

January 31, 2024 | Myanmar

Three years of resistance has blocked the illegal Myanmar junta from taking control

The Myanmar military cartel must be dismantled

In February of 2021, the Myanmar military launched its illegal attempt to seize power. In the three years since, the junta has failed to gain control of the country because of the courageous resistance of Myanmar people.

The Myanmar military has a decades-long record of mass killings, torture, sexual violence and other gross human rights violations against ethnic and religious minorities in particular. Since the attempted coup three years ago, the junta has committed widespread atrocity crimes and grave human rights violations with total impunity, and caused an economic and humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. The military's unprecedented violence and inhuman acts have been enabled by a network of domestic and international companies, illicit trade in natural resources and drugs, and ASEAN's provision of diplomatic, military, technical, financial and intelligence.

How has the resistance movement come this far?

- **Spring Revolution:** On the ground in Myanmar, ordinary people rose up across ethnic, religious, generational and class lines. They organised strikes against the illegitimate junta, boycotted military businesses and took up arms alongside ethnic armies to defend democracy. The Myanmar military has lost thousands of troops through defection and many others have surrendered. They continue to lose ground on all fronts to an alliance of ethnic armies and Spring Revolution resistance and defence forces.
- **Humanitarian Aid:** People-to-people community-based emergency humanitarian aid have supported and saved lives of the most vulnerable population displaced by the Myanmar military's campaign of terror. They continue to resist the military junta as frontline humanitarians.
- **Sanctions:** Courageous people throughout Myanmar, the diaspora and civil society organisations around the world acting in solidarity urged governments to act. Coordinated targeted sanctions are hitting the military's global arms and financial network.
- **Boycotts:** Mass boycotts against military products have hit the generals' hip pockets and irreparably hurt their corrupt network of businesses. Products like Myanmar Beer, Red Ruby cigarettes and Mytel sim cards have been removed from shops and publicly destroyed. **Divestment:** Under pressure, companies have cut ties with the military and its businesses, and shareholders have divested from companies that continued business as usual with the junta. Multinational corporations have divested hundreds of millions of dollars from business with the military.

Together we can dismantle the military cartel.

In 2023, [Justice for Myanmar published a report](#) identifying 22 foreign governments, 26 intergovernmental organisations (including 14 UN entities), 8 foreign financial institutions, and 8 other international organisations that have provided the junta with political and financial support.

The report also recognises “an increasing number of governments and organisations that have taken steps to prevent or rectify their support for the military junta”.

While rounds of sanctions have been imposed by the US, UK, Canada, EU and Australia on senior junta individuals and some of the junta’s business interests, ASEAN’s approach to the Myanmar military junta has been one of enablement and complicity. ASEAN has allowed the junta to participate in and even lead regional initiatives for military cooperation and training. Notably, Singapore remains the third biggest supplier of arms and equipment to the Myanmar military since its coup attempt, in a trade valued at \$254 million from at least 138 Singaporean companies, according to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar.

Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says: “For three years the people of Myanmar have successfully blocked the illegal military junta from taking control of their communities, country and future.

“The people of Myanmar have refused to accept or legitimise the junta.

“Myanmar’s federal democracy forces are rapidly expanding territorial, governance and administrative control and thousands of soldiers have defected or surrendered from the military itself.

“Targeted sanctions have hit the military cartel’s global network and multinational corporations have divested hundreds of millions of dollars from business with the illegal junta.

“It’s a three-year long losing streak caused by pressure from all sides.

“The international community needs to unite around the use sanctions and step up to finally cut off the flow of revenue and arms, equipment, technology and jet fuel to the junta to protect civilian lives.

“They must listen to the Myanmar people resisting the military and act in solidarity now.”

More information:

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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