

Senator the Hon. Penny Wong  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
[Foreign.Minister@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Foreign.Minister@dfat.gov.au)

22 December 2025

Dear Minister Wong,

**Enact additional sanctions ahead of the sham elections in Myanmar**

We write to you as representatives of civil society organisations, trade unions, faith organisations, international development organisations and the diaspora community in Australia, deeply concerned by the Myanmar military junta's planned sham elections on 28 December 2025. These elections, orchestrated under the guise of democratic restoration, are a transparent attempt by the junta to entrench its illegitimate rule and evade international accountability.

The planned 'election' cannot be considered free or fair given the following circumstances:

- At least 40 genuine opposition parties including the National League for Democracy have been banned under the *Political Parties Registration Law*.
- Voting is compulsory in military-controlled polling booths, implemented under the military appointed Union Election Commission, which has been sanctioned by the European Union. In this context people will be forced to vote under threat of violence
- New repressive laws criminalise dissent: the Election Protection Law introduced in July allows anyone criticising the elections to be prosecuted, with a minimum sentence of three years in prison to a maximum sentence of the death penalty. This law has already been used to imprison people on the basis of hanging posters, posting on social media, and 'liking' a post criticising the election plans.
- Electronic voting machines which will be used do not allow people to leave their ballot blank, meaning they must pick a candidate, and there are concerns that surveillance technology could be used to monitor how people are voting.

The junta controls less than a third of Myanmar's territory yet seeks to manufacture legitimacy to govern the whole country even as they continue airstrikes on areas outside their control. Since the February 2021 coup, Myanmar has been plunged into civil war, with the junta intensifying violence against civilians, trade unionists, and democratic leaders. Over 21.9 million people now require humanitarian assistance, and 3.5 million are internally displaced. The regime has ramped up airstrikes, arbitrary arrests, and the destruction of communities in the lead-up to the elections.

In June 2025, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) passed a historic resolution under Article 33 of its constitution, calling on member states to review all relations with Myanmar's military junta and take measures to ensure no engagement enables, facilitates, or prolongs violations of workers' rights. In particular, any relations that may contribute or enable the perpetuation of ongoing harm, including through the support or supply of military equipment or means, including jet fuel, or the free flow of funds to the military authorities.

We thank the Australian Government for your support of restoring democracy in Myanmar, including the provision of humanitarian aid, support for action at the UN and ILO, and the introduction of some targeted sanctions. But further action is urgently needed in order to implement the ILO resolution and isolate the military junta ahead of the sham elections.

Sanctions must be expanded and harmonised with international partners to close gaps and target high-value assets, including:

- State-owned enterprises in oil, gas, mining, gems, and timber (e.g., Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, Myanma Timber Enterprise)
- The banking sector (Myanma Economic Bank, Central Bank of Myanmar)
- Aviation fuel supply chains and associated companies
- Key regime figures and unsanctioned associates

A comprehensive ban on jet fuel exports to Myanmar is essential to halt airstrikes on civilians. Australia should back the UN Human Rights Council's call for a global prohibition and communicate clear due-diligence expectations to Australian companies and financiers.

Australia's leadership matters. By acting now, Australia can demonstrate principled support for democracy and human rights and continue to call for a genuine democracy in Myanmar which doesn't legitimate the military junta's rule. Coordinated sanctions and diplomatic pressure will help isolate the junta, support Myanmar's people, and strengthen Australia's standing as a regional human rights leader.

We respectfully request that you:

1. Enact a package of targeted sanctions on Myanmar's military, state-owned enterprises, business associates, and the jet fuel supply chains.
2. Strongly denounce the sham elections
3. Expand humanitarian support and ensure that funding is delivered to and by civil society organisations which can maintain and strengthen civic and democratic space in Myanmar
4. Coordinate with international partners to maximise pressure on the regime, including encouraging non-recognition of the sham elections.

The people of Myanmar cannot fight alone. We urge you to stand with them in their struggle for freedom, dignity, and genuine democracy.

Sincerely,

Myanmar Campaign Network  
Australian Council of Trade Unions  
Australia Myanmar Institute  
Australian Karen Organisation  
Australian Services Union  
Baptist World Aid  
Finance Sector Union  
Hunter Workers

Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch  
Mining & Energy Union  
Myanmar Refugee Policy Group  
Pax Christi Victoria  
Public Service Association NSW  
Solidarity Australia  
Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA  
Unions NSW  
Unions NT  
United Workers Union  
Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania  
Victorian Trades Hall Council



Uniting Church in Australia  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



**Finance  
Sector Union**  
OF AUSTRALIA



**Mining &  
Energy  
Union**



HUNTER WORKERS  
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