

United States House of Representatives  
Committee on Financial Services  
2129 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

August 4, 2021

The Honorable Janet Yellen  
U.S. Department of Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Yellen:

I write to urge you to use the Treasury Department's significant sanctions and related authorities to further pressure the Burmese military to stop its assault on democracy in the country.

Since February, millions of people in Burma have participated in a nationwide civil disobedience movement, often risking their lives and livelihoods to prevent a return to military rule. If the military junta succeeds in solidifying its hold on power, the people of Burma will almost certainly face years of human rights atrocities, humanitarian crises, civil conflict, and repression. This, in turn, could lead to regional instability that adversely affects U.S. national security and economic interests.

I commend the Administration's swift response to the coup and its targeted use of sanctions aimed at interrupting foreign revenue flows that are critical to the military's ability to maintain operations,<sup>1</sup> including the purchase of arms, equipment, and fuel. I urge the Department of Treasury to move expeditiously and use its authorities to limit the junta's access to revenue flowing from Burma's oil and gas industry—the government of Burma's largest source of foreign exchange<sup>2</sup>—by placing sanctions on the state-owned Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE), which is now under military control.

Similarly, the Department of Treasury should limit the junta's ability to access the global financial system and fund its malign activities. I urge the Department to make clear that it is prepared to use its authorities under E.O. 14014 to designate any financial institution that provides material support to the State Administrative Council or any other entity designated under the executive order. The Department should also determine whether any financial institution knowingly facilitating payments to accounts controlled by the junta should be identified as a primary money laundering concern under Section 311 of the USA PATRIOT Act.

We should work with our allies and partners to identify ways in which the junta, its leaders, and their family members may be trying to move funds illicitly through the international financial system.

Any assets frozen as a result of U.S. sanctions actions should be held in blocked accounts for use by a future, legitimate government. In addition, the Department of the Treasury should ensure, through the use of general and specific licenses, that humanitarian assistance is not interrupted.

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<sup>1</sup> [Treasury Sanctions Key Timber and Pearl Enterprises in Burma](#), Office of Foreign Assets Control, April 21, 2021; [Treasury Sanctions Key Gems Enterprise in Burma](#), April 8, 2021; [Treasury Sanctions Military Holding Companies in Burma](#), March 25, 2021

<sup>2</sup> [Myanmar Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative 2017-2018, BDO](#), March 2020

I also urge the Department, in collaboration with the interagency, to allocate additional resources to the Burma sanctions regime, and prioritize scaling up its capacity to monitor and investigate the junta's cross-border financial flows in real time.

This effort is time sensitive. Revenue that the junta obtains now can be used to prolong the crisis and intensify the military's brutal repression of the Burmese people. A slow and plodding ratcheting up of sanctions at this point is unlikely to achieve the desired results in this case.

The people of Burma have overwhelmingly rejected military rule and expressed their desire for a continuing democratic transition, including through elections in November 2020 and now through a civil disobedience movement. They have asked for the international community's help in stopping the military and have explicitly asked for additional sanctions to be placed on institutions controlled by the junta, including MOGE, with gas revenue payments directed into protected accounts.<sup>3</sup>

This is an opportunity for the United States to show its support for the democratic aspirations of people throughout the world, and that we stand with the people of Burma and support their courageous vision for a democratic future for their country.

Sincerely,



Maxine Waters  
Chairwoman

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<sup>3</sup> [CSO Statement: While People of Myanmar Demand Sanctions on Junta Run Gas Enterprise, Chevron and Total Bankroll Abuses](#), August 2, 2021; [CSO Open Letter to Total and Chevron](#), April 20, 2021; Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, [Call Concerning Revenue Payments by Oil and Gas Companies in Myanmar](#), 24 February 2021; [Statement from the Myanmar civilian-led democratic National Unity Government, Minister of Planning, Finance, and Investment](#), calling for the withholding of payments from offshore oil/gas production that flow to MOGE and provide direct, material support for the Myanmar military through its present control of the state apparatus (Announcement No. 4/2021) May 30, 2021