

April 28, 2023 | Myanmar

Canal+ and Thaicom are broadcasting Myanmar junta incitement of genocide & images of prisoners of war against international law

Canal+ and its satellite partner, Thaicom, are broadcasting Myanmar military junta propaganda against their responsibilities under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the OECD Guidelines, and international law and norms.

The illegal Myanmar military junta uses television for psychological warfare as part of its campaign of terror against the people, in breach of international law, and this content is broadcast by Canal+ and Thaicom.

Canal+ operates a subscription television business in Myanmar in partnership with the crony company Forever Group, launched in 2018. Forever Group is a longstanding broadcast partner of the military and was formerly sanctioned by the EU.

Canal+ is a subsidiary of the French corporation, Vivendi SA, which also owns Gameloft, Dailymotion and Havas Group.

In 2019, Canal+ signed a capacity agreement with the Thai publicly listed satellite corporation Thaicom to broadcast content through the satellite, Thaicom 6.

Thaicom has deep links to the Myanmar military. It formerly broadcast the army's Myawaddy TV (MWD) channels and Thaicom has its own service agreement with Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV), which was renewed in 2021.

MWD is run by the Directorate of Public Relations and Psychological Warfare of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), Soe Win, who is sanctioned by the EU. MRTV is run by the Ministry of Information, illegally controlled by the military. The junta's information minister, Maung Maung Ohn, has also been sanctioned by the EU.

By broadcasting MWD, MRTV and the junta's international propaganda channel, MITV, Canal+ and Thaicom regularly distribute images of individuals that the junta has captured as claimed members of the People's Defence Forces, and are routinely subject to torture, arbitrary imprisonment and death in junta custody.

The broadcast of these images are against the spirit of Article 13(2) of the Third Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (1949): "prisoners of war must at all times be protected, particularly against acts of violence or intimidation *and against insults and public curiosity.*"

Article 13(2) can be interpreted as applicable to "any materials that enable individual prisoners to be identified must normally be regarded as subjecting them to public curiosity and, therefore, may not be transmitted, published or broadcast."

While Article 13(2) originally applied to international armed conflict, Protocol II extends the application of the Geneva Conventions to non-international armed conflicts.

France and Thailand have both ratified Protocol II, and as such have a responsibility to prevent companies in their territory from violating the Geneva Conventions.

Images of prisoners shown on MRTV and broadcast by Canal+ and Thaicom include close-ups of individuals detained by the junta with signs of torture, such as swollen faces and with their names identified.

Canal+ and Thaicom also broadcast content that refers to Rohingya as “Bengali”, a term associated with the military's genocidal intent because it is intended to Other and dehumanise Rohingya.

By doing so, the junta, which unlawfully claims to be the government of Myanmar, is disregarding the Provisional Measures imposed by the International Court of Justice in *The Gambia v. Myanmar* case under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide prohibiting, among other actions, incitement to genocide.

Recent content include footage of Rohingya arbitrarily detained when trying to flee the conditions imposed on them by the genocidal military, which include confinement in camps that amounts to the crime of apartheid.

Canal+ has enhanced corporate human rights responsibilities because of its status as a multinational enterprise. It should follow the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises that obligates multinational enterprises to "consider additional standards" and to pay particular attention to situations of armed conflict and the applicability of international humanitarian law.

Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says: "The genocidal Myanmar military is waging a campaign of terror against the people of Myanmar, in which it uses media for psychological warfare, spreading fear, disinformation and hate.

“By broadcasting MWD, MRTV and MITV, major weapons of the junta’s propaganda arsenal, Canal+ and Thaicom are blatantly disregarding their human rights responsibilities and obligations under international law.

“Through the broadcast of the junta’s images of captured PDFs, Canal+ and Thaicom are making a commodified spectacle of prisoners of war, against the spirit of the Geneva Conventions, which their home countries, France and Thailand, are signatory to.

“The fact that Canal+ and Thaicom also transmit content that refers to Rohingya as “Bengali”, disregards the Provisional Measures imposed by the ICJ that prohibit the direct and public incitement of genocide.

“Canal+ and Thaicom are broadcasting MWD and MRTV's use of the term ‘Bengali’, knowing it is a genocidal slur.

“We call on Canal+ and Thaicom to immediately stop broadcasting junta propaganda and to abide by their responsibilities under the OECD Guidelines and international law.

“France and Thailand, who are responsible for the conduct of companies in their territories, should take urgent steps to ensure that their companies are upholding international law and norms in their business in Myanmar.”

Canal+ and Thaicom did not respond to questions from Justice For Myanmar.

More information:

Read reporting in Le Monde on the [broadcast of junta propaganda by Canal+](#)

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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.