

House Foreign Affairs Committee  
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

Hearing  
On  
Burma: Human Rights in the Aftermath of the Coup

September 13, 2023 – 2:30 p.m.  
H-313, U.S. Capitol

Statement of Dr. Aye Chan Mon  
Burmese medical doctor who was in Naypyidaw at the time of the coup  
and was evacuated with the help of the U.S.

I consider myself fortunate to have been evacuated and provided with the opportunity to live in a safe place, thanks to the US government. But it is essential to acknowledge that there are millions of people whose lives and well-being remain in grave danger inside Myanmar.

Before the Military attempted the coup, my life was happy and promising.

I had finally achieved my life-long dream of becoming a doctor and a government employee. I was excited and proud to be able to help the people in my community.

However, in the early morning of Feb 1, 2021, national TV channels announced that the military had taken control of the country by overthrowing the democratically elected leaders and activists.

For the people of Myanmar, the military coup cannot succeed, our past experience has taught us that it would mean no hope for the future. When millions of people rose up to show their resounding rejection of the coup and peaceful protests erupted in the country, I joined and became a part of the Civil Disobedience Movement or CDM.

The Military Generals started their brutal crackdowns instead of listening to the people's will.

I witnessed the military use a real bullet against the protesters for the first time in Nay Pyi Taw, the capital of Myanmar, when they shot a 20-year-old girl named Mya Thwet Thwet Khaing in the head. She was the very first victim of the Military Junta's terrifying crackdown in 2021.

As a doctor, it was hard to watch the military hurt, torture and kill innocent people.

The coup destroyed all the progress in the healthcare system that we had been making. The Myanmar military withheld Covid vaccines and oxygen tanks from the people to stop the revolution. Consequently, thousands of patients were not treated in the government hospitals.

To fight in our own way, medical professionals organized teleconsultations for the patients and provided emotional support to their families. We faced many challenges because the military made it difficult to access the necessary medical supplies and facilities and sometimes, we had no choice but to watch our patients die in front of our eyes.

The future of the education system is the same. CDM students continue to refuse to go to schools under the military's education which pushes the lies and propaganda of the military regime and restrictions on information make it almost impossible to learn the truth. Despite all this oppression, we established self-education with ethnic resistance organizations, international communities and with the help of Myanmar people abroad.

We are experiencing an unprecedented level of cooperation among all the diverse ethnic communities in countering the Military Junta. Meanwhile, if the people involved in providing services get caught by the Myanmar military, they are arrested and labeled as terrorists.

Their human rights violations have not stopped there. There are airstrikes and bombings on the civilian villages in ethnic controlled areas and Burmese majority regions. This is the same military who has been committing crimes on its own people for several decades.

The effects on me were direct. My colleague who was a CDM nurse was burnt alive only because she was providing medical services to the internally displaced persons when the military forces raided her village.

There are many cases like what my friend went through; innocent people have been arrested, women have been raped, and children have been killed.

I want to see these military criminals taken to court and be held accountable for the crimes against humanity and war crimes. Justice must prevail in my country.

As long as the military stays in power, atrocities and human rights violations will continue to take place. People are now lacking protection and security. All kinds of humanitarian aid such as shelters, food, water as well as education and mobile medical facilities are needed urgently for survival. But it is most important to end the military dictatorship at all costs.

I speak not only for me but also from the hearts of our people inside the country.

We really appreciate the U.S. Government for passing the BURMA ACT. Now, urgent implementation of the BURMA Act is crucial at this moment to relieve suffering of our people. We also welcome more sanctions on Myanmar Military officials and state-owned banks. I would like to urge the US government to consider imposing sanctions on the Myanmar Oil and Gas

Enterprise. By doing so, this will save many lives and will offer hope for the future of the young generation.

Thank you very much.