

## A Cry for Mercy for Myanmar And a Call for Senators to Act

On February 1 a brutal military coup ended nearly a decade of a democratic experiment in Myanmar (Burma). The military seized control and declared a year-long state of emergency, arresting the country's elected leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and members of her party.

Hundreds of thousands of Burmese have taken to the street in a nationwide uprising. This has been met by horrifying violence from the military junta. To date, over 9,900 have been unjustly arrested or detained, over 240,000 have been displaced and more than 1,200 have been killed, including the assassination of a Baptist pastor on September 18. Pastor Cung Biak Hum was attempting to help a member of his church extinguish a fire after the man's home when he was killed. The fire was set by the military.

Tom Andrews, United Nations special rapporteur, tweeted: "The murder of a Baptist minister and bombing of homes in Thantlang, Chin State, are the latest examples of the living hell being delivered by junta forces against the people of Myanmar. The world needs to pay closer attention. More importantly, the world needs to act." We the undersigned, faith leaders and human rights activists, call upon the U.S. Senate generally, and senators Todd Young and Ben Cardin specifically, to move forward The BURMA Act of 2021 (S. 2937 and H.R. 5497). We express gratitude for the bipartisan work in previous incarnations of this bill. Now that the House Foreign Affairs Committee has passed the bill, we have every reason to think it will pass in a House vote soon. It is time for the Senate to act by also bringing the bill to a vote in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The BURMA Act of 2021, builds on legislation that Senator Young co-led with Senator Cardin in 2019. The BURMA Act of 2021 provides hope for the people of Burma. It authorizes humanitarian aid and it creates a high-level position to coordinate the U.S. policy response with other countries in the area.

The bill also mandates that 60 days of passage, the State Department must report back to Congress about the feasibility of cutting off oil and gas revenues by sanctioning Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprises. This is a provision that Chevron's lobbyists have opposed.

There are 1.7 million Baptists in Burma. Last year the Myanmar Baptist Convention was the second fastest growing Baptist convention in the world. In March, a convoy of 15 military vehicles with 60 soldiers arrived at the Kachin Theological College and Seminary at 10:45pm. They went door by door into every dormitory looking for a

New Testament professor who had denounced the military.

Just days ago, on Oct. 29, the Chin Human Rights Organization released a statement that in part reads: “This afternoon, the Tatmadaw began launching incendiary rockets into Thantlang town.

Lt. Col. Thaung Hlaing, as the Chief Military Commander has ordered this wanton destruction of the town. After multiple explosions, as of this evening, over 100 houses are on fire which, continues to spread. ... The first rockets to be fired into the town landed at the entrances to the Thantlang Baptist Church. There are also reports that soldiers have come out on the streets and deliberately torched houses in different locations in town.”

Christians are hardly the sole persecuted faith in Burma. Rohingya Muslims have experienced genocide and expulsion from their homes. Ethnic and religious minorities have long been without traditional liberties but the situation today is dire.

The recent build-up of troops in Burma’s north is very worrying.

The Chin State and the Sagaing region are both seeing an unprecedented influx of soldiers loyal to the coup leaders. The Burmese military coordinated a similar buildup in Rakhine State before committing the genocide against the Rohingya in 2017.

Historically similar tactics have been used to commit atrocities against the Kachin, Shan, and Karen peoples.

There are reports that the military has been given 3 months to “wipe out” the resistance. Troop movements are presently hindering any humanitarian assistance reaching the Chin State. An August USAID statement reads: “Coups-related instability has also resulted in access challenges, restricted banking operations, and limited cash availability, making the provision of humanitarian assistance more difficult for relief actors.”

We call upon all U.S. senators to throw their full support behind any measure that will undermine the repressive and murderous military regime in Burma— one already guilty of genocide. At present, it appears that the most effective means of action is the BURMA Act of 2021.

Please join us and sign on with the link below AND contact your senators now. <https://forms.gle/xfmQUUsZmp5JEW579>

Rev. Dr. Scott Stearman, U.N. Representative, Baptist World Alliance  
Co-Signed:

Peter Thawngmung, Board President, Chin Community of Indiana

Van L. Kio, Community Activist, Grassroots Movement for Burma

Rev. Dr. Stephen Kio, Coordinator for the USCC & Senior Pastor of Indiana Chin Baptist Church.

Rev. Sa Tin Lal, Chin Baptist Association, North America.



