

Intelsat providing Myanmar with unrestricted satellite communications that can be used for military purposes

JFM calls for urgent action to prevent military use of satcom

Aug. 4, 2021, Myanmar: US/Luxembourg satellite company Intelsat is continuing to lease transponder capacity to Myanmar's brutal military junta via a UK subsidiary. Intelsat confirmed to Justice For Myanmar that they do not know how the capacity is being utilised. Intelsat would not answer questions regarding their compliance with sanctions in the EU and UK, which restrict the sale of technology to Myanmar that can be used for internal repression.

Myanmar's agreement to lease capacity on Intelsat 39, branded Myanmarsat-2, was signed in 2018 and the Maxar Technologies-built satellite was launched in 2019. The agreement was signed by the Ministry of Transport and Communications, under the National League for Democracy-led government. However, it was overseen by a steering committee headed by military appointed Vice President Lt Gen Myint Swe. Committee members included the ministers of defence and home affairs, who are also military appointees, raising serious concerns over Intelsat's human rights due diligence following the military's genocide against the Rohingya.

Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says: *"We call on Intelsat to act immediately to prevent the illegal and murderous Myanmar junta from using satellite capacity for military purposes. The Myanmarsat-2 agreement was signed under the National League for Democracy-led government and Intelsat must now consult with the National Unity Government over their continued business in Myanmar, not the illegal junta. We also call on the UK, Luxembourg, and US governments to ensure Intelsat is in compliance with sanctions and protecting human rights in Myanmar. The military has been widening its nationwide terror campaign against the Myanmar people and has murdered over 940 civilians, including children. More than 5,400 have been arrested, facing torture. We have grave concerns that satellite communications now under junta control can be used to support their violent attacks against the Myanmar people."*

JUSTICE FOR MYANMAR

Note to editors

See Justice For Myanmar's feature on Intelsat here: www.justiceformyanmar.org/stories/intelsat-leasing-satellite-capacity-to-myanmar-junta-that-can-be-used-for-military-communications

See more on the Myanmar military's access to satellites in our report, 'Nodes of Corruption, Lines of Abuse': <https://www.justiceformyanmar.org/stories/nodes-of-corruption-lines-of-abuse-how-mytel-viettel-and-a-global-network-of-businesses-support-the-international-crimes-of-the-myanmar-military>

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.

ENDS

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