



ACFID Myanmar Community of Practice

Submission to the Inquiry into the state of democracy and human rights in Myanmar

6 February 2026

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee
Department of the Senate
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Overview

The ACFID Myanmar Community of Practice (CoP) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade regarding the state of democracy and human rights in Myanmar.

The ACFID Myanmar Community of Practice comprises a diverse range of international non-government development and humanitarian organisations operating in Myanmar and its border areas. This includes several members implementing programs with the support of the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

In 2025-26 ACFID members are implementing 16 ANCP projects in Myanmar at a value of \$3,205,722. Beyond ANCP, ACFID Myanmar CoP members are also supporting a wide range of projects with other funding sources, including projects in Myanmar, cross-border assistance from the Thai Myanmar border, and support to the Rohingya in Bangladesh.

Executive Summary

Myanmar is facing the most severe humanitarian, human rights, and democratic crisis in the region. Nearly one-third of the population, approximately 16.2 million people, will require humanitarian assistance in 2026, driven by ongoing conflict, mass displacement, economic collapse, and the impacts of major natural disasters.¹ At the same time, international funding remains critically inadequate, with the UN's 2026 Humanitarian Response Plan only 6.9 per cent funded as of late January 2026.²

¹ Humanitarian Needs and Risks," Myanmar Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026 | Humanitarian Action (December 2, 2025)

² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Myanmar 2026 | Financial Tracking Service* (January 28, 2026)



Against this backdrop, the Myanmar military has conducted phased elections in December 2025 and January 2026 that fall far short of international standards. The process has been widely condemned as illegitimate, coercive, and exclusionary, occurring amid widespread violence, repression, and the dissolution of genuine political parties. ASEAN has declined to endorse the elections, reinforcing international consensus that this election does not represent a pathway to democratic governance.

Human rights and democratic space continue to deteriorate rapidly. Civilians face widespread abuses, including arbitrary detention, attacks on civilian areas, shrinking civic space, and severe restrictions on independent media and civil society. These conditions are incompatible with meaningful political participation and underscore the urgent need for principled international engagement.

Australia has an important leadership role to play. The Australian Government's announcement of up to \$370 million over three years for humanitarian assistance in Myanmar and Rohingya refugee responses in Bangladesh is welcome and timely. However, the scale of need, the withdrawal of other major donors, and increasing operational constraints demand a stronger, more strategic response that combines increased assistance, locally led delivery, flexible risk management, targeted sanctions, and sustained diplomatic leadership.

This submission outlines practical, operationally grounded recommendations to improve civilian protection, humanitarian access, and accountability, while preserving the foundations for a future return to democratic governance. Drawing on the long-standing experience of Australian NGOs and partners working in Myanmar and along its borders, the recommendations prioritise effective aid delivery in highly contested environments and support for civil society, non-government service systems, and refugee communities.

Summary of recommendations

- 1)** Increase the Australian Government's overall official development assistance (ODA) to Myanmar.
- 2)** Within increased ODA, establish a dedicated Civil Society Pooled Fund for Myanmar.
- 3)** Adopt the recommendations made in the Senate FADT Committee of the 47th Parliament report into the Efficacy of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Due Diligence Framework as a matter of priority.
- 4)** Sustain and strengthen active diplomatic leadership and advocacy to address in-country barriers to delivery of assistance, and to support sustained efforts towards a peaceful political solution to the crisis.
- 5)** Publish clear operational principles to guide non-avoidable engagement between development partners and regime bodies, including for non-financial



interactions, to prevent inadvertent legitimisation and ensure partners can operate safely and with confidence.

- 6) Invest in health systems strengthening and surveillance architecture, beyond sustaining essential services, to rebuild non-government health networks and improve epidemiological data.
- 7) Impose additional targeted sanctions and coordinate robust enforcement with partners. In particular:
 - (a) *Union Election Commission (UEC)*
 - (b) *State-owned enterprises in oil, gas, mining, gems, and timber*
 - (c) *Aviation fuel supply chains and associated companies*

Overview of the State of Democracy and Human Rights

The phased elections in December 2025 and January 2026 were the first since the landslide victory in 2020 for the National League for Democracy (NLD). The NLD was ousted in the 2021 coup and, along with many other parties, have since been deregistered. Over 90% of the seats won in the 2020 election belong to parties that have now been dissolved. The subsequent political and economic crises have had multifaceted and far-reaching development and humanitarian impacts in Myanmar.

