

May 10, 2022 | Myanmar

ASEAN's complicity in the Myanmar military's atrocity crimes exposed

Through ongoing defence and military cooperation, it is likely that ASEAN is aiding and abetting the Myanmar military's atrocity crimes, a Justice For Myanmar investigation has concluded.

ASEAN's defence program, detailed by Justice For Myanmar, has allowed the Myanmar military to participate in meetings, training, intelligence exchanges, arms production, R&D, cyber security, and education, under the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) umbrella.

The Myanmar military's involvement in ADMM has supported it to build its capabilities, access arms, find sources of revenue, seek international legitimacy, develop content for propaganda purposes, and forge bilateral military ties with ASEAN members and regional powers.

ASEAN has been engaging with the Myanmar military, knowing that it has repeatedly violated international human rights and humanitarian law.

Since the Myanmar military began an illegal attempted coup on February 1, 2021, ASEAN has allowed it to join defence sector activities, including as co-chair of the bloc's ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Counter Terrorism with the Russian regime.

As the region's key intergovernmental organisation, ASEAN could help prevent the Myanmar military's commission of atrocity crimes. Yet it has not only repeatedly failed to take action, but is complicit in those crimes by providing support and legitimacy to the Myanmar military.

The central role ASEAN plays in the Indo-Pacific region has also impeded coordinated international action to stop the Myanmar military's international crimes, and facilitated the illegitimate junta's defence engagement with regional democracies Australia, India, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and the USA, through ADMM-Plus.

Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says: "ASEAN has utterly failed to uphold international human rights and humanitarian law.

"ASEAN knows full well that the Myanmar military committed genocide against the Rohingya, continues to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity, and staged an attempted coup.

"ASEAN cannot plead ignorance about the crimes that the military is committing, its undermining of democracy and brutal attack on the people of Myanmar.

"Yet its response has been to provide practical assistance, encouragement and support to the military as it terrorises the people of Myanmar.

"ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus has not only utterly failed to resolve Myanmar crisis but enabled the bloc's status quo of complicity with the terrorist junta who created the crisis.

"Justice For Myanmar calls on ASEAN to immediately change course, exclude the illegal Myanmar and work with the NUG to resolve the Myanmar crisis.

“ADMM-Plus countries must stop hiding behind ASEAN and take immediate steps to end the bloc’s complicity in the Myanmar military’s atrocity crimes.

“As the US hosts the US-ASEAN Special Summit, it must commit to end its multilateral engagement with the terrorist junta and demand ASEAN stop aiding and abetting the Myanmar military’s atrocity crimes.

“We call on the US to boycott ASEAN events that include the illegal junta, including the defence maritime security working group that it co-chairs.”

Justice For Myanmar calls for the following urgent action:

ASEAN

1. Exclude the Myanmar military junta from all meetings and activities.
2. Recognise the National Unity Government as the legitimate government of Myanmar, and work with it to resolve the Myanmar crisis.
3. Take concrete action to end the Myanmar military’s violence against the Myanmar people.
4. Create an ASEAN sanctions framework, and encourage ASEAN members to impose an arms embargo and targeted sanctions on the Myanmar military and its business interests.
5. Cooperate with UN Member States to impose a global arms embargo on Myanmar and to refer the Myanmar situation to the International Criminal Court through the UN Security Council.

ADMM-Plus countries (Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Russia and the USA):

1. Call on ASEAN to exclude the Myanmar military junta from all meetings and activities, and end the Myanmar military’s violence against the Myanmar people.
2. Recognise and support the National Unity Government as the legitimate government of Myanmar, and work with it to resolve the Myanmar crisis.
3. Urge ASEAN to recognise the National Unity Government and work with it to resolve the Myanmar crisis.
4. Boycott ASEAN meetings and activities that include the Myanmar military junta.
5. Impose an arms embargo and targeted sanctions against the Myanmar military and its business interests.
6. Cooperate with UN Member States to impose a global arms embargo on Myanmar and to refer the Myanmar situation to the International Criminal Court through the UN Security Council.

More information:

Read our feature on ASEAN’s complicity in the Myanmar military’s atrocity crimes [here](#)

See our Cartel Finance Map on ASEAN business links with the Myanmar military [here](#)

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