

Burma

Japan to Stop Training Myanmar Military Officers

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Japan's Ministry of Defense announced on Tuesday that it will suspend the training of Myanmar military officers from next year.

The decision to stop accepting Myanmar military personnel as students follows the junta's execution of four pro-democracy activists in July, according to Japanese media NHK.

The defense ministry decided that it was not appropriate to continue defense cooperation and exchanges with Myanmar, as prior to the executions the leaders of Myanmar's military regime ignored Japan's expression of strong concern, reported NHK.

Japan has continued to accept senior Myanmar military officers as students, even after the military seized power from the democratically-elected government in a February 1 coup last year.

There are still 11 Myanmar military officers studying in Japan at the National Defense Academy and elsewhere, but they will be allowed to complete their courses, said Japan's defense ministry.

Brigadier-General Tin Soe, who trained in Japan, was involved in the massacre of 35 people, including at least one child and two staff from the international aid organization Save the Children, who were killed and their bodies burned by the Myanmar military in Kayah State's Hpruso Township on Christmas Eve last year, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW).

Tin Soe trained at Japan's Ground Self Defense Force Staff College from August 2016 to March 2017 while still a colonel.

From August 2021 to July 2022, he was based at Eastern Command headquarters, which oversees operations in southern Shan and Kayah states and whose forces were responsible for the Hpruso massacre and other atrocities, said HRW in a report issued in August.

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