Human rights and democratic space are continuing to deteriorate. The operating environment is characterised by continued violence against civilians, large-scale displacement, arbitrary detention, shrinking civic space, and severe constraints on independent media and civil society. These conditions are incompatible with meaningful democratic participation.

ACFID and its members welcome the statement made in December 2025 by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) which condemned “widespread human rights abuses and violations by the Myanmar military regime” and expressed serious concerns that the announced elections “will lead to greater instability and prevent a peaceful resolution to the ongoing crisis”. DFAT identified that the “the current situation in Myanmar falls short of what is needed for free, fair and inclusive elections”.³

The military’s “phased election” should be treated as an engineered legitimacy seeking exercise, not a pathway towards civilian led democracy. The process is occurring under coercion and conflict, with widespread exclusion and the absence of basic conditions for free and fair participation. Tom Andrews, UN Human Rights Council-appointed Special Rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar, stated that “By all measures, this is not a free, fair nor legitimate election” and that “It is a theatrical performance that has exerted enormous pressure on the people of Myanmar to participate in what has been

³ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, “Statement on Myanmar” (Press release, December 10, 2025).



designed to dupe the international community”.⁴ The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will not be endorsing the election results, with the Malaysian Foreign Minister stating in late January 2026 that ASEAN leaders decided at an October summit not to send election observers as conditions for a credible election were not met.⁵ As ASEAN Chair in 2025, the Malaysian Foreign Minister met with Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong in September 2025, where both “reaffirmed their support for the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus (5PC) as ASEAN’s main reference in addressing the political crisis in Myanmar”.⁶ They also “underscored that any elections in Myanmar should be preceded by inclusive political dialogue involving all stakeholders, and reiterated that elections must be free, fair, transparent, and inclusive”.⁷

This submission outlines practical steps the Australian Government can take to protect basic human rights, meet urgent humanitarian needs, and expand civic and democratic space. These measures aim to improve civilian outcomes in the immediate term while helping to preserve the foundations for a future, credible return to democratic governance. The recommendations in this submission are informed by the collective experience of agencies with long-standing humanitarian and development operations in Myanmar and along its borders and reflect operationally grounded perspectives on humanitarian conditions and effective, context-specific aid delivery.

Humanitarian situation in Myanmar and refugee populations in neighbouring countries

Nearly a third of the entire population of Myanmar, approximately 16.2 million people, (including 8.4 million women and 5 million children) need humanitarian assistance in 2026. Needs are largely driven by ongoing conflict, displacement, and the impacts of the March 2025 earthquake. Food insecurity, acute malnutrition, inadequate access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene and severe lack of access to basic services such as health and education are widespread, particularly in the Northeast, Northwest, and Southeast parts of the country. Negative coping strategies and mental health concerns are increasing, especially among IDPs and stateless people including children, with high rates reported of child labour, early marriage, as well as increased risk of survival sex for women and girls.⁸

Despite these severe needs, international funding for Myanmar remains substantially below assessed requirements. Due to funding challenges, the Office for the

⁴ “Myanmar Vote a ‘Facade’ to Entrench Military Rule, Independent Rights Expert Says,” *UN News* (online on January 8, 2026).

⁵ The Associated Press, “ASEAN Won’t Endorse Election in Military-Ruled Myanmar, Malaysia Says,” *NPR* (January 20, 2026)

⁶ Wong, Penny, “7th Malaysia-Australia Annual Foreign Ministers’ Meeting Joint Statement” (Press release, September 12, 2025)

