

New report names five French banks and a pension fund supporting Myanmar military junta

Press Release, Paris, July 6, 2023 - More than two years after the attempted military coup in Myanmar, and two years after financial institutions' investments in Myanmar's military cartel were first exposed in a Justice For Myanmar and BankTrack [briefing](#), five major French banks and a pension fund continue to invest in twenty-two companies linked to the Myanmar military junta, [a report published today](#) by Info Birmanie, BankTrack and Justice for Myanmar found. The junta is accused of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The report, which is endorsed by ALTSEAN-Burma, FIDH and Reporters without Borders, reveals that these investments by Crédit Agricole, La Banque Postale, the BPCE group, BNP Paribas, Société Générale and the Fonds de Réserve pour les Retraites (FRR) amount to over US\$6 billion, 75% of which is in the fossil fuel sector. Investments were also made in companies that sell arms to the junta and in companies operating in the telecommunications sector that enables the junta's surveillance. With US\$4 billion, Crédit Agricole accounts for most of the investments.

The companies in which these six financial institutions are shareholders have been divided into two categories: those with a direct and long-standing relationship with the Myanmar military or with companies controlled by the Myanmar military before the coup (category 1), and those with a direct business relationship with state-owned companies under military control following the coup of February 1, 2021 (category 2).

The report highlights the connection of these investments to fueling widespread and systematic human rights violations in Myanmar, including the imprisonment of 70 journalists and other severe restrictions on press freedom.

It reveals that Crédit Agricole is investing in India's state-owned company Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) that has been implicated in the sale of military equipment to the Myanmar junta since the 2021 coup attempt. BEL is also a leading partner of the Thalès Group.

The findings are published while France is preparing to welcome Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a guest of honour at the July 14th Bastille Day parade in Paris, as part of the celebrations marking the 25th anniversary of the France-India partnership.

French investments and the partnership between India and France in the field of defence should be rigorously scrutinised in the light of these findings, to prevent French institutions from helping to finance the flow of arms and technology to the junta.

Crédit Agricole also invests in Sinotruk Hong Kong Ltd, a company scrutinised in a recent [report](#) from Tom Andrews, UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar, for transferring equipment to the Military junta since the coup attempt¹.

¹ "The Billion Dollar Death Trade: The International Arms Networks that Enable Human Rights Violations in Myanmar", Report Conference room paper of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar §96 : [crp-sr-myanmar-2023-05-17.pdf \(ohchr.org\)](https://www.ohchr.org/documents/e/hqrrp/2023/05/crp-sr-myanmar-2023-05-17.pdf)

Crédit Agricole, Groupe BPCE, BNP Paribas, Banque Postale and Fonds de Réserve pour les retraites also hold shares in the Japanese company KDDI and its partner Sumitomo Corporation. These companies in the telecommunications sector continue to do business with the military junta through their joint operations with Myanma Posts and Telecommunications (MPT), supporting the junta's surveillance capabilities.

The report calls on the five banks and the pension fund to comply with their obligations under France's 2017 Duty of Care Law and international standards on business and human rights. The report authors urge the financial institutions to divest immediately and responsibly from companies listed in category 1 and to sell their shares in category 2 companies if they do not cease their support for the junta. France must ensure that the Pension Reserve Fund does not invest in companies linked to the Myanmar military.

The data published in the report highlights the need for France to give the Duty of Care Law its full practical scope with regard to companies in the financial sector and the importance of the negotiations underway at European level to adopt a directive on corporate due diligence. Several countries, including France, have been reported to lobby for a restricted scope of application for the text under negotiation, excluding the financial sector. Continued vigilance and scrutiny of the ongoing negotiations is needed until the final text includes the financial sector.

Info Birmanie's coordinator highlights that *"it is urgent to see Crédit Agricole divest from Indian arms manufacturer Bharat Electronics Limited, which Norges Bank Investment Management, a Norwegian sovereign wealth fund, in particular, divested from because of its arms sales to the Myanmar junta."*

Yadanar Maung, Justice For Myanmar spokesperson says: *"It is unacceptable that French banks and a pension fund continue to invest in companies with known ties to the Myanmar military junta that is committing atrocity crimes against the people of Myanmar with impunity. These banks must act now to ensure they are in no way supporting the junta. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, we urge France to take a firm stance against the flow of arms to the junta, including from India, and push for a global arms embargo."*

Henriette Butijn, Climate campaigner & researcher at BankTrack adds : *"It is outrageous that these banks have still not taken adequate action to assess and cut ties with companies linked to the Myanmar junta, even after their investments were exposed two years ago. That is two years in which the junta has been able to use the revenues from fossil fuels and the products from companies like Bharat Electronics to terrorise the population. By failing to act on their investments, these five French financiers are not only in breach of the OECD Guidelines and UNGPs, they are also betraying the people of Myanmar."*

Press contacts:

BankTrack: henriette@banktrack.org

Info Birmanie: coordination@info-birmanie.org + 33 7 62 80 61 33 (signal)

Justice For Myanmar: media@justiceformyanmar.org