

The events in Myanmar show the urgent need for a sustained and strategic Australian investment in conflict prevention in our region. My research found that Australia as a diplomatic actor had not sufficiently invested in grassroots conflict prevention strategies and had limited capacity to undertake transformational peace work in Myanmar since 2015, the short window of time that was available to regional powers. The military coup in February 2021 was an extension of the kind of rights-violating behaviour the Tatmadaw had engaged with in Rakhine, Karen, Kachin, Chin and Shan States in the years leading up to the coup, and a perceived and real level of impunity for those actions was not sufficiently countered by the international community. The calculations around quiet diplomacy deserve to be debated and recalibrated.

In the short term, Australia should support a global arms embargo on Myanmar's military, for the Security Council to refer Myanmar to the International Criminal Court, and for council members to consider "whether there is a responsibility to protect", using every diplomatic lever at its disposal. But more fundamentally, Australia needs a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy, and can look to the recent US [Strategy](#) as a model. Australia should also invest in a high-level mediation unit. Australia should also seek to support Burmese students and other visa holders currently in Australia, and should reach out to Burmese citizens inside Myanmar that have strong connections to Australia, especially alumni, and consider the use of in-country rescue visas for this cohort