian and development assistance. Strengthening localisation is a key commitment of *Australia's International Development Policy* and this is built into the Australia-Myanmar Development Partnership Plan 2024-2029. While Australia's direct funding partners in Myanmar are mostly multilateral agencies and international non-government organisations, they partner with local organisations to deliver assistance.

The Government considers the existing due diligence framework used by DFAT to be fit-for-purpose. This framework is one element of the Government's risk management approach to the delivery of official development assistance in the high-risk context of Myanmar.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends the Australian Government increase resettlement opportunities and alternative visas for education, research and employment opportunities for Myanmar asylum seekers and refugees and expand the Myanmar Australia Awards program.

Response:

The Australian Government notes the recommendation.

In recognition of the grave humanitarian and security situation in Myanmar, the Australian Government has designated Myanmar nationals in Australia as a priority caseload in our onshore humanitarian visa program.

This focus sits alongside Australia's ongoing offshore humanitarian resettlement efforts, where Myanmar nationals continue to feature prominently. From 2019-20 to 2024-25, Myanmar has consistently been in:

- the top five countries of origin for offshore humanitarian visas granted;
- the top ten countries of origin for vulnerable women and children granted offshore humanitarian visas; and
- the top five countries of origin for the Community Support Program (CSP) and its predecessor, the Community Proposal Pilot (CPP).

From 1 July 2025 to 31 March 2026, 1,364 permanent offshore humanitarian visas were granted to Myanmar citizens, making up almost 10% of offshore humanitarian grants in the 2025-26 program year.

The Australia Awards program in Myanmar is a valued component of our development program, supporting emerging and future leaders to develop skills and knowledge to drive change and contribute to development in Myanmar while maintaining strong links to Australia.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government provide a quarterly statement to Parliament on its response to the ongoing conflict in Myanmar and include:

- progress on the implementation of the Australia-Myanmar Development Partnership Plan 2024-2029;
- progress of initiatives undertaken with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations;
- the monitoring and compliance of Australia's sanctions regime; and
- engagement with the Myanmar diaspora and National Unity Government.

Response:

The Government does not accept this recommendation.

There are a range of existing mechanisms and avenues in place to provide transparency of the Government's response to the ongoing conflict in Myanmar.

Progress of all DFAT initiatives, including our bilateral development program, ASEAN and other regional programs on and related to Myanmar, are aggregated and reported on through the DFAT Annual Report, Annual Performance of Australia Development Cooperation Report and DFAT's Online AusDev Portal. This includes progress of regional initiatives

including the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking Program, the Mekong-Australia Partnership on Transnational Crime and the Southeast Asia and Pacific Cyber Program.

As is the case for all Development Partnership Plans (DPP), DFAT undertakes an internal performance assessment process of DPP implementation each year. A mid-cycle review of the DPP is scheduled for 2026-27. The review process will take into consideration key shifts in the Myanmar development context since 2024 to ensure our development and humanitarian priorities for Myanmar remain relevant. To ensure the safety and security of our implementing partners, we do not share information about our programs, implementing partners or implementation progress.

As Australia's sanctions regulator, the Australian Sanctions Office conducts robust, independent evaluations of potential non-compliance and takes appropriate corrective action where a risk of a contravention is found. It is the longstanding practice of successive Australian governments not to comment on sanctions compliance matters.

Australian officials engage with a diversity of voices and groups as opportunities arise, including National Unity Government representatives. The Government also engages with diaspora at both organisational and individual levels. We refrain from publicising this engagement due to the risks posed to these groups, the diaspora and their families still in Myanmar.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends the Australian Government formalise its engagement with Myanmar diaspora groups to access the extensive first-hand knowledge, experience and networks these groups can bring to sustaining Australia's response to the ongoing conflict in Myanmar.

Response:

The Government accepts this recommendation in principle.

The Australian Government acknowledges the importance of consultation and engagement with a broad range of views and perspectives. Australian officials engage with a diversity of voices and groups as opportunities arise, including members of the Myanmar diaspora. However, public formalised engagement with diaspora carries sensitivities due to the risks posed to them and their families still in Myanmar. Australia stands with the people of Myanmar and we will continue to engage with groups and voices working for democracy.