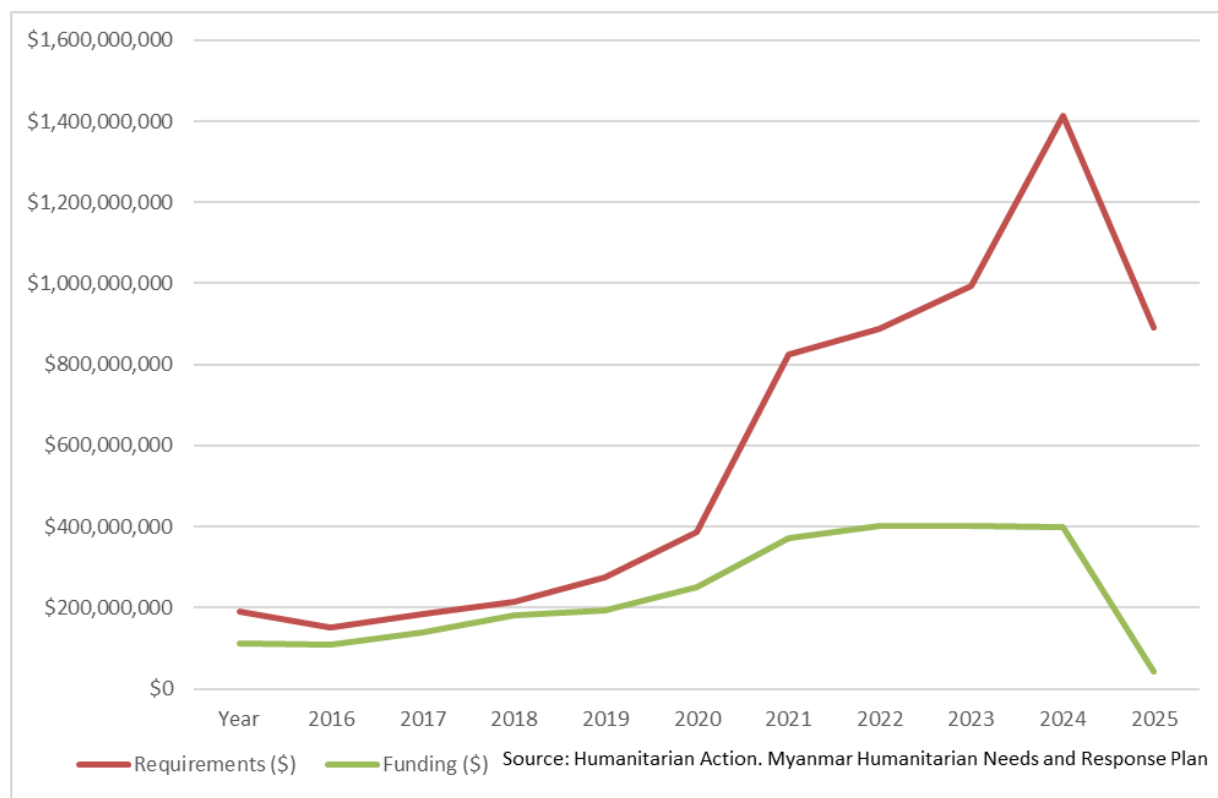
⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Humanitarian Needs and Risks,” Myanmar Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026 | Humanitarian Action (December 2, 2025)



Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has needed to reduce the scope of its 2026 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP), to distinguish between the total population targeted and those considered most critically in need of life-saving and protection assistance.⁹ US\$890 million has been requested for 2026, representing a 36% decrease from the US\$1.4 billion requested in 2025. According to OCHA’s Financial Tracking Service, as of January 28, 2026, the Myanmar HNRP has received only US\$62.9 million (or 6.9% of total funding required).¹⁰ This builds on an already significant accumulated funding gap since the 2021 coup.

Figure 1: OCHA’s Humanitarian Funding Gap in Myanmar¹¹



As of January 2026, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that 3,405,300 people are internally displaced within Myanmar.¹² An additional 198,500 refugees are estimated to be displaced in neighbouring countries.¹³ The Border Consortium recently advised a verified population along the Thai Border of 90,759 people across 9 temporary shelters.¹⁴ Displaced populations in neighbouring

⁹ Myanmar Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026 (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, December 10, 2025)

¹⁰ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Myanmar 2026 | Financial Tracking Service (January 28, 2026)

¹¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Myanmar Humanitarian Access Snapshot - August 2025 (September 18, 2025).

¹² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Myanmar Emergency Overview Map: Number of People Displaced since Feb 2021 and Remain Displaced (January 8, 2026).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ The Border Consortium, Thailand: Refugee Camp Population (September 2025) (September 30, 2025).



countries continue to face major challenges and unmet needs. A recent survey focusing on the humanitarian situation along the Thai Myanmar border found that funding cuts have resulted in food shortages, a lack of medical care, and inadequate educational facilities.¹⁵ Myanmar nationals have limited legal pathways in Thailand despite being refugees under international law. This is due to a lack of recognition by Thailand, effectively blocking Myanmar nationals who leave the border camps from accessing basic health care, education, or work.¹⁶ Due to these restrictions on freedom of movement, Human Rights Watch estimates that 82,000 people have been stuck in the camps for decades. The Thai Government has wavered between pushing migrants back, allowing them to stay in informal temporary spaces near the border, and allowing for work rights for long-term refugees.¹⁷ Taken together, fluctuating Thai Government policy settings and significant funding reductions have compounded uncertainty along the border, entrenching protracted displacement and undermining the stability and wellbeing of refugee communities.

