

March 8, 2024 | Myanmar

JFM calls on Italy to take swift action against Rachel Tayza, following legal submission

On March 4, 2024, the French lawyers William Bourdon and Lily Ravon reported Htoo Htwe Tay Za, also known as Rachel Tayza, to Italian authorities on behalf of Justice For Myanmar, requesting that they investigate her involvement as a shareholder and director of companies that are part of the EU-sanctioned Htoo Group of Companies, and where appropriate, to freeze her assets and to remove her from Italy.

Rachel Tayza has continued to reside in Italy and conduct business for the EU-sanctioned Htoo Group of Companies, a crony conglomerate that is owned by her family.

Htoo Group is a key node in the Myanmar military's international network of businesses that provides it with funds, arms and equipment, which aids and abets genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. It does this through its network of more than 60 businesses in Myanmar and Singapore in sectors throughout the economy, including extractive industries.

Htoo Group is also sanctioned by the US, UK and Canada.

In its reasons for sanctions, the EU noted, "Htoo Group of Companies has acted as an intermediary for the provision of military equipment which was used against civilian populations protesting against the 1 February coup, all across the country and in particular in areas with ethnic minorities."

William Bourdon and Lily Ravon also submitted a dossier to Rachel Tayza's bank, Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, which is owned by BNP Paribas, urging that they take action under EU sanctions.

Rachel Tayza has been residing in Milan, where she recently completed her studies at a fashion school, supported by proceeds from Htoo Group of Companies, according to a Justice For Myanmar investigation.

While in Italy, Rachel has continued to hold shares and act as director of at least seven Htoo Group companies, including ones newly formed after the military's coup attempt, and those in direct business with the Myanmar army.

This includes Ayeyarwaddy Resorts and Lodges Company Limited, which has build-operate-transfer contracts with the Myanmar army's EU-sanctioned Office of the Quarter Master General. One of their projects is for a commercial project on 22 acres of land in Yangon, which provides the military with approximately USD\$1.65 million annually under a 50-year contract, according to Myanmar Investment Commission data released by Distributed Denial of Secrets.

Other companies Rachel holds shares in and serves as a director from Italy are Pegu Wood Company Limited, a subsidiary of Htoo Capital Company Limited, and One Fibre Company Limited, a subsidiary of Htoo Tech Company Limited, both established after the military's illegal coup attempt.

Rachel was previously a director and shareholder in the now dissolved Myanmar Avia Export Company Limited, a Myanmar military arms broker that supplied Russian military aircraft and spare parts.

Rachel was sanctioned by the USA on January 31, 2023 for her active role in Htoo Group of Companies and for being the adult daughter of the Htoo Group Chairperson, Tay Za. Tay Za is sanctioned by the EU, USA, UK and Canada. Rachel's brothers, Pye Phyto Tay Za and Htoo Htet Tay Za, are sanctioned by the USA, UK and Canada.

In addition to providing arms, Htoo Group donated funds to the Myanmar military in 2017 in support of their campaign of genocide against the Rohingya, a fact noted in the EU's sanctions designation against the conglomerate.

Justice For Myanmar urges the EU to impose sanctions on the whole Htoo Group network of companies and individuals, including Rachel Tayza, as well as all other Myanmar junta cronies and arms brokers.

Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says: "Weak sanctions enforcement by Italian authorities has allowed Rachel Tayza to do business in Italy that funds an illegal and illegitimate military junta.

"Rachel Tayza and her family have long aided and abetted the Myanmar military's endless war crimes and crimes against humanity through Htoo Group of Companies and profited from the bloodshed of Myanmar people.

"Rachel Tayza should be held accountable under EU sanctions and Italy needs to ensure that she and no other Myanmar cronies can do their bloodstained business on Italian soil.

"The EU and other governments need to do far more to block the junta's access to funds and arms through more concerted, strategic and coordinated sanctions that cover whole networks of companies, and through far stronger enforcement.

"For three years, the people of Myanmar have courageously resisted the military's failing attempted coup.

"Italy and the EU must stand with the people of Myanmar in the struggle to build a new and inclusive Myanmar that respects human rights and guarantees justice and accountability."

More information:

Read the legal submission to Italian authorities [here](#)

Read the legal submission to Banca Nazionale del Lavoro and BNP Paribas [here](#)

Read our investigation into Htoo Group of Companies [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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