



# Integrated Country Strategy

---

---

## Myanmar

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

**Table of Contents**

I. Chief of Mission Priorities ..... 2

II. Mission Strategic Framework ..... 4

III. Mission Goals and Objectives ..... 5

IV. Management Objectives..... 9

## I. Chief of Mission Priorities

After several years of reform that put Myanmar on a track toward becoming an important U.S. partner in the region, the conflict and exodus of refugees from Rakhine State since August 2017 – a dramatic escalation after decades of intermittent violence arising from political grievances and intercommunal tensions -- poses a significant threat to the country's trajectory and prospects. Myanmar still has the potential to become an important partner in the years ahead as we implement the Indo-Pacific strategy, but the authorities must come to terms with what transpired, hold accountable those responsible for human rights violations, and begin to change the attitudes and policies that gave rise to this tragedy, and that contribute to intercommunal conflict across Myanmar. Without tangible improvements, Myanmar risks further alienating and potentially radicalizing these populations to uncertain ends, and cannot succeed in its democratic aspirations. Myanmar also risks having to rely internationally on a few countries willing to overlook what happened because of their broader strategic interests.

Enhancing the ability of Myanmar's nascent democracy to deliver progress to its entire people, and overcome the legacy of military rule and isolation, remains a top Mission priority, even as recent events demonstrate how difficult this will be. We will invest across a wider spectrum of society to identify and cultivate the next generation of Myanmar's leaders. The Mission will help the Myanmar government become more inclusive, capable, accountable, and responsive to its people through good governance and protection of human rights. This will include those traditionally excluded from decision making, such as religious and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, women, and LGBT persons. We are backing the efforts of civil society to address the pervasiveness of hate speech on social media. Over the longer term, the Mission will buttress efforts to build strong national institutions that respect the rule of law and freedom of the press, both critical components to democratic sustainability and national reconciliation. We support legislatures, electoral processes, law enforcement and judicial professionalism, as well as universal access to justice, to help ensure core democratic institutions are effective, transparent, and accountable to the public. We will also engage when appropriate with junior and mid-level officers in the Myanmar military, to advocate for an appropriate role for the military in a civilian-led democracy, even as we pursue accountability for violations of human rights. We will strengthen Myanmar's capacity to protect the lives and rights of U.S. citizens, counter transnational threats, and respond to the disasters that frequently afflict Myanmar.

Ultimately, Myanmar's success can only be achieved if there is an end to the decades-long conflict between ethnic armed groups and the national government, and national reconciliation among the government, military, and those ethnic groups. This will require Constitutional reform and a rebalancing of power between state governments and the Union government, as well as between the military and the civilian government. As a trusted partner, we will continue to support the peace process to facilitate dialogue and negotiations. We will also continue to be a catalyst for dialogue among cross-sections of society seeking to create a national identity within a future federal structure. Forging a tolerant, inclusive national identity will be a long-term effort. We can share lessons learned from our history of harnessing strength from diversity to promote tolerance. This will be critical to the ability to govern the diverse

population that makes up Myanmar. In the end, **our support for a peaceful and democratic Myanmar enhances both U.S. and Myanmar security.**

Myanmar's path to success also relies on inclusive, sustainable economic growth, and it must integrate its economy into regional and global markets to demonstrate that democracy delivers benefits. Because **our economic and development partnership expands U.S. and Myanmar prosperity**, our Mission is working with the government to develop the legal and regulatory frameworks required to promote international trade and investment and enforce contracts, intellectual property laws, and resolve civil disputes, making this market more attractive to responsible western businesses. The American brand remains popular, but many companies are opting out of the Myanmar market due to concerns over reputational risk and the difficult business environment, characterized by an opaque and outdated legal framework and complicated and inconsistent bureaucracy. Equitable access to land and managing natural resources sustainably will be critical to the peaceful economic growth of the country. Further, the government must address the domestic health and social issues, as well as the international criminal dimension, of being one of the world's largest producers of illicit narcotics. We will support the government in addressing these and will help ensure essential quality health care for everyone through stronger and more inclusive health systems. This will help Myanmar combat infectious diseases, such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis that present health risks to the United States and the world.

**Our broad engagement will build support for U.S. policies and values and the U.S. as the partner of choice.** People-to-people ties underpin our bilateral relationship as we focus on the next generation of leaders and reformers. We will use tools such as the new American Center and our exchange and educational programs to help build the capacity for effective governance and journalism. We will continue to support a growing Peace Corps program with volunteers who strengthen the capacities of teachers, students, and community members and who promote cross-cultural understanding and friendship between our two countries. We will support civil society in its efforts to secure human rights for all, and women's participation and influence in decision-making at all levels and in all areas. We will increase law enforcement cooperation against transnational threats and partner to advance regional and global priorities of mutual interest in fora like ASEAN and the UN. We will support Myanmar's efforts to fulfill international obligations concerning non-proliferation, regional security, transnational crime, and other global challenges. We will pursue all our mission goals with attention to gender equality, adopting an inclusive approach to integrate gender concerns into all mission policy, programming, and management.

