

Treasury Sanctions Commanders and Units of the Burmese Security Forces for Serious Human Rights Abuses

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Designations Build on International Efforts to Hold Accountable Persons Responsible for Serious Human Rights Abuses in Burma

WASHINGTON - Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned four Burmese military and Border Guard Police (BGP) commanders and two Burmese military units for their involvement in ethnic cleansing in Burma's Rakhine State and other widespread human rights abuses in Burma's Kachin and Shan States. Burmese military commanders Aung Kyaw Zaw, Khin Maung Soe, Khin Hlaing, and BGP commander Thura San Lwin, along with the 33rd Light Infantry Division (LID) and the 99th LID, were designated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13818, which builds upon the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act of 2016 to target perpetrators of serious human rights abuse and corruption.

"Burmese security forces have engaged in violent campaigns against ethnic minority communities across Burma, including ethnic cleansing, massacres, sexual assault, extrajudicial killings, and other serious human rights abuses. Treasury is sanctioning units and leaders overseeing this horrific behavior as part of a broader U.S. government strategy to hold accountable those responsible for such wide scale human suffering," said Sigal Mandelker, Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. "There must be justice for the victims and those who work to uncover these atrocities, with those responsible held to account for these abhorrent crimes. The U.S. government is committed to ensuring that Burmese military units and leaders reckon with and put a stop to these brutal acts. We will continue to systematically expose and bring accountability to human rights abusers in this region and many others and greatly appreciate the efforts of civil society who are doing the same."

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE IN BURMA'S RAKHINE, KACHIN, AND SHAN STATES

The Burmese military, which retains broad political powers and exclusive control over the security forces in accordance with the 2008 military-drafted constitution, has committed human rights abuses against ethnic and religious minority groups across Burma, including Rohingya, Kachin, Shan, and others. The United States' decision to sanction individual units and commanders responsible for these abuses should serve as a warning that the security forces must cease such behavior immediately and respect and protect the human rights of all ethnic and religious groups in Burma.

Beginning in October 2016, the Burmese military committed widespread, systematic, and brutal acts of violence against Rohingya villagers across northern Rakhine State's three townships—Maundaw, Buthidaung, and Rathedaung. The violence increased substantially through sweeping military operations that responded to deadly militant attacks on August 25, 2017 that targeted Burmese border security posts. In November 2017 the Administration determined that the situation in northern Rakhine constituted ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya.

In Kachin and Shan States, the military has used many of the same tactics against a number of other ethnic and religious minority groups. Amid a long-running civil war in these states, the military has committed extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, and torture against civilians from minority communities, including the Kachin, Shan, Ta'ang, Kokang, and other groups.

AUNG KYAW ZAW

Aung Kyaw Zaw is designated for having been the leader of the Bureau of Special Operations (BSO) 3, an entity whose members have engaged in serious human rights abuse during his tenure. As commander of BSO 3, Aung Kyaw Zaw controlled military and border guard police operations in Western, Southern, and Southwestern Commands from 2015 to early 2018. Operations in regions controlled by Western Command, which was led by his subordinate Maung Maung Soe, who was sanctioned by the President for widespread human rights abuse on December 20, 2017, included military operations in Rakhine State in and after August 2017. Subordinates under his command played leading roles in a crisis in Rakhine State, which included widespread human rights abuses which killed thousands and drove hundreds of thousands of Rohingya to Bangladesh, a situation the Secretary of State determined to constitute ethnic cleansing.

KHIN MAUNG SOE

Khin Maung Soe is designated for having been a leader of the Military Operations Command (MOC) 15, an entity whose members engaged in serious human rights abuse during his tenure. Members of MOC 15 participated in the Maung Nu massacre on August 27, 2017, and other abuses in Rakhine State. In Maung Nu, soldiers reportedly beat, sexually assaulted, and summarily executed or otherwise killed dozens of Rohingya villagers.

