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Analysis of the U.S. Appropriations Bills for Fiscal Year 2024
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Summary:

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2024 will not significantly update the previous year's NDAA with respect to Burma. The BURMA Act of 2022, which is a part of NDAA Fiscal Year 2023, remains in effect but does not provide a specific amount of funding.

Instead, the appropriations process will determine how much money goes to Burma in Fiscal Year 2024. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 provided \$136 million for Burma.

The Appropriations Committees of the House of Representatives and Senate have approved two different appropriations bills for funding the State Department, foreign operations, and related programs (SFOPS) in Fiscal Year 2024. The appropriations process will require both houses to negotiate and produce a final bill for approval by Congress and President Biden.

The House bill, H.R.4665 ([here](#)), recommends only \$50 million for implementation of the BURMA Act, as specified in the accompanying report ([here](#)).

The Senate bill, S.2438 ([here](#)), contains not less than \$121 million in appropriations for Burma through the Economic Support Fund. Crucially, it outlines specific goals which should be funded, as listed on page 50 of the accompanying report ([here](#)) and reproduced below:

BURMA: \$121,000,000

- of which, assistance programs, including in Thailand and India, and cross border programs- \$75,000,000
- of which, governance/federalism programs, including at the local and state levels- \$10,000,000
- of which, atrocity prevention and accountability, including for the documentation and preservation of evidence- \$7,000,000
- of which, accountability and justice for Rohingya- \$1,000,000
- of which, technical support and non-lethal assistance- \$25,000,000
- of which, support to former political prisoners- \$1,500,000
- of which, support for deserters- \$1,500,000

The Senate version also [recommends](#) “assistance under the GHP [Global Health Programs] heading for the people of Burma at not less than the prior fiscal year level.” (page 89) According

to a U.S. official, this would maintain the Fiscal Year 2023 funding of \$13.7 million via USAID and \$32.4 million via the State Department, resulting in an overall increase to \$167 million.

The \$167 million figure is separate from pre-existing funding streams related to Burma such as the National Endowment for Democracy or the U.S. Embassy in Burma.

The Senate's funding goals (for example, \$25 million for technical and non-lethal assistance) places stricter requirements on how the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) should spend appropriated Burma funds, unlike Fiscal Year 2023.

The main advocacy goal of the Chin Association of Maryland (CAM) is to preserve the Senate's explicit funding goals and overall figure of \$167 million as the appropriations process moves forward.

Authorized Groups:

The House bill's [report](#) states that, "The Committee encourages funding in support of democratic governance activities that engage the non-military aligned and democratically elected members of Parliament, the National Unity Government, and civil society organizations in a way that builds trust and cooperation among ethnic groups and communities." (p103)

While the Senate bill does not name specific organizations, it refers to implementation of the BURMA Act of 2022, which [provides](#) general authorization of appropriations for "each of the fiscal years 2023 through 2027." (p975)

Part 1 of the BURMA Act [states](#) that it is the policy of the United States to "support the efforts of the National Unity Government (NUG), the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC), the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), the Burmese Civil Disobedience Movement, and other entities in Burma and in other countries to oppose the Burmese military and bring about an end to the military junta's rule." (p968)

While the [authorization](#) of appropriations in Part 3 does not name all of these groups, it specifically includes "Burma's Ethnic Armed Organizations, People's Defense Forces, and prodemocracy movement organizations." (p975)

Notable Changes:

The FY 2024 Senate bill is meant to increase overall Burma funding; FY 2023's appropriation of \$136 million included Development Assistance (\$40 million), an Economic Support Fund (\$50 million), and Global Health Programs (\$46 million). The FY 2024 Senate bill eliminates Development Assistance but raises the Economic Support Fund to \$121 million, while recommending funds for Global Health Programs at the previous year's level of \$46 million.

Over the previous year, CAM has urged the United States to provide assistance to refugees in India, as well as cross-border assistance to Burma. The FY 2024 Senate bill explicitly includes funds for both of these efforts, an improvement over FY 2023.

The Senate bill is also notable for requiring a minimum of \$25 million to be spent on technical support and non-lethal assistance, and for requiring the State Department and USAID to [report](#) at least quarterly on their engagement with “entities in Burma defending themselves against the military junta regarding their non-lethal assistance needs” and the status of their specific assistance requests. (page 890)

While this stops short of the military aid that would require presidential authorization, it is the clearest direction yet for the U.S. Government to directly assist Burma’s pro-democracy resistance.

Relevant Documents:

- a. FY 2024 House SFOPS Appropriations Bill: H.R.4665 ([here](#))
- b. Accompanying Report for H.R.4665 ([here](#))
- c. FY 2024 Senate SFOPS Appropriations Bill: S.2438 ([here](#))
- d. Accompanying Report for S.2438 ([here](#))
- e. The BURMA Act of 2022 ([here](#))
- f. CAM’s FY 2023 Recommendations ([here](#))