Our highest management priority is to open an Embassy Liaison Office in the capital, Nay Pyi Taw, as a platform for enhanced diplomacy, while also developing long term plans to open an embassy there. To further support our mission goals, we are developing a highly skilled workforce and strong mission culture, adaptable to change and reflective of our own diverse culture. These efforts are critical to our successful engagement with the Myanmar government and its people.

## II. Mission Strategic Framework

**Mission Goal 1: Our support for a peaceful and democratic Myanmar enhances U.S. and Myanmar security.**

**Mission Objective 1.1:** Reduce violent conflict through support for inclusive solutions to long-standing grievances.

**Mission Objective 1.2:** Strengthen institutions to promote good governance, rule of law and human rights, and to expand space for civil society and the media to support the democratic transition.

**Mission Objective 1.3:** Strengthen Myanmar's capacity to protect lives and rights of U.S. citizens, counter transnational threats, and respond to disasters.

**Mission Objective 1.4:** Increase civilian control, professionalism and accountability of the security services through capacity building programs and engagement activities.

**Mission Goal 2: Our economic and development partnership expands U.S. and Myanmar prosperity.**

**Mission Objective 2.1:** Promote Myanmar's transition to a more inclusive and open economy, while increasing bilateral trade and investment.

**Mission Objective 2.2:** Mitigate sources of fragility and transnational health threats by promoting healthy and resilient populations.

**Mission Goal 3: Our broad engagement builds support for U.S. policies and values and the U.S. as the partner of choice.**

**Mission Objective 3.1:** Deepen and expand people-to-people ties in order to promote greater understanding of and support for U.S. policies and values.

**Mission Objective 3.2:** Build Myanmar institutional support for U.S. policies and international norms.

**Management Objective 1:** Strengthen efficiency and effectiveness of Mission performance by investing the necessary resources for mission expansion to sustain and advance our diplomacy and development goals.

**Management Objective 2:** Enhance workforce performance by recruiting, developing, and retaining an agile and productive workforce. Fostering an organizational culture that embraces and models innovation, accountability, and diversity.

### III. Mission Goals and Objectives

**Mission Goal 1: Our support for a peaceful and democratic Myanmar enhances U.S. and Myanmar security.**

**Description and Linkages:** Enhancing U.S. and Myanmar security by supporting a peaceful and democratic Myanmar is Post's top policy and assistance priority. A peaceful and democratic Myanmar will be a better partner for the United States and our allies, a stronger counter against non-democratic forces in the region, and a bulwark against the expansion of violent extremist movements. To complete its transition to a peaceful democracy, Myanmar must increase civilian control, professionalism and accountability of the military and security services, strengthen institutions of good governance, expand space for civil society and media, and reduce violent conflict through inclusive solutions to grievances, and strengthen its capacity to respond to disasters and transnational threats. Mission Goal 1 links directly to Goal 1 of the Joint State/USAID Strategic Plan by supporting Goal 1.3: Counter instability, transnational crime, and violence that threaten U.S. interests by strengthening citizen-responsive governance, security, democracy, human rights, and rule of law. Mission Goal 1 also supports Pillar 3, Preserve Peace Through Strength, of the National Security Strategy and Presidential Executive Order 13773 focusing on Transnational Crime, through our proposed activities to combat crimes like drug trafficking, people trafficking and illegal trade in wildlife.

**Mission Objective 1.1:** Reduce violent conflict through support for inclusive solutions to long-standing grievances.

**Justification:** Myanmar continues to seek ways to foster legitimate and sustainable peace while pursuing the overall goal of national reconciliation after decades of conflict. Despite setbacks due to continuing violence and a national ceasefire agreement that so far does not encompass all warring factions, solutions continue to be pursued. Appropriate diplomatic engagement and sustained development assistance will be the hallmark of the US government's approach to conflict resolution and sustainable peace. If this Mission Objective is not achieved, Myanmar risks continued instability and an incomplete transition toward democracy or a slide back to authoritarian government.

**Mission Objective 1.2:** Strengthen institutions to promote good governance, rule of law and human rights, and to expand space for civil society and the media to support the democratic transition.