# Kachin American Baptist Association

American Jinghpaw Wunpawng Hkalup Ninghtan Hpung

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April 14, 2021

Joe Biden

46th U.S. President

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW,  
Washington, D.C., DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I am Rev. Dr. Yawba Lasaw, a citizen of the USA, the current president of the Kachin American Baptist Association, humbly and emphatically request your prompt attention to imperatively take action on the Burma situation where the military general Min Aung Hlaing regime illegally usurped the power of the country on 1<sup>st</sup> February, the day: the Democratically elected NLD party plan to hold the very First Session of the Parliament.

Burmese people being excruciatingly suffered for over 60-70 years can no longer bear under the ruthless rule of animal-liked generals. The people right away took to the street and vehemently protested the military generals from day one to over two months continually until now as I am writing.

On February 12-2021, being Union Day (signifying Panglone Accord led by General Aung San), the military regime purposely released about 23000 prisoners and gave them drugs to counterattack the protesters on the streets. How dare they do this to their people. This is brutally killing the innocent demonstrators now came up to over 700 civilian lives.

The remnant NLD elected leaders who were not arrested were formed **Committee Representing Pyihtaungsu Hluttaw** (CRPH). The CRPH is now actively involved with the help of former Ambassador to the UN, U Kyaw Moe Htun, and with the use of UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, called for UN security Meeting on Burma. CRPH can present its important document to the UN Security Council. But, it was not very effective as it should be. Even though most of the members pass the opinion, Russian and China always hinder making a decisive resolution in the meeting.

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*Associated Ministry  
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Dr. Sa Sa representing CRPH, also tried his best to meet leaders of VOA, BBC, UN, ASEAN to voice the illegal military coup in Burma- Myanmar of their brutal and inhuman violation on innocent people of their own. His effort of advocacies in Burma has been made known all over the world through Facebook and YouTube. People of all walks of life come to know him for his simple lifestyle and the affected style of presentation he made.

The USA is **One Nation Under God** – by Rus Walton stated: “Constitution Was designed to perpetuate the Christian Order”- In Burma: Kachin, Chin, and Karen are Christian, they had been suffered for so long, confronted by a brutal regime’s very unethical animal-like behavior tortured, raped, forced labored killing domestic animals, burning houses and churches. Our Nation has been honored and esteemed on account of the Greatness of our Land, the Greatness of America’s People, the Greatness of America’s System, the Greatness of America’s Generosity, and the Greatness of America’s Freedom.

**God’s Politics** writer “Jim Wallis argues that America’s separation of church and state does not require banishing moral and religious value from the public square the very survival of America’s social fabric depends on such values and vision to shape our politics... a dependence on the nation’s founders recognized.”

**Christian America and the Kingdom of God** writer Richard T. Hughes reviews the myth of Christian America from its earliest story in the founding of the Republic to the present day. Extensively analyzing the Old and New Testament, Hughes provides a solid spiritual-based explanation of the Kingdom of God—a Kingdom defined by love, peace, patience, and generosity.

Now Burma military started targeting shooting their own Bama peoples on brought daylight on the peaceful protesters, suffered like ethnic minorities. The Bama people hate and express disgust at the military regime, but they cannot do anything living under the power of gunpoint. Now they also suffered like any other ethnic friends and learned the empathy on Ethnic brothers and sisters. They protest every day in a non-violent-manner, yet the police and soldiers violently and brutally shoot them and arrest them, for no reason, even using the Sniper and killing the leaders and active generation Z graduates young people.

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Most of all, the Chinese are vividly variously assisting the regime, Bama people hate to deal with the Chinese, because of their faded goods like imitation egg, plastic rice, children's milk powders naming a few. Burmese people boycott using those very inhumane goods exported to Burma. This is an unbearable and not acceptable trade deal Burmese people are disgusted at such goods.

May I, therefore, humbly and emphatically implore your prompt attention to imperative and immediate action be taken on Burma in consultation with the consultive branches.

With best regards, and sincerity:

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President of Kachin American Baptist Association (KABA)  
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## **The BURMA Act of 2021**

Peace and Justice Committee of the Chin Baptist Churches USA in partnership with Kachin Alliance of USA welcome the “Burma Unified through Rigorous Military Accountability Act of 2021”, or the “BURMA Act of 2021” introduced by the House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Gregory W. Meeks (D-NY), House Foreign Affairs Asia-Pacific Subcommittee Ranking Member Steve Chabot (R-OH) and Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD) on October 5, 2021.

We support the BURMA Act of 2021 with an understanding and hope that it would pave the way to establish an inclusive political dialogue in Burma, which would be a step toward establishing a federal democratic union. A copy of the BURMA Act of 2021 can be found [here](#).

