

Urgent need for stronger action from Australia to support people displaced by the crisis in Myanmar

Sydney | 12 June 2026 – As World Refugee Day draws attention to the experiences and rights of people displaced around the world, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Australia and Jesuit Mission Australia are renewing calls for stronger action from Australia in response to the ongoing crisis in Myanmar.

More than five years on from the military coup, people in Myanmar continue to face widespread violence, displacement, and the systematic denial of their fundamental rights. This has escalated following deeply flawed elections earlier this year. Despite the scale and persistence of this crisis, it has not received the sustained response it demands.

JRS is an international Catholic organisation working in over 57 countries, accompanying, serving and advocating for refugees and people seeking asylum, including throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Jesuit Mission Australia has long-standing relationships with local partners, including JRS, who have deep roots in affected communities across the Asia-Pacific. Programs include providing support for livelihoods and poverty alleviation; education, aid, and accompaniment; and the provision of essential services to people displaced from Myanmar across the region.

Collectively we represent thousands of people, from frontline workers, displaced families, and concerned citizens, to diaspora leaders here in Australia, who want to see lasting change for the people of Myanmar.

*“JRS works daily, across the region, alongside people who have fled violence and persecution in Myanmar. We see their strength and resilience, and we also see the immense barriers they face in accessing the bare minimum standards of safety, dignity and human rights,” said **Fr Brett O’Neill SJ, Country Director of JRS Australia.***

“As the situation in Myanmar continues to deteriorate, Australia has both an opportunity and a responsibility to show leadership in our region. This means ensuring people can access protection, supporting communities on the frontlines of this crisis, and responding in a way that protects the dignity and humanity of those most affected.”

Together we witness the resilience of people from Myanmar as they face immense challenges accessing safety, education, healthcare, and protection. We also see the growing strain on local organisations and community networks working to respond to an increased severity of need, amidst dangerous reductions in global aid. As a result, displaced communities face compounding trauma, and women and children face increased risks of gender-based violence.

The Myanmar diaspora community here in Australia continue to show extraordinary leadership. Many have been at the forefront of advocacy efforts, raising awareness, supporting those affected, and contributing to the evidence base that informed the Senate inquiry. Their voices and lived experience are critical to shaping an urgent, just, and effective response from Australia.

*“Jesuit Mission Australia stands with the people of Myanmar and with the communities across our region who continue to respond with courage and compassion in the face of immense suffering,” said **Helen Forde, CEO of Jesuit Mission Australia.***

“Our partners across the region continue to accompany communities affected by the crisis in Myanmar every day, providing education, essential services, and hope in incredibly difficult circumstances. Australia has a responsibility to respond in a way that upholds human dignity, strengthens protection pathways, and supports those working closest to the communities most affected.”

We welcomed the report from the Senate inquiry into [Democracy and human rights in Myanmar](#). We are now looking forward to supporting the Australian government with the implementation of its recommendations, to take tangible steps towards facilitating human rights and democracy for the people of Myanmar.

In particular, we make the following recommendations to the Australian Government:

- 1. Establish a specialised pathway for people from Myanmar to seek protection in Australia**, including to expand our Humanitarian Program, expedite visas for those already seeking asylum onshore and in border areas, and to address barriers faced by Myanmar nationals awaiting the processing of work, study, or family visas, including recipients of the Myanmar Australia Awards scholarship;

2. **Increase aid funding for locally led and grassroots organisations across the region**, particularly along the Thai-Myanmar border, ensuring funding reaches communities directly and supports essential services such as education, healthcare, and psychosocial and gender-based violence support;
3. **Formalise engagement with Myanmar diaspora groups** to listen to the extensive first-hand knowledge, experience and networks these groups can offer, and be guided as such in Australia's response to investing in a path to peace for the people of Myanmar; and
4. **Substantiate a clear and principled objection to the continuing military rule of Myanmar**, by drawing attention to the sustained repression, violence, and human rights abuses perpetrated by the military regime, denouncing the non-democratic elections that took place in December 2025, and not engaging with Myanmar in diplomatic, parliamentary and regional or multilateral forums while military rule continues.

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