



## CALL TO PRAYER RESOURCE

JOIN US IN PRAYING FOR THREE NATIONS CURRENTLY FACING CRISES IN OUR REGION:  
MYANMAR, TIMOR-LESTE AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

### 1. Myanmar



#### OVERVIEW OF SITUATION:

On 1 February 2021, Myanmar's military, called the Tatmadaw declared a year - long state of emergency as a response to supposed 'voter fraud', overthrowing the government and taking control of the nation. Following Myanmar's independence in 1948, the Tatmadaw have maintained control of Myanmar from the years 1962-2011. In 2011, a group of military generals created what was claimed to be a citizen-led government, with the foundation of this government being a constitution which the military had drafted.

In 2015, an election took place in which the National League for Democracy (NLD) party, led by Aung San Suu Kyi won. The results of this election were respected, with this being the beginning of what was hoped to be genuine democracy. However, in November 2020 a national election took place in which the Tatmadaw won only 71 seats out of 1117 seats, with the NLD winning 920, this loss sparked the violent coup that took place on 1 February, the same date that these governmental changes were supposed to take place. Since the coup, more than 500 people have been killed, with thousands of people detained. The Tatmadaw have open fired on protestors as well as attacked people within their homes and places of work.

This coup, whilst an affront on human rights and democracy, is also creating even greater dangers for the Rohingya people. The Rohingya people of Myanmar are not recognised as citizens and have long been persecuted by the military, with the United Nations considering this persecution as attempted genocide. More than 1 million Rohingya people have been displaced as a result, with this new military rule likely leading to even greater persecution. Similar concerns are rising for other minority groups within the nation.

#### WHAT IS THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DOING IN RESPONSE?

The Australian Government has spoken out against the violence, condemning the lethal force enacted towards citizens. The government has paused a military program which it had with Myanmar, and has re-directed aid to bypass government bodies and to specifically assist the Rohingya population and other minority groups.

#### WHAT FURTHER ACTION IS NEEDED?

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) has called upon the Australian Government to take greater action. It asks for the formal recognition of the Committee Representing Pyidansu Htuttaw (CRPH), this being the government led by elected party of the National League for Democracy. Other asks include that targeted sanctions are placed upon Myanmar, increased aid is provided for those affected by the civil unrest and for visa extension and visa grants for citizens of Myanmar who cannot safely return home.

### PRAYER POINTS:

- For peace within the nation of Myanmar.
- For the protection of those persecuted by the military.
- For the Australian Government to listen to the cries for help and to respond generously.



## 2. Timor-Leste



### OVERVIEW OF SITUATION:

Catastrophic storms and flooding have hit Timor-Leste, with these severe weather conditions coming to a peak last weekend with the arrival of tropical cyclone Seroja. Unfortunately, the extreme weather conditions from the cyclone are expected to continue throughout the next few days. At least 27 lives have been lost and thousands of homes have been destroyed, leaving thousands of citizens displaced and currently residing in shelters. Important infrastructure including hospitals, bridges and communication centres have been ruined. This leaving people vulnerable to waterborne diseases as well as lacking access to food and clean water. Development Coordination Officer with the UN, Alex Tilman has stated "We are facing a twin crisis I would say: health crisis as well as humanitarian crisis", with those evacuees further at risk of contracting Covid-19 due to the influx of household members due to loss of housing, and large groups within shelters.

### WHAT IS THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DOING IN RESPONSE?

Existing Australian aid and development agencies have been providing support to evacuees, with a focus upon providing clean water. The Timor Government Minister Fidelis Leite Magalhães said the government was still assessing the impact of the floods but signalled his country would ask for more help soon. "The government would request assistance from friendly countries, especially Australia considering its closeness and available resources and experience in disaster management, after conducting its assessment of the damage," he has told the ABC. The Australian embassy and its agencies are working very hard side-by-side with the Timorese government and its people.

### WHAT FURTHER ACTION IS NEEDED?

Foreign Affairs Minister, Marise Payne has stated that the Australian Government is ready to provide further assistance, if called upon by the Timor-Leste government.

### PRAYER POINTS:

- Pray for the rain, storms and flooding to subside.
- Pray for the families of those who have lost loved ones and whose homes and livelihoods have been devastated.
- Pray for those agencies and churches working on the ground: for wisdom, protection and strength as they assist local communities.
- Pray for assistance and aid to get quickly to where it is needed most.

### 3. Papua New Guinea



#### *OVERVIEW OF SITUATION:*

The Covid-19 crisis in our neighbouring nation of Papua New Guinea is quickly escalating, with the number of cases reaching over 7400 and with a devastating 67 total deaths. When considering that, as of February this year, the total number of cases had only reached 867, it can be seen that the situation has deteriorated rapidly in the past two months.

Epidemiologists are predicting that currently more than 100 000 citizens may be unknowingly infected, with this number to reach 1 million in the coming weeks if substantive action is not taken. PNG Prime Minister, Mr Marape has stated "The number is quite staggering, if we don't do [a] corrective response to this, our health system will be clogged and we won't be able to sustain it". Health care facilities across the nation have reached capacity, with this placing an increased strain upon the dwindling number of health care workers due to the spread of the virus among these first responders.

#### *WHAT IS THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DOING IN RESPONSE?*

In response to this crisis, the Australian Government has sent 8480 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to be provided to frontline health care workers. Alongside this, a small group of Australian medical professionals have been sent to assist with outbreak.

The Government is also currently in negotiations with the European Union, attempting to secure an additional 1 million doses of the vaccine, to be sent to PNG.

#### *WHAT FURTHER ACTION IS NEEDED?*

The World Health Organisation has called upon Australia to increase the number of vaccines supplied to PNG in order to protect health care workers, those vulnerable and in order to gain control of the virus. The Australian Council for International Development has supported this call, further urging the government to provide 1 million doses of the domestically produced vaccine to our struggling neighbour. Within this, the ACFID has asked that resources are provided to assist in the actual rollout of the vaccine, ensuring that health care and development workers are prioritised in its deliverance.

#### *PRAYER POINTS:*

- Wisdom and support for the leaders of PNG.
- The protection of health care and frontline workers in Papua New Guinea.
- For the slow of the spread of COVID-19 in the nation.
- That the Australian Government will continue to take the call to 'love thy neighbour' by providing additional assistance and vaccinations to PNG.