



# LIFELINE FOR MYANMAR



**It has been nine months since the military coup in Myanmar. Our lives, first turned upside down by COVID-19, are now characterised by fear.**

Military and police forces have indiscriminately attacked crowds of peaceful demonstrators and health care workers with tear gas, rubber bullets and military grade weapons.

The casualty rate is escalating each day, testing our stamina from all perspectives and yet we are united in our resolve that peace will return to Myanmar.

It is of course, not the first time we have faced such trauma. For fifty years we lived under military dictatorship and during that time the health system crumbled. Health workers went untrained, equipment lay broken and outdated and patients were unable to access the vital care they needed.

[Since 2014](#), we have been working to change this.

Through partnerships with the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust we have supported the improvement of child and newborn services, nurse training and surgical care.

Through our office in Yangon, which opened in early 2017, we worked closely with the Ministry of Health and Sports and other local health institutions to support the strengthening of health systems in Myanmar.

Since the coup, much of this work has had to stop but the demand for support has only increased and we have worked to respond quickly and appropriately.

As the following pages will show, the Health Partnership community in the UK has remained resolute in its commitment to their colleagues in Myanmar. Providing emergency trauma training, continuing vital education programmes and advocating for their safety and protection in this desperate time.

With this unbreakable unity that we hold, I am convinced that we will survive this battle and come out even stronger than ever before with many lessons learnt together.

Christmas is the time of sharing, kindness and being together. In Myanmar many health care workers have been arrested and forced to leave their homes and loved ones, and yet they continue to provide healthcare in conflict areas and to COVID-19 affected patients by setting up charity clinics and Telehealth services.

With your support, we will be able to strengthen our work to help Myanmar healthcare workers with the provision of academic resources and psychological support.

Let us be together this Christmas in helping the people of Myanmar.

Thank you for your support.

**Dr Thinn Thinn Hlaing**  
**Myanmar Country Director, THET**

# OUR IMPACT...

## POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Since the coup the UK health community, including the Myanmar diaspora of health and social care workers here in the UK, have come together to support their colleagues in Myanmar. Convened by THET, representatives from over 30 institutions have met bimonthly. As a specialist global health organisation that educates, trains and supports healthcare workers through partnerships, strengthening health systems and enabling people in low- and middle-income countries to access essential healthcare, THET has been the ideal umbrella under which this medley of concerned colleagues has gathered.

The roll call of support convened by THET is truly interdisciplinary and includes; Primary Care, Emergency and Trauma Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Paediatrics and Child Health, Oncology, Dermatology, Care of the Elderly, Anaesthesia, Nursing, Midwifery, and Public Health.



## THE MYANMAR RESPONSE FUND (MRF)

The MRF harnesses the power of Health Partnerships to enable the UK to engage with the crisis in Myanmar, supporting health care professionals to respond to the risks presented by the coup, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

*"The past 10 months have been extremely difficult. As a Burmese citizen working for CGHP, a global health organisation, I am committed to supporting health workers at this challenging time. The Myanmar health system is collapsing, and health workers are on the frontline without colleagues, infrastructure or resources. It is frightening. But CGHP and the wider health partnership community has come together to develop telemedicine services and a suite of clinical skills videos. These tools are providing a lifeline and kinship to health workers in Myanmar. None of this would be possible without the support and co-ordination of THET, and I have no words to express my gratitude."* - Thet Win Aung, Myanmar Programme Support, Cambridge Global Health Partnerships (CGHP)

## ADVOCACY

Responding to the violence and persecution experienced by health workers across Myanmar we responded with a comprehensive advocacy and media strategy to bring global awareness. This work stands in recognition of what colleagues in Myanmar are experiencing and in response to the advocacy efforts of Health Partnerships for Myanmar.

We have shared evidence of medical violations, campaigned in front of the British public and secured jobs and/or clinical attachments for 143 Myanmar doctors within the NHS, averting their deportation.

## FUNDRAISING

A fundraising group has been formed with representatives from the organisations convened by THET to explore individual philanthropy and government funding.

Together, we have lobbied successfully for £100,000 from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Myanmar to support Health Partnerships responding to the coup. In addition, funding has been approved by the FCDO for small group education webinars, strategies to build personal resilience and practical support for PPE, oxygen and medication. As a symbol of concern for our colleagues and the people of Myanmar, a bike ride covering a total of 21,600 miles has also taken place, raising £21,000 to support healthcare delivery.