Not captured in the aforementioned UNHCR displacement estimates are the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, who were displaced prior to the coup. In 2026 the UNHCR estimated that 1.26 million refugees make up the largest refugee camp in the world in Cox's Bazar.¹⁸ The 2025 Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya refugee response was only 46% funded as of December 31 2025, continuing a pattern of under resourcing in which donor contributions have averaged around 70 per cent of identified needs since 2017.¹⁹ This funding gap exacerbates already precarious conditions and undermines prospects for durable solutions. As the Hon. Julie Bishop, United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Myanmar has stated at the High-level Conference on the Situation of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar:

*“An inclusive Myanmar is only possible if it guarantees safety, justice, and opportunity for all communities, most critically the Rohingya, and addresses the root causes of conflict, discrimination, and disenfranchisement. As one representative put it, this is not just about survival, it is about recognition”.*²⁰

This perspective reinforces the urgent need for sustained international engagement that addresses immediate humanitarian shortfalls while investing in long-term,

¹⁵ Save the Children, *Survey Report: Education on the Edge: Access to Education for Conflict-Displaced and Migrant Children along the Thailand-Myanmar Border* (January 20, 2026).

¹⁶ Nadia Hardman, *“I’ll Never Feel Secure”* (July 15, 2025).

¹⁷ Sebastian Strangio, *“Thai Government Grants Refugees From Myanmar the Right to Work,”* *The Diplomat* (online, August 27, 2025).

¹⁸ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *“Bangladesh: Where We Work”* (2026).

¹⁹ Inter-Sector Coordination Group, *Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis Joint Response Plan 2025-26: Funding Update as of 31 December 2025* (January 12, 2026).

²⁰ HE Ms Annalena Baerbock et al, *High-Level Conference on the Situation of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar* (2025).



coordinated responses to protracted displacement and instability along Myanmar's borders. For Rohingya communities, who have been systematically dispossessed, subjected to mass violence, and forcibly removed from their land, prolonged containment in refugee camps in Bangladesh is not a viable nor humane solution. An international response that remains fragmented and under-funded, and that relies on prolonged displacement in Bangladesh without parallel efforts to address root causes in Myanmar, risks entrenching permanent displacement rather than enabling safety, justice, and durable futures.

In addition to limiting the scale of the humanitarian response, response planning and delivery continue to be constrained by widespread and unlawful restrictions on humanitarian access. Under international human rights law and humanitarian law, the Myanmar military regime is obligated to facilitate rapid and impartial humanitarian assistance. However, in the case of both the 2025 earthquake and cyclone Mocha in 2023, the junta has restricted the delivery of lifesaving aid, refusing to work with ethnic armed organisations (EAOs) who controlled some of the regions most affected by these natural disasters.²¹

The cumulative effect of ongoing conflict, policy uncertainty in neighbouring countries, and chronic under resourcing has entrenched displacement and heightened vulnerability for civilian populations both within Myanmar and in border and refugee settings. Drawing on the operational experience of agencies working across these contexts, the Myanmar CoP has prepared several practical recommendations for the Australian Government to more effectively deliver assistance in highly contested environments, including through flexible, locally led, and cross-border approaches that prioritise civilian protection, humanitarian access, and accountability.

The ACFID Myanmar COP recommends that the Australian Government:

- 1) Increase the Australian Government's overall official development assistance (ODA) to Myanmar and neighbouring countries and ensure that new and existing funding is delivered in line with best practice, locally led approaches, consistent with the Australia–Myanmar Development Partnership Plan.**

Considering the scale and severity of humanitarian needs outlined above, ACFID welcomes the Australian Government's announcement of a new 3-year program of up to \$370 million to support humanitarian assistance in Myanmar and Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. In a 2025 humanitarian funding announcement, the Foreign Minister, Senator the Hon. Penny Wong, highlighted the gravity of the crisis, stating that

