

## **AN URGENT CALL FOR EFFECTIVE TARGETED SANCTION ON MYANMAR MILITARY**

003/2021  
March 30, 2021

Burma (Myanmar) descended from the golden age to the dark ages following the military coup d'état on March 02, 1962 by General Ne Win. His totalitarian rule and mishandling of economy led to 8888 Uprising. Through the military coup culture, the self-promoted generals continued the cycle of dictatorship to this day. On February 1, 2021, the nascent democracy was uprooted by another coup d'état by General Min Aung Hlaing. The junta brutally cracked down on peaceful protestors with live ammunition killing 500+ civilians and terrorized Myanmar citizens with warrantless nightly raids and ruthless torture of those detained.

The relentless nature of the military junta's grip of their sovereignty stems from their voracious greed of power and money. The palpable secret of the junta's viability is their ability to access substantial revenue without the civilian oversight since 1962. In 2008, the military crafted a constitution that guaranteed them autocratic control for their operations and spending. Well before 2008, the active and retired military leaders established two conglomerates: Myanma Economic Holdings Public Company Ltd. (MEHL) and Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC) own or control a vast business empire that encompasses all profitable segments of the Myanmar economy. The business ownership and the exact relation with their family members and their affiliates are secretive and convoluted. The total amount of dividends paid over 20 years amounted to billions of USD as reported by Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

The obvious but tedious solution is to cut off the financial lifeline of the military enterprises meticulously. While the calls for refusal to pay taxes directed by the Civil Disobedience Movement and Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) are straining on the junta, the actions taken by international community are also imperative in toppling the military dictatorship.

Since the coup, under Executive Order 14014, the government of the United States has imposed 14 top generals of State Administration Council, 3 jade and ruby companies, 2 adult children of Min Aung Hlaing and 6 of their affiliated businesses, 2 Light Infantry Divisions, 2 businesses entities- MEHL and MEC on Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (SDN) list. The Congress passed H Res 1112 (Protect Democracy in Burma Act of 2021), S Res 35, H Res 134, and S Res 105 to condemn military coup and urged the junta to release the political detainees.

The European Union has imposed sanctions on 10 generals and chairman of the new union election commission. Canada implemented a freeze on assets of any Myanmar nationals connected with the Myanmar State, called for an arms embargo, and imposed sanction on 9 top generals. The UK imposed sanctions on ministers of Home Affairs and Defense, and 5 generals, and MEHL. Australia suspended the military cooperation with Myanmar and redirected aid commitment to NGOs.

All the stepwise sanctions imposed by the US and international community, welcomed by the people of Myanmar, however, are not impactful enough to immediately cripple the capability of the military's ongoing atrocities and human rights violations. Therefore, we wholeheartedly urge the government of United States to impose the following timely and comprehensive actions:

1. **To immediately freeze the financial and banking transactions of all military controlled and once-State-owned now military controlled banks.**
2. **To include subsidiary business enterprises of MEHL and MEC in the most profitable sectors like military owned banks, distribution, vice businesses, gem/ jewelry that have brought in 90% of revenue for MEHL and MEC in the SDN list without any further delay.**
3. **To immediately sanction once-State-owned now military controlled Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE); and**
4. **To include all senior military echelon from commander-in-chief to Infantry division commanders (to disrupt the future heirs to stratocracy), all retired senior military commanders and previous military regimes (SLORC and SPDC), and all family members of the military leaders and their business allies-the cronies (to unroot all the supportive structures of military empire) in the SDN list.**

The swift executive action of President Biden Administration and the powerful bipartisan legislative support by the US Congress as well as a strong coalition of coordinated international sanctions from US, EU, UK, Canada, Australia, South Korea, Japan, and ASEAN members would bring the Myanmar junta down to its knees. We also welcome the friends from the international community to stand with the people of Myanmar in the pursuit of freedom, equal rights, democracy, and eventual prosperity. **We must act now!**

Board of Directors  
Free Myanmar Inc.