Peace and Justice Committee and Kachin Alliance suggest that the Bill can be strengthened by considering the following amendments drafted in accordance with the current situation and political aspiration and will of the people of Burma.

We encourage you and your Church/ Organization to add your voice to the Burma Act of 2021 by affirming the amendments proposed by the Peace and Justice Committee and Kachin Alliance. Peace and Justice Committee and Kachin Alliance will urge the US Senators to consider the proposed amendments to be included in the BURMA Act of 2021 before it passes in the U.S Congress.

### **The Amendments of The BURMA Act of 2021**

#### **Drafted and Proposed by**

**Peace and Justice Committee of the Chin Baptist Churches USA and  
Kachin Alliance of USA**

#### **1. Establish A Federal Democratic Union of Burma**

It is important to mention of the phrase “federal democratic union,” in the Act and not just democracy. The political crisis in the union of Burma is not only about promoting democracy or human rights. For over a half a century, the Burmese military regimes have been persecuting the ethnic nationalities and the religious minorities. Resolving the political crisis in Burma is about respecting minority rights and autonomy. That is what the ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) have been fighting for all these years. A “federal democratic union” would help ensure those rights are safeguarded. NUG’s duties include “establishing a federal democratic union” (see building a federal democratic union” under the Duties of NUG, <https://gov.nugmyanmar.org/about-nug/>). It is important that the bill restores civilian governance and ensures strong oversight over the military, but it should also mention the importance of establishing a federal democratic union that safeguards full autonomy for the internal administration of states or regions.

For instance, the term “federal” can be mentioned in, not limited to, the following sections:

H. R. 5497 – ...promote “federal” democracy  
A Bill - ...promote “federal” democracy  
Title I. SEC. 101. (1) to support genuine “federal” democracy  
Title I. SEC. 101. (3). (C). assisting in the establishment of a fully “federal” democratic  
Title II. SUB. B. SEC. 211. (a): the United States Special Coordinator for Burmese “Federal”  
Democracy

## **2. Nullify/Abolish the 2008 Constitution:**

The Act should clearly mention abolishing the 2008 Constitution rather than reforming it (see NUG’s duties to abolish the 2008 Constitution). The ethnic political organizations and ethnic armed organizations have the same goal to abolish it. The Act should recommend a new constitution that reflects principles of a federal democratic government for the new Myanmar.

The following sections, not limited to sections mentioned below, both support constitution amendments (reforms) and recommending a new constitution:

Title I. SEC. 101. (3). (B).  
Title I. SEC. 101. (3). (H).  
Title II. SUB. A. SEC. 203. (b) (4).  
Title II. SUB. A. SEC. 205. (b) (4).

## **3. Do Not Advocate for a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement:**

The Act should also not advocate for the implementation of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). It ceased being a just and viable instrument for maintaining peace when the military illegally took power on February 1, 2021. If included in the Act, many ethnic political organizations and ethnic armed organizations will strongly oppose it. The Act should instead advocate an inclusive peace process that would lead to establishing a federal democratic union.

For example, Title I. SEC. 101. (3). (H) directly promote “national reconciliation and the conclusion and credible implementation of a *nationwide cease-fire agreement*, followed by a peace process that is inclusive of ethnic Rohingya, Shan, Rakhine, Kachin, Chin, and Kayin, and other ethnic groups and leads to the development of a political system that effectively addresses natural resource governance, revenue-sharing, land rights, and constitutional change enabling inclusive peace”

## **4. Include Engagement with Malaysia and India:**

Both Malaysia and India should be included in the bill because they both have a large stake in the return of refugees. According to UNHCR in Malaysia, there are 154,860 refugees from Burma, of which 102,990 are Rohingyas (<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance-in-malaysia.html>, CAM’s Report, September 2020: <https://chinmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Chin-Refugees-Final-Oct-8-2020.pdf>) According to the Mizoram State government, since February 1, an estimated 20,000 Chins have fled to Mizoram seeking refuge. New Delhi has about 3,000 refugees. Besides hosting a large number of refugees Malaysia is an



influential political and economic nation in the region. India likewise is very influential, as a Quad member, and the world's largest democracy. Both countries can and should play a big role to put pressure on the military regime in Burma to change its behavior.

In the following sections, not limited to sections mentioned below, countries such as India and Malaysia should be included.

Title I. SEC. 101. (3). (I)

Title III. SEC. 301. (a)

Title III. SEC. 302. (a) and (a) (1).

Title III. SEC. 302. (a) (4) (B).