**Justification:** Supporting Myanmar's transition to democracy is a key priority of U.S. policy. A democratic Myanmar will be a better partner for the United States, a stronger counter against non-democratic forces in the region, and an ally in reducing factors that drive violent extremism. To complete its transition to democracy, Myanmar must adopt reforms consistent with international norms, undertake legal and regulatory reforms that support fundamental freedoms and human rights, and allow civil society and media organizations to operate independently and without intimidation and harassment. Mission Objective 1.2 links directly to Goal 1 of the Joint State/USAID Strategic Plan by supporting Goal 1.3: Counter instability, transnational crime, and violence that threaten U.S. interests by strengthening citizen-

responsive governance, security, democracy, human rights, and rule of law. If this Mission Objective is not achieved, Myanmar risks not completing its transition to an established democracy.

**Mission Objective 1.3:** Strengthen Myanmar's capacity to protect lives and rights of U.S. citizens, counter transnational threats, and respond to disasters.

**Justification:** The Embassy has no greater priority than the safety and security of U.S. citizens in Myanmar. Working with the Government of Myanmar, and when appropriate its military, to bolster its capacity to respond to transnational threats and disasters will not only serve to help permanent and transient U.S. citizens in Myanmar, it will also help the Myanmar government protect its citizens and the natural environment from irreversible damage. A lack of resources and technical capacity continue to hinder efforts to address environmental challenges like those created by the illegal trade in wildlife, resulting in great loss of biodiversity. Our efforts will focus on identifying and facilitating funding partnerships and capacity building in this area.

**Mission Objective 1.4:** Increase civilian control, professionalism and accountability of the security services through limited capacity building programs and engagement activities.

**Justification:** As part of a broader USG effort to support reform and democratic change, promote national reconciliation, and foster respect for human rights, when appropriate the Embassy will consult with Washington to resume limited and calibrated military-to-military engagement. While lack of civilian control of the security services, civil war, and human rights abuses have resulted in Congressional and international pressure to cease engagement with the Myanmar military, we continue constructive engagement with some elements of the police services. In the longer term, tailored interactions rather than disengagement will be more likely to promote positive change and professionalism among Myanmar's military and police services.

**Mission Goal 2: Our economic and development partnership expands U.S. and Myanmar prosperity.**

**Description and Linkages:** A geopolitical competition between free and repressive visions of world order is taking place in the Indo-Pacific region, which is the geographic source of two-thirds of global economic growth in 2017. By encouraging and assisting Myanmar to advance market-led economic reforms and reciprocal trade relationships, while addressing public health threats that impede inclusive economic growth and threaten global safety, Mission Goal 2 directly contributes to National Security Strategy's vision of a more prosperous United States through a more free and open Indo-Pacific region. This Goal also directly supports Goal 2 of the Joint State/USAID Strategic Plan to renew America's competitive advantage for sustained economic growth and job creation.

Efforts under Mission Goal 2 will help Myanmar protect hard-won democratic gains in the face of significant and longstanding challenges, by addressing key sources of fragility - limited access to health and economic opportunity. USG efforts will help the new government deliver tangible and broad-based improvements in social, economic, and health conditions that are essential for Myanmar to fully participate in the global economy. Without the pull of an inclusive and fast-developing economy and the promise of a better and healthier future the peace process and further democratic reforms will fail.

Recognizing the importance of gender equality to reaching a country's full economic potential, we will integrate gender equality priorities into all our work, ensuring women and girls have full and equal access to credit and economic opportunities. Economic and health assistance, especially early in Myanmar's democratic transition, provides a window of opportunity to help Myanmar become more peaceful, prosperous, and democratic, and represent arenas in which different ethnic groups and segments of the Myanmar population can converge around common values to build a shared interest in peace.

**Mission Objective 2.1:** Promote Myanmar's transition to a more inclusive and open economy, while increasing bilateral trade and investment.

**Justification Statement:** USG activities will invest in Myanmar's ability to stimulate broad-based, sustained economic growth throughout the economy by focusing on policy reforms and investments in sectors that offer the greatest positive impacts. These activities will build broad political support for further reforms, strengthen our economic ties and establish new economic opportunities in hopes of releasing a virtuous cycle that will be critical for sustaining democratic reforms, economic prosperity, the peace process, and a more inclusive Indo-Pacific region. This in turn promotes American prosperity by supporting Myanmar's continued economic reform. Recognizing that the lack of economic opportunity for women entails large economic costs, we support gender equality to help Myanmar achieve its full economic potential.

**Mission Objective 2.2:** Mitigate sources of fragility and transnational health threats by promoting healthy and resilient populations.