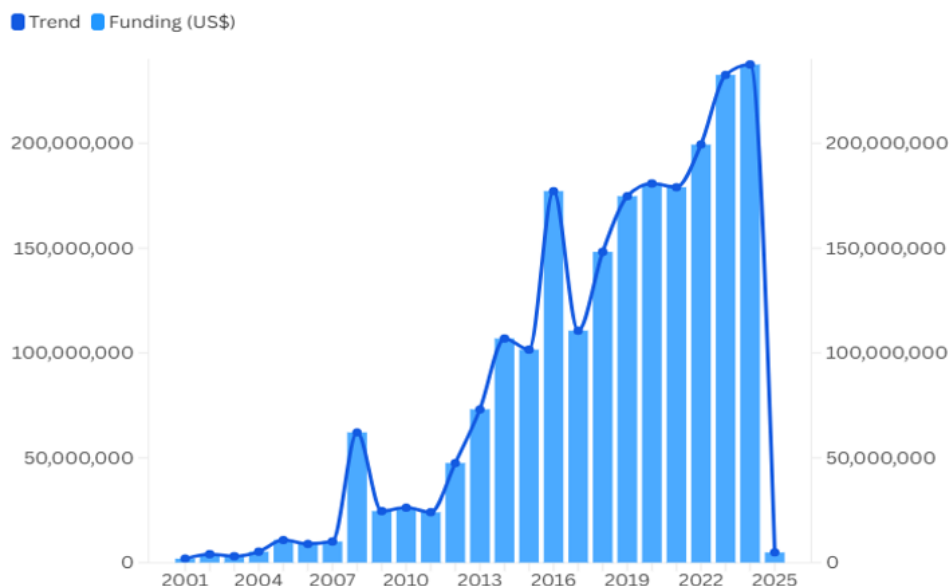
²¹ Kim, Kyungmee, "Rebel Responses to Disasters in Conflict Zones: A Case Study of Cyclone Mocha in Myanmar" (2026) 50(1) *Disasters* e70039.



“humanitarian needs have increased twenty-fold since the Myanmar coup”.²² The \$370 million funding package represents a meaningful contribution to addressing urgent humanitarian needs in Myanmar and Bangladesh and continues Australia’s longstanding humanitarian support to Myanmar.

Further clarity is still required on how the package will align with the first objective set out in the 2024–2029 Australia–Myanmar Development Partnership Plan (DPP). Namely, to “Support efforts to mitigate conflict and its effects, and protect space for longer-term progress on human rights, rule of law, democratic space, and gender equality and social inclusion”.²³ Ensuring that new funding supports locally led approaches and strengthens civic and democratic space will be critical to realising this objective in Myanmar’s highly contested operating environment. The growing funding gap has been exacerbated by the withdrawal of other key ODA donors from Myanmar, including the almost complete withdrawal of USAID in 2025.

Figure 2: US Foreign Assistance to Myanmar²⁴



Source: [U.S. Foreign Assistance](#) • Data for 2024 and 2025 remains only partially reported

Australia cannot fill the growing funding gap alone but as a regional leader, it has both an opportunity and responsibility to take further action in the face of this challenge. As such, we urge the Australian Government to increase its overall ODA to Myanmar in the

²² Penny Wong, “Additional Humanitarian Support for Gaza, Myanmar and Afghan Women and Girls” (Press release, March 28, 2025).

²³ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *AUSTRALIA – MYANMAR DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2024–2029*.

²⁴ Gabriel Lane, “The Long-Term Ramifications of US Aid Cuts in Myanmar: The Social, Political and Humanitarian Consequences of Washington’s Retrenchment,” *Atlas Institute for International Affairs* (May 30, 2025).



upcoming federal budget through new and additional ODA funding, and to increase its advocacy to mobilise additional donor support for Myanmar's forgotten crisis.

The Myanmar CoP identified a set of funding approaches assessed as most effective in Myanmar's highly constrained and conflict-affected operating environment which could be utilised for this funding. These approaches include:

- a. **Support local civil society** to deliver essential services and strengthen community resilience.
- b. **Invest in diplomacy and peacebuilding** to accelerate political solutions and a return to democratic rule.
- c. **Prioritise evidence-based programming** with flexible funding and robust monitoring to guide interventions in a data-scarce environment.
- d. **Strengthen health systems**, leveraging non-government networks and integrating GEDSI principles to ensure inclusive, resilient health services.
- e. **Promote consortium models** like the Australian Humanitarian Partnership to pool resources, amplify advocacy, and coordinate effectively while recognising legal restrictions under the Organization Registration Law.
- f. **Increase community-led, participatory approaches** that empower local actors and embed rights-based, conflict-sensitive programming.

