



## UN should investigate conflicts of interest over UN Special Envoy on Myanmar's business activities and links to China

Julie Bishop, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Myanmar, is engaged with businesses including Energy Transition Minerals (ETM), where she was recently appointed as a Strategic Advisor for a controversial uranium and rare earths mining project in Greenland linked to Chinese state-owned companies with involvement in Myanmar.

Julie Bishop was appointed UN Special Envoy to Myanmar in April 2024. The role should involve working for a resolution to the crisis in Myanmar and therefore trust and integrity are crucial for her engagement with democratic actors, civil society and affected communities.

Yet Julie Bishop's involvement in the mining sector and links to Chinese state-owned companies raise serious questions over her ethical conduct and ability to successfully carry out her mission.

Justice For Myanmar calls on the United Nations Secretary General António Guterres to open an investigation into conflicts of interest over Julie Bishop's business activities.

Julie Bishop's links to Chinese state companies through the ASX-listed ETM were first reported by the [Saturday Paper](#).

Julie Bishop was appointed Strategic Advisor to ETM in January 2025 through her business advisory firm, [Julie Bishop and Partners](#). According to the company [announcement](#), Julie Bishop's role is to advise the board "to advance the Kvanefjeld Project towards development, in parallel with the ongoing legal process."

ETM's Kvanefjeld mining project, located in southwestern Greenland, has been opposed by local people over environmental and health concerns, and was suspended after the Greenland government imposed a ban on uranium mining in 2021.

In a widely criticised decision, ETM is seeking US\$11.5 billion in compensation through legal proceedings against the governments of Greenland and Denmark. The amount is almost 4 times Greenland's [gross domestic product](#).

One key partner in the Kvenfjeld project is Shenghe Resources, a Chinese partly state-owned rare earths mining conglomerate. Shenghe Resources is a major shareholder of ETM, controlling 9% of the company and has a seat on the ETM board, which Julie Bishop is advising. Shenghe Resources has anti-dilution rights in ETM at up to 19.9%.

In 2018, Shenghe Resources and ETM signed a memorandum of understanding for the import of rare earth concentrates containing uranium from Kvanefjeld into China and to create a strategic development plan for the project. The following year, Shenghe formed a joint venture with subsidiaries of China National Nuclear Corporation to create a legal means for those imports.

Another ETM partner is China Communications Construction Company (CCCC), a Chinese state-owned construction conglomerate which is in the design team for the Kvanefjeld project.

### **Myanmar links to ETM's Chinese partners**

Shenghe Resources is a major Chinese producer, processor and supplier of rare earths with a market capitalisation of over US\$2.7 billion. Myanmar is the largest supplier of heavy rare earths to China, according to a 2022 Global Witness report that documented the devastating impact of rare earth mining on ecosystems, livelihoods and local water supplies in Kachin State. Global Witness found a high risk that revenues from rare earth mining fund the Myanmar military's abuses.

Rare earth mining in Myanmar is dominated by Chinese companies operating on Kachin State's border with Yunnan province. The industry rapidly expanded over the past decade, mostly in areas which until recently were controlled by the Kachin Border Guard Force (BGF) led by Zahkung Ting Ying, under Myanmar military command.

The Kachin Independence Army defeated the Kachin BGF and took over these areas in late 2024, disrupting mining operations and leaving the future direction of the industry in Myanmar uncertain.

Shenghe Resources' corporate disclosures suggest they may have sourced rare earths from Myanmar. Shenghe Resources did not respond to questions from Justice For Myanmar.

CCCC remains active in Myanmar and is linked to China-Myanmar Economic Corridor projects. In 2018, it signed a US\$1.5 billion agreement for the controversial New Yangon City project, which the junta reportedly plans to resume.

The Myanmar corporate registry shows a CCCC branch office and at least two other CCCC subsidiaries in Myanmar: Myanmar China Harbor Engineering Company Limited, and China Road and Bridge (Myanmar) Company Limited.

China Harbor Engineering is part of the Kyauk Phyu deep sea port consortium, which the junta has tried to proceed with. In January, the company signed memorandum of agreements for the development of port facilities in Yangon at a ceremony presided over by a sanctioned junta minister.

In 2016, China Road and Bridge was awarded a contract for the improvement of the Eindu-Kawkareik road in Karen State, which was opposed by civil society, fuelled conflict and served the Myanmar military's strategic interests.

The junta also engaged with China National Nuclear Corporation last year and is seeking support for nuclear energy development.

### **Julie Bishop's other business links**

Julie Bishop is registered as a lobbyist for Twinza Oil Limited, an Australian private oil and gas company with assets in Papua New Guinea and an office in Singapore.

Twinza Oil's majority owners are the Clough family and the Hong Kong and London-based Kerogen Capital.

The company has a deep and problematic history in Myanmar, having signed a production sharing contract with the former military junta in 2006 for the Yetagun East Block, off the Tanintharyi coast. The company has since withdrawn from Myanmar.

Twinza founder Bill Clough, who currently sits on the company's board of directors, was a major investor in the now defunct Myanmar Times newspaper, which was linked to military intelligence.

In August 2024, Julie Bishop signed a consultancy agreement with Summit Gold Limited, another Australian resources company, to advise on a gold mining project in Papua New Guinea.

Julie Bishop has also done work for Mineral Resources (MinRes), an Australian mining company that is a partner of the Chinese state-owned China Baowu Steel Group.

A China Baowu Steel Group subsidiary is developing the Tagaung Taung nickel project in Myanmar, which finances the military junta.

Julie Bishop's links to numerous companies, including those owned by the Chinese state with interests in Myanmar, create unacceptable conflicts of interest that must be fully investigated.

**Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says:** “We have serious concerns about UN Special Envoy Julie Bishop’s business activities, including her appointment as an advisor for a China-backed mining project in Greenland that has been rightfully resisted by indigenous people.

“China is one of the Myanmar military’s biggest arms suppliers and also provides the military with major sources of revenue, including from the mining sector.

“Through its supply of arms and funds to the Myanmar military, the Chinese government is aiding and abetting ongoing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

“Any commercial ties between the UN Special Envoy and the Chinese state are therefore alarming and call into question her ability to carry out her mission with integrity.

“The fact that the companies Julie Bishop is linked to have a history of dirty deals with the Myanmar military makes her activities even more questionable.

“Julie Bishop’s apparent disregard for the rights of Greenlanders raises further concerns about the extent she will uphold the rights of Myanmar people.

“We urge the United Nations Secretary General to urgently open an investigation into Julie Bishop’s business activities, consider the appropriateness of her continued UN engagement, and disclose the findings.”

**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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