



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. EMBASSY RANGOON

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A/S Malinowski Burma Trip Statement June 28, 2014, Rangoon, Burma

Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Tom Malinowski led an interagency delegation to Burma comprising senior officials from the Departments of State, Defense, and Treasury, and the National Security Council staff June 22-28. The delegation held discussions with senior Union Government, military, and parliamentary officials including Minister of Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin, Minister of Home Affairs General Ko Ko, Ministers of the President U Aung Min and U Soe Thane, Speaker of the Parliament Thura U Shwe Mann, Union Election Commission Chairman U Tin Aye, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Minister of Defense Lt. General Wai Lwin, and Commander in Chief General Min Aung Hlaing.

During the delegation's visit to Naypyitaw, Lieutenant General Anthony Crutchfield, Deputy Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, addressed the National Defense College, the first U.S. military officer to do so. His remarks can be found here: <http://burma.usembassy.gov/index.html>.

Assistant Secretary Malinowski, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Searight, and Lieutenant General Crutchfield discussed U.S. support for a peaceful settlement in the armed conflict between Burma's government and ethnic nationalities, urged an end to fighting in Kachin State, and shared U.S. experiences in developing a professional military.

Assistant Secretary Malinowski underscored that "The only path to a professional and modern Burmese military is through discipline, accountability, transparency, and civilian oversight by a democratically elected government. This may not happen overnight, but in the meantime we encouraged the military to take concrete, visible steps to demonstrate its commitment to human rights, for example by issuing and making public orders to cease land confiscations, and the use of forced labor and child soldiers."

The delegation expressed support for the post-ceasefire peace process, which will have to tackle long unresolved political grievances of people living in ethnic minority areas. Assistant Secretary Malinowski said, "A nationwide ceasefire will be an important step, but we understand that the peace process does not end there."

Joined by David Mortlock of the National Security Council staff and John Smith, Associate Director of the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), the delegation also met with members of the Burmese business community currently on the U.S. Specially Designated National (SDN) List to discuss responsible business practices, transparency, and support for the government's reforms. The delegation explained that removal from the SDN list is a legal, not a political, process managed by OFAC, through which petitioners must submit proof of fundamental behavior change. "Those still on our

sanctions list have a chance to build a new legacy for themselves and their country by showing that they have cut business ties with the military and started respecting human rights in the communities where they operate,” said Assistant Secretary Malinowski.

The delegation also met with members of the U.S. and Burmese business communities to discuss responsible investment. Assistant Secretary Malinowski urged U.S. companies to continue publicly reporting on their activities in the country, including voluntary reporting, under the Responsible Investment Reporting Requirements.

In Yangon delegation members met with leaders from Rakhine State, as well as with international NGOs to discuss how the United States can help support their efforts to improve the humanitarian situation in the state and ensure the fundamental rights of all communities are respected. In Karen and Mon States Assistant Secretary Malinowski met ethnic nationality, political party, civil society, and religious leaders from the Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian communities to discuss how the United States can best support national reconciliation, tolerance, and diversity.

Throughout the visit the delegation discussed the need to develop an inclusive national identity and counter those trying to exploit the country’s diversity to sow division and win political points. The delegation raised concerns about draft laws before the parliament that would discriminate against religious minorities, including by banning interfaith marriage, and urged the government to protect those who have received death threats for opposing the laws. Assistant Secretary Malinowski said, “Around the world we have seen countries torn apart when religious and ethnic divisions turn violent. We urged everyone – government officials, religious leaders, ethnic leaders, and students – not to go down this path, to unite and give voice to a different, better future for their country.”

The Assistant Secretary urged a turn to the future – democracy, human rights, unity, tolerance and openness, and development – “This country’s transition has just begun, and the hardest work is still ahead – but there is unlimited potential. And the United States is committed as a partner and as a friend to seeing that potential fully realized.”

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