2) Within increased ODA, establish a dedicated Civil Society Pooled Fund for Myanmar

In Myanmar's conflict affected areas, governance and security conditions vary significantly between townships and even between neighbouring communities. Current funding modalities disproportionately favour registered organisations able to work with or through the military authorities, resulting in frontline actors and community-based organisations (CBOs) being under resourced despite their proximity to affected populations. Greater support for these actors would strengthen locally led responses and improve the reach and effectiveness of assistance for the most vulnerable.

One practical mechanism to advance the first objective of DFAT's Development Partnership Plan would be the establishment of a dedicated DFAT civil society pooled fund, providing core operational support. Such a mechanism would strengthen local NGOs and CBOs by sustaining their organisational capacity and enabling implementing partners to work through trusted local actors, consistent with commitments in Australia's International Development Policy to support local leadership, solutions, and accountability through more flexible and innovative program design and delivery.



A targeted increase to support civil society in Myanmar would not only represent an efficient and effective allocation of funding that supports the first objective of DFAT's DPP but would bolster Australia's leadership in response to the crisis, support civic space in response to the fraudulent election, and reinforce Australia's commitment to human rights and democratic principles. The upcoming federal budget is an opportunity for the Australian Government to reinforce its leadership through support for the people of Myanmar in what is the largest humanitarian crisis in our region.

The establishment of a dedicated civil society pooled fund has been a consistent recommendation of the Myanmar CoP in previous submissions over several years, including in its advice to DFAT on the design of the DPP, the \$370 million humanitarian funding package, and the inquiry into the operation of DFAT's due diligence framework in highly contested environments.

3) Adopt the recommendations made in the Senate FADT Committee of the 47th Parliament report into the Efficacy of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Due Diligence Framework as a matter of priority

The Senate inquiry into the efficacy of DFAT's due diligence framework concluded that the current approach is not fit for purpose in highly complex and contested environments like Myanmar. The Committee recommended that DFAT develop and implement an alternative and more flexible due diligence framework for use when recipient communities are in defined contested environments. This recommendation reflects the reality that rigid compliance requirements can unintentionally increase risks for implementing partners and hinder the delivery of life-saving assistance.

Adopting this recommendation is critical to ensuring that Australian aid can be delivered safely and effectively in Myanmar's volatile context. Some of the key recommendations which would allow for a more flexible framework include:

- Recognise the overlap between humanitarian and development activities and allow funding to move between these categories as needs evolve.
- Mitigate risks for implementing partners by avoiding documentation demands that could endanger staff or communities.
- Enable adaptive approaches to accountability and risk management that reflect the security and access challenges on the ground.

Implementing these recommendations will align DFAT's practices with international best standards for operating in conflict-affected settings and demonstrate Australia's commitment to principled, context-sensitive aid delivery.



4) Sustain and strengthen active diplomatic leadership and advocacy to address in-country barriers to delivery of assistance, and to support sustained efforts towards a peaceful political solution to the crisis.

Implementing agencies continue to face a number of significant restrictions and barriers to the delivery of assistance within Myanmar, such as slow progress in the renewal of registration and MoUs, delays in release of funds transferred via the Central Bank of Myanmar, delays in approvals for in-country staff and partners to travel to other regions of the country, and access restrictions as a result of worsening conflict.

We encourage increased diplomacy and advocacy from the international donor community, including Australia, to negotiate access and address these key barriers to delivery of assistance and to reduce civilian harm.

We also encourage the Australian Government to continue to amplify its efforts and commitment to working diplomatically with ASEAN and all relevant stakeholders to create conditions for inclusive political dialogue that brings a lasting, peaceful political solution to the crisis and return to democratic rule.

5) Publish clear operational principles to guide non-avoidable engagement between development partners and regime bodies, including for non-financial interactions, to prevent inadvertent legitimisation and ensure partners can operate safely and with confidence.

Provide clarity on DFAT's principles for development partners to engage with government bodies for critical operational matters such as MoU renewal and travel authorisations, even when these engagements are non-financial. This will help to ensure implementing partners have confidence to operate in the country. The CoP notes this as an area requiring greater clarity from DFAT in a context where there is increasing pressure for agencies to engage with the de-facto military authorities, to confer them legitimacy and recognition, and increased pressure not to criticise the military regime. The need for this guidance is likely to become more pressing following the election, as development partners are concerned that there will be an increased expectation by the regime for financial and in-kind contributions towards humanitarian response and development initiatives implemented by authorities at different levels.

