

JUSTICE FOR MYANMAR

Tokyo Olympics tainted by sponsorship from companies financing the Myanmar military's terror

July 22, 2021, Myanmar: The Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics has partnered with at least three businesses that continue to maintain commercial ties with the Myanmar army, in breach of their human rights responsibilities under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Sponsors include Mizuho Financial Group and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, which are “Tokyo 2020 Olympic Gold Partners”, and Daiwa House Industry, which is a “Tokyo 2020 Olympic Official Partner”. All three businesses are part of the Y Complex commercial real estate project in Yangon, on land leased from the Myanmar army’s office of the quartermaster general, which purchases arms for the military.

According to the Olympic Charter, fundamental principles of the Olympics include “respect for universal fundamental ethical principles” and the promotion of “a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity” through sport.

Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says: “*We are appalled that the Tokyo Organising Committee is partnering with companies that are complicit in the Myanmar military’s widening campaign of terror, which has involved the murder of over 900 people since the illegal February 1 attempted military coup. The military’s criminal conduct is enabled by companies like Daiwa House Industry, Mizuho and SMBC, which provides the military with a direct source of revenue. These companies have failed to uphold their human rights responsibilities. Promoting these companies through the Tokyo Olympics taints the games and goes against the fundamental principles of Olympism. We call on the Tokyo Organising Committee to revoke sponsorships with these companies that are aiding the Myanmar military’s atrocities.*”

The Y Complex project is being developed by Daiwa House Industry and Tokyo Tatemono, co-financed by Mizuho and SMBC, under a Build, Operate, Transfer (B.O.T.) agreement with the Myanmar army. In addition to annual lease payments of US\$2.163 million, the army will take ownership of the building on completion of the lease, providing a continued source of revenue which can be used to finance their war crimes and crimes against humanity. Parties to the Y Complex project also include two publicly funded entities: Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corporation for Transport and Urban Development (JOIN).

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In August 2019, the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar published a report into the Myanmar military's economic interests and recommended that businesses end their commercial relationships with the Myanmar military and entities it owns or controls, specifying real estate rental as a type of relationship. The parties to the Y Complex project have failed to implement these recommendations.

Note to editors

See joint press release on Y Complex: <https://www.justiceformyanmar.org/press-releases/japan-stop-real-estate-project-in-myanmar>

See joint submission to the United Nations Working Group on Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises regarding Y Complex:

<https://www.justiceformyanmar.org/press-releases/submission-by-civil-society-organizations-concerning-japanese-business-entities-operating-in-myanmar>

See Justice For Myanmar's web features on Y Complex:

<https://www.justiceformyanmar.org/stories/land-lease-payments-tie-japanese-gov-and-investors-to-myanmars-military> and <https://www.justiceformyanmar.org/stories/y-complex>

Justice For Myanmar, a group of covert activists campaigning for justice and accountability for the people of Myanmar, is calling for an end to military business and for federal democracy and a sustainable peace.

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