**Justification.** Decades of conflict and economic stagnation, combined with severe under-investment in the health sector, have prevented the development of adequate health infrastructure and services throughout the country, and limited Myanmar's ability to deal with major communicable diseases as well as broader emerging public health threats. As a result, Myanmar continues to face some of the highest HIV, malaria, tuberculosis and maternal and child mortality rates in the region, and is under-prepared for future epidemics. Poor quality of basic health care and gaps in access to services, particularly in remote and conflict-affected regions, also threaten to undermine broader peace efforts and trust-building, and represent a drag on productivity and economic growth. The U.S.-Myanmar partnership seeks to advance our mutual health and prosperity by mitigating sources of fragility arising from public health threats of international concern – such as multi-drug-resistant (MDR) TB and malaria, and emerging infectious diseases – as well as from persistent inequities in health access. U.S. investments work to improve health outcomes among vulnerable groups, while supporting Myanmar in building a stronger, more inclusive health system. Improving health is a key opportunity for the country to demonstrate that democratically-elected government is able to deliver tangible benefits to all communities, supporting longer-term peace and stability through a strengthened social contract. U.S. support for policies and interventions aimed at reaching poor, vulnerable and conflict-affected populations will support more inclusive economic growth to make Myanmar a stronger global strategic and trading partner in the future.

**Mission Goal 3: Our broad engagement builds support for U.S. policies and values and the U.S. as the partner of choice.**

**Description and Linkages:** Mission Goal 3 seeks to strengthen and build U.S. influence in the Indo-Pacific region and Myanmar. Utilizing public diplomacy we will provide an understanding of and will champion U.S. goals and values resulting in a clear preference for the U.S. as a strategic partner, directly supporting Pillar 4 of the National Security Strategy and Goal 3 of the Joint State/USAID Strategic Plan. By providing educational opportunities to key actors we will create an environment supportive of good governance and values that symbiotically align with those of the United States. Through strategic partnerships we will connect with communities and civil society to create shared value, purpose, and vision resulting in achieving our national security objectives. Additionally, supporting press freedom, transparency and a vibrant civil society in Myanmar is essential to serving as a counterweight to other regional actors and positioning the U.S. as the partner of choice.

**Mission Objective 3.1:** Deepen and expand people-to-people ties in order to promote greater understanding of and support for U.S. policies and values.

**Justification:** Cultivating connections and cross-cultural experiences makes U.S. policies and values relatable, encouraging others to adopt them. This objective addresses the closing space for civil society and media freedom since the 2015 elections, and encompasses strategies to inculcate critical thinking skills and media literacy.

**Mission Objective 3.2:** Build Myanmar institutional support for U.S. policies and international norms.

**Justification:** Building institutional support and relationships provides a degree of continuity and sustainability for U.S. efforts to build the bilateral relationship. Building institutional relationships insulates our efforts to a degree against changes of personnel and political climate.

## IV. Management Objectives

**Management Objective 1:** Strengthen efficiency and effectiveness of Mission performance by investing the necessary resources for mission expansion to sustain and advance our diplomacy and development goals.

**Justification:** To continue engagement and diplomacy with the Government of Myanmar and accomplish our mission goals, we require a permanent space in the capital city of Nay Pyi Taw and appropriate space in Yangon to carry out expanded mission priorities. The Government of Myanmar's bureaucratic processes and limited capacity make it difficult to negotiate leases and agree upon land acquisition terms in a timely manner. This presents a direct risk to our broader diplomatic objectives. To this end our management office will focus on overcoming these challenges while at the same time doing the necessary work to establish a permanent presence in Nay Pyi Taw. As we strive to open an Embassy Liaison Office (ELO) in Nay Pyi Taw, we will also work with OBO to optimize the space available at the Chancery in Yangon. This Management Objective 1 supports the Joint State/USAID Strategic Plan, specifically Objective 4.2 "the provision of modern and secure infrastructure and operational capabilities to support effective diplomacy".

**Management Objective 2:** Enhance workforce performance by recruiting, developing, and retaining an agile and productive workforce. Foster an organizational culture that embraces and models innovation, accountability, and diversity.

**Justification:** Objective 4.3 of the Joint State/USAID Strategic Plan requires us to enhance workforce performance, leadership, engagement and accountability and to execute our mission efficiently and effectively. The tertiary education system in Myanmar does not prepare students for the workforce as it does in countries like the United States. This poses a workforce management challenge and limits our ability to meet our Mission objectives. As local conditions in Myanmar continue to develop and change rapidly, we must ensure that our workforce, policies, and procedures reflect the current reality at Post and allow us to adapt to the changing environment. Our staff will continue to undergo skills training which will prepare them to face these challenges and allow them to operate effectively within our dynamic mission environment. We must also cultivate acceptance and support among all mission staff for gender equality and full inclusion for colleagues of all religions, ethnicities, gender identities, and disabilities.