

The Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
King Charles Street
London, SW1A 2AH

Sent via email

25 March 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

Treatment of doctors and medical students in Myanmar

We are writing to you, on behalf of the BMA (British Medical Association), to express our grave concern about the persistent reports of human rights abuses against peaceful protestors in Myanmar, including the targeting of medical professionals.

As you will be aware, many in Myanmar have been protesting against the illegal coup against the democratically elected government. This has included many doctors and other healthcare professionals who are engaging in civil disobedience against the military leadership, as is their right. It is been widely reported that the authorities in Myanmar have responded violently to these protests and have assaulted, imprisoned and even murdered protestors.¹

Doctors have been at the forefront of the protests against the illegal coup including by refusing to work at government hospitals (so as not to legitimise the actions or priorities of an unlawful military regime which they believe does not have any regard for their patients) while setting up alternate makeshift health centres to care for their patients, and informing the media of the injuries that have been inflicted by Myanmar authorities. The BMA is deeply troubled by the actions that have been taken against them including the arrest of at least 100 medical students in Yangon, the targeting of the makeshift health centres (established in opposition to government facilities), the threats medical staff have faced, and vicious assaults by Myanmar security forces.

The specific targeting of healthcare settings and staff is a violation of international humanitarian law and, as the World Medical Association has noted, the right to the highest

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/28/world/asia/myanmar-protests.html>

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standard of health is guaranteed by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which was ratified by Myanmar in 2017.

We strongly urge you to raise this with your counterparts in Myanmar and explore co-ordinated international action that can be taken to oppose the abuses going on in Myanmar and ensure the safety of doctors and other medical professionals.

Yours sincerely,



Dr John Chisholm CBE
Chair, BMA medical ethics committee



Dr Kitty Mohan
Chair, BMA international committee