THURA SAN LWIN

Thura San Lwin is designated for having been the leader of the BGP, an entity whose members have engaged in serious human rights abuse during his tenure. Thura San Lwin commanded the BGP from October 2016 to October 2017, during which time his subordinates engaged in widespread extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, assault, and other abuses of human rights.

KHIN HLAING

Khin Hlaing is designated for having been the leader of the 99th LID, a military entity whose members have engaged in serious human rights abuse during his tenure. The 99th LID participated in abuses, including in November 2016 when 99th LID soldiers in Mong Ko, Shan State detained ethnic Kachin and Chinese minority villagers. For 13 days, the villagers were forced to serve as human shields by lying down between rows of fences encircling the 99th LID element's outpost. The villagers were forced to stay lying down, exposed to the elements, gunfire, and grenade attacks while 99th LID soldiers sheltered behind them while fighting with militia forces. The 99th LID also engaged in beatings, killings, forced disappearances, and other abuses in Shan State.

99TH LID

The 99th LID is designated for engaging in serious human rights abuse. The 99th LID participated in abuses in Mong Ko and elsewhere in Shan State detailed above. In 2017, the 99th LID was deployed to Rakhine State and participated in serious human rights abuses alongside the 33rd LID and other security forces. In one operation in Min Gyi Village, hundreds of men, women, and children were reportedly forced to the nearby river bank where the 99th LID opened fire, executing many of the men, and forced women and girls to nearby houses where they were sexually assaulted. A number of these women and children were later stabbed and beaten, with the houses set fire while they were inside.

33RD LID

The 33rd LID is designated for engaging in serious human rights abuse. The 33rd LID participated in abuses in Rakhine State, including the August 27, 2017 operation in Chut Pyin village. This operation included extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, and sexual violence, as well as firing on fleeing villagers. Hundreds were reportedly killed in this one operation alone. Members of the 33rd LID, along with other security forces, also participated in operations in Inn Din in August and September 2017. Nearly all of the thousands of Rohingya residing in Inn Din were driven out of the village. Ten Rohingya men and boys were captured, bound, and executed by security forces and militia. Two journalists remain detained for their role investigating the incident.

GLOBAL MAGNITSKY

Building upon the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act of 2016, on December 20, 2017, the President signed E.O. 13818 “Blocking the Property of Persons Involved in Serious Human Rights Abuse or Corruption,” in which the President found that the prevalence of human rights abuse and corruption that have their source, in whole or in part, outside the United States, had reached such scope and gravity that it threatens the stability of international political and economic systems. Human rights abuse and corruption undermine the values that form an essential foundation of stable, secure, and functioning societies; have devastating impacts on individuals; weaken democratic institutions; degrade the rule of law; perpetuate violent conflicts; facilitate the activities of dangerous persons; and undermine economic markets. The United States seeks to impose tangible and significant consequences on those who commit serious human rights abuse or engage in corruption, as well as to protect the financial system of the United States from abuse by these same persons.

To date, 84 individuals and entities have been sanctioned under E.O. 13818. This is in addition to the numerous human rights and/or corruption related designations Treasury has issued under various other authorities. In total, since January of 2017, Treasury has taken action against over 460 individuals and entities engaged in activities related to, or directly involving, human rights abuse and/or corruption, including actions in connection with Syria, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burma, Venezuela, North Korea, Russia, Iran, and other sanctions programs.

This Administration will continue to take action against human rights and corruption related targets around the globe, including implementing sanctions under Global Magnitsky and other

authorities, throughout the year.

In June 2018, Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) issued an [advisory](#)  to U.S. financial institutions to highlight the connection between corrupt senior foreign political figures and their enabling of human rights abuses. The advisory describes a number of typologies used by these persons and provides red flags that may assist financial institutions in identifying methods used by corrupt senior officials.

As a result of these designations, any property, or interest in property, of those designated today within U.S. jurisdiction is blocked. Additionally, U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with blocked persons, including entities 50 percent or more owned by designated persons.

[Identifying information on the individuals designated today.](#)

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