**5. Provide Karenni State, Sagaing Division, and Magwe Division with Humanitarian Assistance:**

The Bill should provide Karenni State (also known as Kayah State), Sagaing Division, and Magwe Division with access to humanitarian assistance from UN Agencies and the international community. After the February coup, Karennis have been severely targeted by the military, creating over 82,000 new internally displaced persons. Also, at least eight Catholic churches in Karenni State have been destroyed by the military.

- END -





THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

November 19, 2021

The Reverend Dr. Yawba Lasaw  
West Covina, California

Dear Dr. Lasaw,

Thank you for writing to me about U.S. foreign policy. I appreciate the time you took to write, and I welcome the opportunity to respond.

The challenges facing our world today demonstrate how interconnected we are and how the fates of all people are bound up together. The outbreak of a virus overseas can cause profound grief and suffering at home. Conflict a continent away can create unrest that endangers our own security. Economic downturns abroad can mean lost jobs and shuttered businesses in towns across America. Global climate change is already worsening hurricanes in the Gulf, floods in the heartland, and wildfires in the West. No country can solve these problems alone, and America cannot afford to be absent from the world stage. Investing in strengthening our leadership abroad is also an investment in bolstering our security and prosperity at home.

As President, I am determined to repair our alliances, renew our leadership in international institutions, reclaim our credibility, and equip the American middle class to succeed in a global economy. I strongly believe that our Nation is better positioned than any other to lead in the 21st century and to be the greatest force for good in the world. Under my Administration, American political and economic leadership will be rooted in our most cherished values: defending freedom, championing opportunity, upholding universal rights, respecting the rule of law, and treating every person with dignity.

We have returned diplomacy to the center of our foreign policy and are committed to meeting today's global challenges from a position of strength, working in close cooperation with our allies and partners. I also want to be clear that I will never hesitate to defend the American people or our vital interests, including through the use of force when necessary. We will always stand with our friends around the world to protect our values and to advance peace, security, and prosperity for all.

I appreciate you sharing your views with me, and I will keep your perspective on these important issues in mind as we work to meet the challenges of our time. May God bless America, and may God protect our troops, our diplomats, our development experts, and all those serving in harm's way.

Sincerely,

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20500



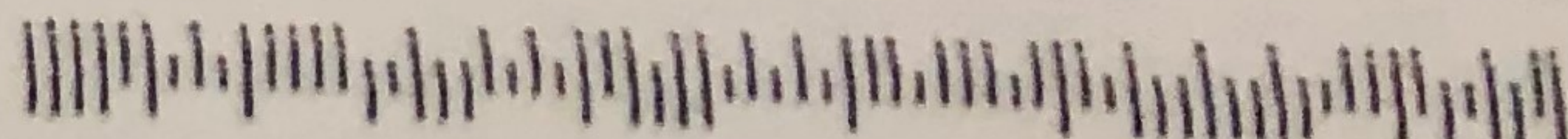
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AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

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*Rev. Dr. C. Jeff Woods*  
*General Secretary*

December 2, 2021

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230 Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator McConnell:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with the Grassroots Movement for Burma on December 7, 2021. We greatly appreciate your time and attention to this important matter. In my role as General Secretary for the American Baptist Churches USA, I am writing in support of the group's advocacy work on the Burma Act.

I sincerely ask for your co-sponsorship of the Burma Act that Senator Cardin has sponsored in the Senate. I hope you will also galvanize Senator Young to join you in this co-sponsorship. The people of Myanmar have suffered too long under the brutality of the military junta. Your leadership in passing this Act will turn this tragic history towards hope as it helps restore democracy and freedom for the people of Myanmar.

Since the military coup on February 1, 2021, we have been appalled to see over 1,000 civilians killed and over 230,000 people (as reported by Reuters in June 2021) internally displaced with hundreds of homes burned. The military junta must be stopped, and sanctions must be imposed.

American Baptist Churches USA is one of the most diverse Christian organizations with approximately 5,000 local congregations comprised of 1.3 million members throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. We have a long-standing relationship with Burma going back to 1813 with the arrival of Anne and Adoniram Judson as our first missionaries to Burma. Since 2006, our congregations have welcomed over 80,000 refugees of the 140,000 resettled into the U.S. Our strong relationship with the Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Lisu, Mon, and Shan ethnic people, together with our General Secretary Emeritus' involvement with the Forum for Peace in Muslim societies, is an expression of our commitment to the goal that the long-suffering people of Burma must be heard.

Thank you for taking the time to meet with the key leaders from the Grassroots Movement for Burma. We hope that through your co-sponsorship the Burma Act will soon reach the Senate floor for passage.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. C. Jeff Woods  
General Secretary