

Myanmar: Two Years Since Illegal Attempted Coup A Redemptive Resistance Remains Resolute

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While it continues to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity, international governments and aid agencies are risking complicity in their atrocities by lending it legitimacy, particularly by cooperating with the junta, signing Memoranda of Understanding, and entering into development projects with the junta.

Fierce atrocities committed by the Myanmar military junta against civilians continue to intensify two years after the illegal attempted coup with the junta's frustration growing due to its' failure to assert control. Since the illegal coup attempt on 1 February 2021, the military junta has brazenly killed over 2,900 people and arrested over 17,000. While it continues to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity, international governments and aid agencies are risking complicity in their atrocities by lending it legitimacy, particularly by cooperating with the junta, signing Memoranda of Understanding, and entering into development projects with the junta. In the meantime, Myanmar people, Myanmar civil society, and the National Unity Government (NUG) that formed on the basis of the 2020 general elections and is the only government that can legitimately represent Myanmar, are receiving insufficient recognition and support. The time to be ambiguous is up. Now is the time to stand with the people of Myanmar and dismantle the illegal military junta.

A recent [report](#) from Justice For Myanmar reveals a list of foreign governments, intergovernmental organizations, foreign financial institutions, and other international organizations that are providing support to the junta in direct and indirect ways, despite the junta's ongoing campaign of terror. The junta's crimes are enabled by its staunch allies and supporters who remain reticent to stop engaging with the junta. The report identifies several different categories of support that has been provided to the junta, including political, technical, financial, as well as the renting of military-owned properties.

Reinforcing the gravity of the findings of the report, [according](#) to Human Rights Watch, Japan's Yokogawa Bridge Corp. apparently transferred over US\$1 million in 2022 to Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC), a military conglomerate, for the Bago River Bridge Construction Project in Yangon. The Project was approved in 2016 as part of Japan's official development assistance. To make matters worse, they were granted an [exemption](#) by the US government to make such payments to the MEC. Such businesses benefit the military junta, allowing it to purchase and produce deadly weapons, including operating airstrikes that indiscriminately kill people, including children.

Ending all forms of engagement and cooperation with the Myanmar military junta is essential to end atrocity crimes against the people of Myanmar. One welcomed action was taken by the central bank of Norway, [Norges Bank](#), to exclude two companies; AviChina Industry & Technology Co Ltd and Bharat Electronics Ltd from the Government Pension Fund Global (GPF). The Council on Ethics in which members are proposed by Norges Bank and appointed by the Norwegian Ministry of Finance recommended [excluding](#) AviChina Industry & Technology Co Ltd from GPF investment for

delivering arms, including several light combat aircraft, to the military junta. Bharat Electronics Ltd was [excluded](#) due to delivering a remote-controlled weapons station to the junta that has been reportedly used in attacks against the people of Myanmar. The above actions demonstrate some of the concrete and substantive ways businesses could be supporting the Myanmar people.

It is not only companies that need to take action. Humanitarian organizations also have a responsibility to ensure that their actions in Myanmar are not weaponized by the junta for its political and tactical advantage. The Justice For Myanmar [report](#) also detailed the UN agencies, including UNICEF, UNOCHA, IOM, WHO, FAO, and other UN agencies, presenting their credentials or signing agreements with the military junta. Such kind of actions not only undermine the [humanitarian resistance](#) and resistance forces' efforts to swiftly address the humanitarian crisis, but also causes more harm to the very people that such international organizations are professing to help.

Believing that one can continue to partner with the junta to deliver assistance to those who are fleeing from the junta's violence is either a [hallucination](#) or self-serving strategy. The junta are the cause of the humanitarian crisis and therefore cannot be partners in the delivery of assistance. The recent deliberate air raid over displaced people in Mindat Township, Chin State, which injured at least eight people by targeting a monastery and rural health care center where IDPs sought refuge, is evidence of this. Again, in Kyondoe, Karen state, thousands of people are newly displaced due to the clashes between 23-25 January. Around the same date, thousands of people were displaced due to the continuous attacks via airstrikes by the junta troops in [Demoso](#), Karenni State. It is not the junta who will provide the much-needed humanitarian assistance to the people most in need, but local frontline humanitarian aid providers who have experience, capacity, legitimacy, and trust of local populations. It is their proactive actions that will ensure effective delivery of aid to those who have suffered the violence by the junta and who are in direst need.

The Myanmar military junta is making every effort to seize its power through diplomatic ties, financial corporations, and development projects. Therefore, international actors must stop engaging with the military junta and take immediate and substantive actions. Such actions must include reviewing breaches of international and domestic law in relation to partnering with the junta by all foreign, intergovernmental organizations and institutions, and other international and regional entities. There is no shortage of choice when it comes to supporting people in need in Myanmar. For example, local civil society organizations through cross-border channels are [best placed](#) to deliver humanitarian assistance. Handing humanitarian aid to Myanmar military junta would be the same as fueling a killing machine that will further weaponize the aid in its ongoing desperate attempt to seize power and cause more harm to the people. While witnessing the military junta as the root cause of all Myanmar's crisis, it is certain that engaging with them is not the solution but only allows them to continue committing more crimes.

If the past two years has shown anything, it is that engagement with the junta and partnering with them will not help resolve the crisis but cause more suffering of the people. The international community must listen to the voice of Myanmar people and respond to the crisis effectively with concrete actions that are in line with their will and aspirations.

[1] One year following the 1988 pro-democracy uprising, the former military junta changed the country's name from Burma to Myanmar overnight. Progressive Voice uses the term 'Myanmar' in acknowledgement that most people of the country use this term. However, the deception of inclusiveness and the historical process of coercion by the former State Peace and Development Council military regime into usage of 'Myanmar' rather than 'Burma' without the consent of the

people is recognized and not forgotten. Thus, under certain circumstances, 'Burma' is used.

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