## MEDICAL EDUCATION

Many health workers now find themselves the only healthcare provider in their area, a role for which they were never trained. They face a lack of supplies and live under the constant fear of arrest, yet they continue, supporting their communities and their patients.

In all this, doctors and nurses need help and the UK health community response to the call for educational support from Myanmar colleagues has resulted in an impressive array of initiatives from online medical guidance to regular webinar training sessions.



*In 2021, we reached over **3,000** health workers in Myanmar through online training.*

# MYANMAR IS NOW ONE OF THE DEADLIEST PLACES ON EARTH FOR HEALTH WORKERS



Photo Credit: Reuters 2021

According to the World Health Organization (WHO)'s Surveillance System for Attacks on Healthcare, **283** attacks have been documented against health workers, accounting for nearly **40%** of the global total.

Before the coup I worked as a tutor at a Nursing University and witnessed the progress we were making. But on February 1st our world turned upside down. Three days later we saw the Red Ribbon Movement initiated by Health Workers. There were brutal crackdowns and many casualties. I constantly fear the day my name appears on the military's list for roundup. Some have been arrested, some have had to flee to border areas and some are in prisons. Military restrictions on travel and curfews have also had desparate affects on our COVID response.

It is really heart-breaking to learn that people are dying because they can't access this fundamental right to healthcare. Just like me, there are hundreds of nurses who have been continually working for the people with whatever they have and wherever they are. Although they are on the run and have to leave their workplaces, they still commit themselves to helping people.

In order to support patients who can't access care, I now work on screen for more than 14 hours a day conducting tele-consultations, trying to do my small part to help. We have also vowed to continue to teach our students and with the support from the UK team we have been able to conduct clinical teaching twice a week.

I have discovered, however, that these worry-filled days all have one reliably good moment: the minute one wakes in the morning. I feel relief to the point of bliss upon waking up in my bed to the realization that I have made it through one more night without being arrested— that, quite simply, I still find myself a free person.

Here in Myanmar, I am not alone in my plight. It has become the daily reality for so many of us. So my humble request to you is please tell the international communities what is really happening with Burmese nurses and health care in our nation.

- Sister April, Nurse, Myanmar

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

### HOW YOUR DONATION HELPS:

With your support we can strengthen the skills of health workers in Myanmar and equip them with the clinical guidance and educational resources needed to continue delivering healthcare to communities and patients at a time of crisis.

Whether you decide to make a one-off donation or give a regular gift, we promise that the donation you make to THET will be used to help train the next generation of qualified health workers in the communities where they are needed most. If you would like to support our work, please donate through one of following methods:



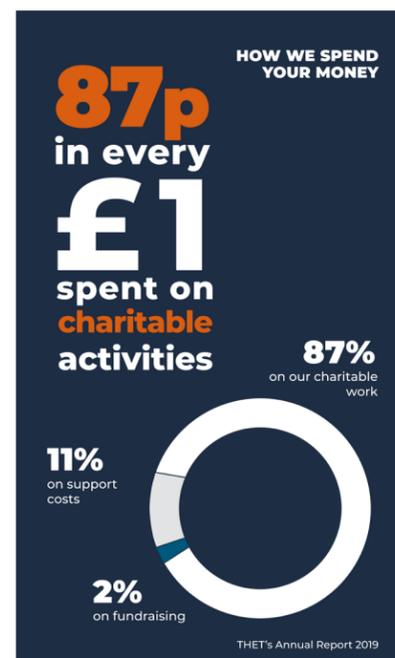
Send a cheque to THET's new office:  
1 St Andrews Place, Regent's Park, London, NW1 4LE.



Bank Transfer to: Tropical Health and Education Trust,  
Account Number: 00004198, Sort Code: 40-52-40.



Online, via our website:  
[www.thet.org/donate](http://www.thet.org/donate).



*This appeal is a stark reminder of the dangers health workers are facing as they seek to provide care to those in need. Their voices must remain heard, their roles respected, and their advice heeded. Your support this christmas will enable us to continue our work in Myanmar. In the face of the coup and the covid pandemic they need our help more than ever. We stand in solidarity with them.*

*Thank you for your support.*