Penny Wong
Senator for South Australia
Minister of Foreign Affairs

27 November 2025

Dear Penny Wong

Myanmar – condemn sham elections and strengthen safeguards against the junta

Australian Quakers have long been concerned about human rights in Myanmar, last writing to you about this issue in September last year. Australian Quakers are involved in practical peacebuilding initiatives inside Myanmar and also advocating for stronger international action to support human rights and a return of Myanmar to a democracy.

We appreciate your statements of concern about the ongoing horrific suffering in Myanmar and Australia's commitment to humanitarian assistance. However, it is nearly five years since the junta overthrew the democratically elected government and began its reign of terror, and clearly more must be done to intervene in these horrific violations of international law. In fact, we note that China's engagement in the past year has shifted the balance of power towards the junta, and the increasing violence of the junta is of deep concern to Quakers.

We note many reputable organisations are expressing deep concern about the junta's planned elections beginning 28 December, widely referred to as "sham elections" (Special Advisory Council on Myanmar, International Crisis Group). We call on Australia to publicly repudiate these planned measures as not meeting the basic standards for free and fair elections. We respect that you have expressed some caution about the elections (ref), but given that the junta are undertaking these elections as a strategy to establish legitimacy, we call on Australia to take a stronger stand that says unequivocally that elections that don't meet basic standards will give no legitimacy to an illegitimate junta.

We also join the calls for Australia to broaden sanctions against the junta, including State-owned enterprises, including the banking sector, and take a leadership role in establishing and implementing a ban on jet fuel exports to Myanmar.

It is clear that the ASEAN Five Point Consensus(FPC) is not able to offer any meaningful intervention into this crisis. As a major player in our region, Australia could play a leadership role in working with other countries in our region to develop a comprehensive program to remove the junta and ensure a peaceful democratic future for Myanmar.

In peace and justice,

Duncan Frewin
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