

September 8, 2023 | Myanmar

## **JFM calls on other ASEAN members to refuse to attend air force meeting following Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines**

Justice For Myanmar calls on other ASEAN members to follow Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines in refusing to attend the upcoming ASEAN Air Chiefs' Conference (AACC), heeding the outcry from Myanmar and international civil society.

We call on ASEAN members to bar the illegal junta from all ASEAN defence activities, and failing that, to refuse to attend activities in which the junta participates.

The Myanmar junta's air force head, Htun Aung, is the chair of AACC, and is currently commanding an indiscriminate campaign of aerial terror, slaughtering men, women and children, and destroying homes, schools, places of worship and whole villages.

According to [reporting by AFP](#), the Thai air force chief is the only confirmed attendee of the 2023 AACC, while the air forces of Singapore, Brunei and Vietnam did not respond to questions.

Cambodia's air force chief refused to comment to AFP on whether he will attend the meeting, which will be held in Naypyidaw from September 12-15.

Justice For Myanmar condemns ASEAN's continued and direct support for the Myanmar air force, army and navy as it commits genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes with total impunity.

In August, Singapore was the only ASEAN member state that refused to attend a [counter terrorism tabletop military exercise](#) in Naypyidaw, chaired by the military junta with the Russian regime.

From September 25-30, the junta is scheduled to co-chair an ASEAN counter terrorism field training exercise in Russia, which ASEAN leaders must cancel, or refuse to attend if it goes ahead.

Myanmar and international civil society organisations have repeatedly denounced ASEAN's defence cooperation with the illegal military junta, called for the junta's exclusion from ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) activities, and urged countries to boycott defence activities that include the junta.

In an [oral update](#) to the UN Human Rights Council in July 2023, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar slammed ASEAN's appointment of Htun Aung as AACC chair, stating that "those responsible for these atrocities should not be serving in leadership positions in ASEAN. They should be serving sentences for their crimes."

**Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says:** "The refusal of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines to attend the AACC sends a clear and strong message to the military junta that it is losing support.

"It is untenable for a criminal junta that is committing atrocities with total impunity to chair a regional conference.

“Other ASEAN air force chiefs should follow the example of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines and refuse to attend the AACC with the illegal junta.

“ASEAN must take a firm stand against the illegal junta and its aerial campaign of terror, led by the current AACC chair Htun Aung, who is a war criminal.

“ASEAN must stop providing legitimacy and support to the Myanmar military, which totally disregards and directly undermines its own commitments to resolve the crisis in Myanmar.

“We call on ASEAN members to bar the junta from defence meetings and activities, and refuse to attend when the junta participates.”

**More information:**

Read our previous press release on AACC [here](#)

Read our press release on ASEAN’s counter terrorism military training exercise [here](#)

Read our investigation into ADMM [here](#)

[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.

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