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## **Japan's railway projects risk aiding & abetting Myanmar junta's crimes**

*Japan must suspend development assistance until there is a transition to federal democracy*

Japan has continued railway improvement projects following the Myanmar military's illegal coup attempt, a Justice For Myanmar investigation based on public sources and leaked documents has revealed.

Japanese multinational corporations have received millions in revenue from Myanma Railways under projects financed by loans from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) that were awarded before the attempted coup.

Myanma Railways is a state agency unlawfully controlled by the junta. Following the coup attempt, an estimated 90% of its 30,000 workers courageously joined the Civil Disobedience Movement, refusing to work under the junta and risking their lives and livelihoods.

The continuation of the railway improvement projects legitimises the junta and provides it with increased logistical capacity.

The junta uses trains to move troops, arms and other supplies as it commits atrocity crimes across Myanmar with total impunity. Through the project, the Japanese government and the corporations involved risk aiding and abetting the junta's international crimes by providing it with logistical support.

JICA told Justice For Myanmar that under the bilateral agreement, which was made before the coup attempt, the projects shall not be used for military purposes.

However, the Japanese government and the corporations involved are unable to prevent misuse by the junta.

Recently, the junta was caught misusing boats donated by Japan for civilian use to move troops in Arakan State. Japan made a complaint to the junta about it last month, but details of any further action have not been made public.

Under the railway improvement projects, work is being carried out by multinational corporations from Japan and the EU, in partnership with Myanmar military crony companies. Public sources and leaked documents, including from Distributed Denial of Secrets, show:

- The Spanish corporation Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles (CAF) and Mitsubishi Corporation are supplying new trains to the junta.
- Daiwa House subsidiary Fujita Corporation, Sumitomo Corporation and Nippon Signal Co. Ltd. are doing track and station upgrades, bridgework and work on signal and communication equipment under a contract signed in 2019. Fujita received revenues of 29.7 billion kyat from Myanma Railways for work on the Yangon to Bago section of the

project in 2022, equivalent to over US\$15 million, according to leaked tax filings.

- Tekken Corporation and Rinkai Nissan Construction are working on the Bago to Nyaunglebin section of the track under a deal awarded in 2018, while Tokyu Construction is working on the Nyaunglebin to Taungoo section, with Toenec Corporation doing signalling and communications upgrades

Justice For Myanmar calls on the Japanese government and the businesses involved in the railways improvement projects to immediately suspend work until Myanmar's transition to federal democracy.

Japan should stand with the people of Myanmar and fulfil its international obligations by imposing sanctions on the junta and its business interests and suspending all official development assistance projects in Myanmar.

The Spanish government should investigate CAF's business with the military junta and take swift action if EU sanctions have been breached.

**Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says:** "By allowing its railway improvement projects to continue, the Japanese government is legitimising the junta and providing it with resources that will support its campaign of terror against the people of Myanmar.

"Since its illegal coup attempt, the junta has killed more than 3,500 people and arbitrarily arrested over 22,700. Mass atrocities are being committed by the junta daily, including indiscriminate airstrikes, shelling, rape and torture.

"By continuing the project, Japan and major multinational corporations risk complicity in these international crimes.

"Japan needs to get on the right track for the people of Myanmar, suspend all official development assistance projects, and impose sanctions on the junta and its businesses.

"Myanma Railways are part of the Myanmar military cartel, and the businesses working with it need to responsibly cut ties, in accordance with their international human rights obligations.

"The role of CAF raises serious questions for the Spanish government and the EU over continued business links with the junta that need to be addressed."

### **More information:**

Read our feature on Japan's railway improvement projects [here](#)

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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.