



After four years of resistance, ASEAN and its member states must block Myanmar junta's access to funds, arms and aviation fuel

On February 1, 2021, the Myanmar military launched an illegal coup attempt. For four years, the people of Myanmar have courageously resisted a brutal junta and made profound sacrifices to ensure that the military failed to gain control of the country and rule over them.

In retaliation, the Myanmar junta has deployed collective punishment against the people and launched a nationwide campaign of terror, committing war crimes and crimes against humanity with total impunity. As resistance mounted, it desperately intensified its bloody and indiscriminate air and heavy artillery ground attacks, burning villages, schools, hospitals, and churches to ashes, causing a humanitarian crisis that has displaced over 3.3 million people.

The Myanmar military's decades long atrocity crimes, which include genocide against the Rohingya, are enabled by a network of domestic and international companies, the ongoing supply of weapons and aviation fuel that the military uses in its aerial attacks against civilians, and ASEAN's diplomatic, military, technical, financial, and intelligence support.

Despite Myanmar civil society's repeated calls for ASEAN to end all engagements with the military junta, ASEAN and key members have continued to aid and abet the military's terror campaign, betraying the people of Myanmar and failing its own commitment to "maintain and enhance peace, security and stability and to further strengthen peace-oriented values in the region."

ASEAN has repeatedly awarded legitimacy to the junta, provided training to the Myanmar military as it slaughters civilians, and even allowed war criminals such as the junta's air force and navy chiefs to chair meetings.

While ASEAN partners the USA, Australia, EU, UK and Canada have sanctioned the junta, enterprises under its control, and its associates, ASEAN members have continued business as usual.

Thailand's state-owned oil conglomerate PTT Exploration and Production Public Company Limited (PTTEP), which is publicly listed, operates two major offshore gas projects with the

junta, Yadana and Zawtika, and associated pipelines, bankrolling atrocities. PTTEP has continued drilling wells that would keep profits flowing to the junta.

Vietnam remains a major business partner of the junta through the investment of the Ministry of National Defence-owned company Viettel in Telecom International Myanmar, the company behind Mytel, in partnership with the military conglomerate Myanmar Economic Corporation. An analysis of Mytel's own profit forecast shows that the Myanmar military could earn over US\$700 million in the coming years. The junta also uses Mytel for surveillance, supported by Viettel.

Malaysia's richest tycoon, Robert Kuok, is the founder of Shangri-La Group, which operates the Sule Square real estate development on land leased from the Myanmar army. The deal was signed in 1996, the same year that the army brutally crushed student democracy protests. The Kuok family have continued their investment in Sule Square through the military's 2021 coup attempt.

Malaysia, which is the current chair of ASEAN, has failed to prevent its citizens and companies from doing business with the Myanmar military.

Singapore, long the military's international business hub, continues to allow junta cronies and associates to do business, such as Tay Za, who is sanctioned by the USA, UK, EU and Canada.

For the Singapore publicly listed company Interra Resources, the military's coup attempt has been profitable as it keeps extracting crude oil, which the junta uses to power its terror campaign.

Singapore must do more to uphold its public statement that it has worked to prevent the flow of arms and dual use goods into Myanmar, following the UN Special Rapporteur's report exposing Singapore-based entities as the third largest source of weapons materials to the Myanmar military and Justice For Myanmar's exposé of 38 Myanmar arms broker companies in the city state.

Singapore must block the junta's access to funds and aviation fuel.

Other ASEAN governments and their businesses, such as Brunei and Indonesia, are exacerbating the Myanmar people's suffering by exploring and signing new business agreements with the illegal junta and its cronies.

ASEAN and its member states must immediately end their complicity in the junta's international crimes against the Myanmar people by ceasing all legitimisation of the junta and cutting its access to funds, arms, dual use goods, technology and aviation fuel.

Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says: "Four years after the Myanmar military junta's violent and illegal coup attempt, the people of Myanmar persist in their steadfast resistance against the military.

"We honour those who have made immense sacrifices to ensure the junta's attempt to violently seize power from the people has failed after four years. Together, we will continue to work to dismantle the military cartel.

"Time is long overdue for ASEAN to stop engaging with the junta, support coordinated sanctions against its cronies, arms brokers and partners, and dismantle the military cartel once and for all.

"ASEAN must end its complicity in the junta's war crimes and crimes against humanity by excluding the junta and its representatives from all meetings, and ending its military, technical, financial and intelligence support. Instead, ASEAN must formally engage with legitimate representatives of the people of Myanmar, the National Unity Government, National Unity Consultative Council, Ethnic Resistance Organisations and civil society.

"ASEAN member states must cut payments to the illegal junta and stop the flow of arms, equipment, technology and aviation fuel.

"The future of a federal democratic Myanmar must be led and owned by the people of Myanmar as guided by the Federal Democracy Charter.

"ASEAN and the wider international community must listen to voice of Myanmar people and recognise their collective efforts to build a nation that is led by the people. It is time to choose the right side of humanity."

More information:

Justice For Myanmar is a 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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