

BURMA

21WILBERFORCE FACT SHEET

KEY FACTS

- Burma, also known as Myanmar, is located in South East Asia and neighbors Thailand, Laos, Bangladesh, China, and India.
- Burma is an ethnically diverse nation, with 135 distinct ethnic groups officially recognized by the Burmese government (about 40% of the population). Its main minorities and indigenous communities include the Shan, Karen, Mon, Chin, Kachin, Rakhine/Rohingya, Karenni, Nagas, and Wa.
- Almost 80% of Burma's population is Buddhist, with Christianity, Folk Religions, Islam, and Hinduism following as the next largest religious communities.
- Burma is a designated Country of Particular Concern (CPC) by the US State Department under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

BACKGROUND

Burmese military (officially called Tatmadaw) seized control and overthrew its democratically elected government. People have taken to the streets across Burma to protest against the coup, which is led by General Min Aung Hlaing. Burma's elected leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, has been detained along with members of her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD).

The military coup threatens to further inflame the ongoing violence perpetrated by the military for years against ethnic and religious minorities, with the military destroying whole villages and places of worship for Christians, Muslims, and other minority communities. The Rohingya ethnic group, which is largely Muslim, has been especially targeted by military atrocities and the entire people group have been denied citizenship in the country. More than 900,000 refugees have fled the country to escape persecution. As nations struggle to contain COVID-19, refugees have been denied entry to many countries and asylum seekers remain stranded with their lives at risk to do strict pandemic restrictions.



ACTION ITEMS



Please be in prayer for the war-torn nation of Burma.

- Pray that Tatmadaw will stop its deadly aggression against civilians and ethnic minorities. Ask God to direct government officials toward freedom and servanthood.
- Pray for Burmese civilians who are suffering from telecom networks that have become inaccessible. Attacks on religious freedom and other basic human rights are of great concern.
- Pray for protection over demonstrators protesting the coup and for safety over refugees fleeing persecution.
- Pray that love, hope, and reconciliation will grow amongst the people in Burma.



Contact your member of Congress to encourage them to co-sponsor legislation to support the democratic and religious rights of the Burmese people.

- Click this [link](#) to instantly send a pre-written message to your member of Congress.



Make some noise! Every night at 8pm, civilians in many parts of Burma pound on pots and pans to stand against the authoritarian regime's injustices and voice their dissent.

- Stand in solidarity by sharing posts [such as this one](#) or creating a short video of your own and post on social media using the hashtag #PostAndPansForMyanmar

SOURCES

Cuddy, A., 2021. Myanmar Coup: What is happening and why? BBC News <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-55902070>

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Baptist World Alliance <https://www.baptistworld.org/Myanmar/>

21Wilberforce <https://21wfreedom.center/library/myanmar/>