



Chris Heaton-Harris
Member of Parliament for Daventry
House of Commons, London SW1A
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Tel: 020 7219 7048

March 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the recent military coup in Myanmar.

The November 2020 elections, albeit far from perfect, were nevertheless a significant milestone on Myanmar's path from military dictatorship to democracy. The UK expressed its willingness to work with the newly elected government that was due to begin its second term on the 1st February.

The news that the military has instead seized power in Myanmar and detained members of the Government, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, is very troubling. I join the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in condemnation of recent developments and in calling for the military to respect the rule of law and human rights, and release those unlawfully detained.

The Minister for Asia twice summoned the Myanmar Ambassador to the FCDO in February to condemn the coup and the arbitrary detention of civilians, and to call for the peaceful return to democracy. The UK has led a strong, coordinated international response to the coup, and has reaffirmed this message repeatedly, including in joint statements of the Foreign Ministers of the G7, of which the UK is President, on 3rd and 23rd February at an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council, convened by the UK, and at a Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council on 12th February, co-led by the UK.

It is essential we see the peaceful reconvening of the National Assembly, respecting the results of the November 2020 general election and the expressed wishes of the people of Myanmar. I am assured that the UK is doing all it can to facilitate this outcome.

The British Embassy in Yangon has been regularly updating their advice since the onset of the military coup. British nationals in Myanmar are advised to exercise caution, stay at home if possible and continue to check the travel advice. The military have suspended international flights until 31 May 2021 and closed all land borders. This means options are limited for those wishing to return to the UK at this time. I understand some flights out of the country are still operating, however. Any British national wanting to return to the UK or in need of any urgent consular assistance, should contact the British Embassy, whose phone lines are open 24 hours a day.

All information and contact details can be found on the Gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/myanmar>

Following an urgent review of the UK's development activities in Myanmar after the recent coup, new safeguards are now in place to prevent UK aid from indirectly supporting the military regime. Support for government led reforms has been axed and planned programmes will close. The UK is working on further measures to ensure that aid can still, and only, reach the most vulnerable people in Myanmar.

I welcome the imposition of sanctions, announced in February, against 9 senior members of the military regime in Myanmar in response to gross violations of human rights, including the right to life, freedom of

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assembly, freedom of expression and the right not to be subject to arbitrary arrest or detention. These new sanctions, effective immediately, are in addition to the sanctions against 16 individuals from Myanmar already listed, bringing the total number of designations in Myanmar to 25. They will stop those individuals from travelling to the UK and will prevent businesses and institutions from dealing with their funds or economic resources in this country.

In conjunction with sanctions, the UK will be temporarily suspending all promotion of trade with Myanmar, while we work with British businesses and civil society to reshape our approach to trade. The Department for International Trade (DIT) is leading on work to ensure that UK companies in Myanmar are not trading with military-owned businesses, while protecting the important role that trade plays in poverty reduction and economic development.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY