



Karen BGF/KNA regional criminal network exposed

JFM calls for sanctions and accountability

The Myanmar junta-allied Karen Border Guard Force (BGF), rebranded as the Karen National Army (KNA), has built a transnational network of businesses that enriches the militia's ruling family and their associates, and causes widespread suffering.

A Justice For Myanmar investigation into the Karen BGF/KNA corporate structure and regional network provides new details into the militia's involvement in illegal and abusive businesses with companies and individuals from Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Cambodia, China and Hong Kong.

These include cyber scam parks, illegal casinos and illegal online gambling as the junta and its allied Karen BGF/KNA continue to commit international crimes with total impunity.

Malaysians play a prominent role in the Yatai New City and Dongmei Park projects, which involve a vast range of criminal activities and human rights violations.

Yatai New City is a mega development with illegal casinos, cyber scam and illegal online gambling operations and is a joint venture between the Karen BGF/KNA and Yatai International Holding Group. In 2022, Yatai's chairperson, She Zhijiang, was arrested in Thailand on an international warrant and is awaiting extradition to China to answer charges of running illegal gambling operations. The two remaining members of Yatai Group in the company's Myanmar joint venture were Malaysian citizens.

Dongmei Park is a cyber scam park established by former 14K Triad boss Wan Kuok-koi (also known as Broken Tooth) with Malaysian associates that include former deputy minister to the prime minister Dato Dr Mashitah Ibrahim and her husband, Datuk Abdul Shakor bin Abu Bakar, a former diplomat. The couple traveled to Karen State in 2020 with a contingent of prominent Malaysians and Wan Kuok-koi to launch the project. Datuk Abdul Shakor bin Abu Bakar continues to serve as a director and shareholder of Dongmei Group's US-sanctioned Hong Kong company.

The investigation also exposes new connections between Thai companies and individuals and Karen BGF/KNA businesses, including a trip to Shwe Kokko by representatives of the Thai state-owned EXIM Bank, Bangkok Bank, Kasikorn Bank and Krungthai Bank via an unofficial Karen BGF border crossing to discuss financial support.

The investigation details the central role San Myint (who goes by the pseudonym Saw Chit Thu) and his children play in Karen BGF/KNA companies. By distributing shares between family members, San Myint's family controls six Karen BGF/KNA business and has a minority stake in two notorious cyber scam parks: Apollo Park and Yulong Bay Park. In both of these businesses, San Myint's son, Saw Htoo Eh Moo, a Karen BGF/KNA major, is a director and shareholder.

Justice For Myanmar calls for urgent sanctions against the Karen BGF/KNA, its businesses and key individuals, including San Myint and his family.

Justice For Myanmar calls for Malaysia and Thailand in particular, as well as other authorities in the region, to investigate and hold their citizens and residents accountable for their involvement in transnational crimes and human rights violations in Myanmar.

Thailand must block the Karen BGF/KNA and its business associates from operating in its territory.

Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says: "The Karen BGF/KNA is responsible for war crimes and transnational crimes, which it commits with total impunity.

"The illegal junta not only protects these criminal activities but also profits from them as it continues to wage a war of terror against the people of Myanmar.

"The Karen BGF/KNA and junta's international and transnational crimes have continued amid insufficient international action to resolve the crisis in Myanmar and to hold perpetrators accountable.

"Justice For Myanmar calls for urgent sanctions against the Karen BGF/KNA and its businesses.

"Authorities in the region must do far more to investigate the involvement of their citizens, residents and companies in the transnational and international crimes committed in Myanmar.

"In 2025, Malaysia will become chair of ASEAN and needs to step up and stamp out the involvement of its citizens in criminal activities in Myanmar. Malaysia cannot credibly

respond to the crisis in Myanmar if its own citizens can do business with war criminals and cause harm to the people of Myanmar and the region with impunity.

“Thailand remains complicit in the commission of international crimes in Myanmar through its business with the illegal junta, and it has failed to take sufficient action against its citizens and companies enabling and profiting from the Karen BGF/KNA.

“Thailand and Malaysia need to change course now to help resolve the Myanmar crisis, rather than allowing their companies and citizens to cause more harm to the people of Myanmar.”

More information:

Read the full investigation into the **[Karen BGF/KNA criminal business network](#)**

Justice For Myanmar is covert group of activists using research, data visualisation and reporting to expose the companies and criminals profiting from brutality, war crimes and mass-scale suffering

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