

US: Myanmar legislation on birth control 'dangerous'

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The U.S. says legislation on population control approved by Myanmar's parliament is dangerous and could undermine the democratic hopes of minority groups.

State Department spokesman Jeff Rathke voiced deep concern Tuesday over the bill. He said it could provide a legal basis for discrimination through coercive and uneven application of [birth control](#) policies.

Human Rights Watch says the bill directs authorities to impose "birth spacing" restrictions. It would require a 36-month interval between each child and could allow forced contraception, the group said.

The bill is the first of four government-backed bills to "protect race and religion." Human Rights Watch says the legislation has been championed by activists with a racist and anti-Muslim agenda.

Rathke said women who have spoken out against the bills faced sexual harassment and death threats, demonstrating the "dangerous impact."

Myanmar is facing international criticism over its treatment of minority Rohingya Muslims who have fled the predominantly Buddhist country, causing a refugee crisis in Southeast Asia.

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