6) Invest in health systems strengthening and surveillance architecture, beyond sustaining essential services, to rebuild non-government health networks and improve epidemiological data.

The public health system has largely collapsed since 2021, with many services either poorly managed or no longer operational. Access and attendance to regime-run health facilities has declined sharply, as large segments of the population avoid these services, international donors limit engagement with regime-affiliated staff except



where unavoidable, and NGO personnel and health workers face ongoing safety concerns.

However, Ethnic Health Organisations (EHOs), private clinics, secondary and community-based health services, set up through the previous Government's investments in decentralising the health system and run by volunteers, are still functioning and providing health care for most communities. We urge the Australian Government to increase its strategic investment in strengthening existing parallel, non-government systems (particularly in health, as well as in other key social services such as education). This could include increasing support to EHOs, private providers, civil society and community-based networks.

Noting the breakdown of traditional health surveillance systems, which has weakened evidence-informed planning and decision making, we also encourage the Australian Government to support innovative, low-bandwidth humanitarian health surveillance systems. This could include directly supporting civil society and community-based health networks and workers to employ low-cost SMS/mobile tools to report service utilisation, epidemiological data and disease outbreaks, and urgent supply needs in near real time.

7) Impose additional targeted sanctions and coordinate robust enforcement with partners

The ACFID Myanmar CoP welcomes the targeted sanctions already imposed by the Australian Government on entities with direct links to the military regime. We encourage the Australian Government to impose additional targeted sanctions to harmonise with international partners, close loopholes, and ensure the regime and affiliated corporations cannot circumvent sanctions through restructuring or other methods. In particular:

a. *Union Election Commission (UEC)*

Following the 2020 election, key officials in Myanmar's Union Election Commission (UEC) were arrested and replaced with individuals aligned with the military. These new appointees subsequently moved to unlawfully annul the election results. In response, the United States, United Kingdom, European Union, Switzerland, and Canada have imposed sanctions on the UEC, with many also targeting regime-appointed UEC chair Thein Soe. To acknowledge the fraudulent nature of the annulment, the Australian Government should introduce similar sanctions against both the UEC and Thein Soe.

b. *State-owned enterprises in oil, gas, mining, gems, and timber, including:*

- Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE)
- Myanma Timber Enterprise (MTE)
- Myanma Gems Enterprise (MGE)



c. Aviation fuel supply chains and associated companies

Despite jet fuel sanctions imposed by the Australian Government and many other countries, investigations by Amnesty International indicate that the military regime has been able to employ complex sanction evasion tactics. Myanmar's fuel imports in 2025 exceeded those of any year since the coup and 2025 simultaneously became the deadliest year on record for aerial attacks carried out by the Myanmar military.²⁵

In line with calls from the UN Human Rights Council, we urge the Australian Government to take further action in support of a comprehensive ban on jet fuel exports to Myanmar to impede military's airstrikes.²⁶ This should include communicating clear due diligence expectations to Australian companies and financiers to not enable supply, storage, transport, insurance, or payment for jet fuel linked to the junta, and imposing penalties for non-compliance.

Conclusion

In the face of the widely criticised military-run elections and a deteriorating human rights situation in Myanmar, the Australian Government has a critical role to play in supporting the ongoing crisis response, supporting civic space, and driving international pressure for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and return to democracy. By combining increased humanitarian and development assistance with principled diplomacy and targeted advocacy, the Australian Government can help protect vulnerable communities, sustain essential services, and support pathways toward inclusive governance. These actions will not only address urgent needs but also reinforce the Australian Government's commitment to human rights and democratic principles in the Indo-Pacific region.

The ACFID Myanmar Community of Practice expresses our appreciation for this inquiry and welcomes any opportunities to provide further input or clarification of the points included in this submission. Our members stand ready to continue engagement and collaboration with DFAT to support the effective delivery of assistance in Myanmar.

We would be pleased to provide further information as required by the committee. Please contact Sam Crosby at scrosby@acfid.asn.au

Sincerely

²⁵ Amnesty International, "Myanmar: Jet Fuel Used in Deadly Air Strikes Flowing in on 'Ghost Ships' with Suspected Links to Iran," *Amnesty International* (January 27, 2026).

²⁶ Amnesty International, "UN Human Rights Council: Resolution on Myanmar Takes Crucial Stand against Deadly Jet Fuel Supply Chain," *Amnesty International* (April 9, 2024).



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