



To: UCR Leadership and Community

From: UCR Burmese Student Association (UCR BSA)

Date: February 2, 2021

Subject: Concerning the Political Situation in Myanmar (Burma)

We are writing on behalf of UCR's Burmese student population to speak up about the recent events in Myanmar (Burma). We are deeply saddened and angered by the military coup d'état staged in our home country that occurred on the morning of February 1st, 2021.

This day was supposed to be the peaceful inauguration of a new term of the democratically-elected legislature. Instead, senior members of the governing party, the National League for Democracy, have been detained, and power has been unrightfully seized by the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party. This occurred just hours before Myanmar lawmakers were to take their seats in parliament. The recent elections held in November 2020 were fairly facilitated by the independent Union Election Committee, however, the military claims that the victory in this election was fraudulent. The country's majority party, led by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, won 83 percent of the parliamentary seats available under Myanmar's constitution. Myanmar, a country that lived under military rule for years, had rightfully paved its way to democracy, only to have history repeat itself once again.

The military has now declared a state of emergency in order to seize power, and has announced Marshall law to be implemented for one year. Power has been handed to the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, with other military leaders also being installed into several positions within the government.

In light of the hardships and political uncertainty in Myanmar, we are asking UCR leadership to show their support to the Burmese community. UCR Burmese students are now living in fear for their loved ones residing in Myanmar. During this time, Myanmar is now facing suspended cell service, cable news of local and international channels, internet services, and financial services. This makes it an extremely frightening time for our students who are trying to stay in close contact with their families overseas to receive updates on their safety. Additionally, there are students across the UC campuses who are currently located in Myanmar who are also facing challenges to their online education in this situation. **We are**

urging the University and faculty to provide academic support and leniency for all UCR students who may be impacted by these recent events. Furthermore, we are also requesting mental health resources and support be made available to Burmese students during this unpredictable time. Additionally, we ask that the financial services department be considerate in regards to school tuition payments, as local financial institutions have ceased operation for the considerable future.

On behalf of all Burmese students at UCR, we are asking the University, faculty, and leadership to show support to our community. We ask that you stand in solidarity with us in condemning this terrorizing abuse of power and ensuring the peaceful installment of the civilian government that the Burmese people have rightfully voted for. This is a devastating time for Burmese people across the world. It is crucial and urgent for us to spread awareness of the recent, tragic events in Myanmar and speak up for citizens in our home country who have had their freedom and rights undermined. As an underrepresented minority group, we plead that you help us amplify our voices on this important matter. We, the UCR Burmese Student Association, call upon the University and the Riverside community to reaffirm and make explicit its commitment to supporting the Burmese student community.

In Solidarity,

The Founding Board of Burmese Student Association at UCR:

Carol Wann, BSA President

Oaksoe Aung, BSA Vice President

Emily Ong, BSA Co-Secretary

Melody Thu, BSA Co-Secretary

May Thwe, BSA Treasurer

Hsu Tun, BSA Committee Member

And the members of Burmese Student Association