

April 19, 2023 | Myanmar

Heineken, Carlsberg and ThaiBev tax payments bankrolling Myanmar junta

Drink giants Heineken, Carlsberg and ThaiBev are paying tens of millions of dollars in tax to the Myanmar military junta, Justice For Myanmar has revealed in an investigation of tax filings released by [Distributed Denial of Secrets](#).

The foreign companies are partnered with the family of the deceased crony Thein Tun, who controlled Myanma Golden Star Group with his son, Thant Zin Tun. Myanma Golden Star Group produces beer with Carlsberg and soft drinks with a subsidiary of LOTTE Corporation.

Thein Tun's daughter, Mar Mar Tun and son-in-law, Aung Moe Kyaw, are the local partners of Heineken and Thai Beverage (ThaiBev). ThaiBev controls Grand Royal Group.

An analysis of available tax filings from October to December 2021 show that Heineken, Carlsberg and ThaiBev subsidiaries paid 49.9 billion kyat in Specific Goods Tax (SGT) alone to the military junta, equivalent to US\$27.6 million based on average exchange rates from the Central Bank of Myanmar, which is illegally under junta control.

SGT is a tax on the production and import of alcohol and other products that is applied to beer at a rate of 60% and a sliding scale for spirits, depending on the price level.

ThaiBev, Heineken and Carlsberg companies also pay commercial tax and income tax to the junta, which totalled 12.6 billion kyat in the period, equivalent to US\$7 million.

Spread across a year, ThaiBev, Heineken and Carlsberg companies in Myanmar could be paying as much as 250 billion kyat or US\$155 million in taxes to the junta, bankrolling its international crimes.

LOTTE, which is not subject to SGT, pays smaller amounts of tax and is also responsible for lease payments to the Myanmar Army as part of its hotel subsidiary's investment in a hotel development with POSCO International.

Payments from these corporations aid the junta as it wages a campaign of terror against the people of Myanmar, increasingly relying on its air force to carry out indiscriminate attacks.

On April 11, the junta launched an indiscriminate aerial attack against people gathered at an event in Pazigy village, Sagaing, killing at least 168 people, weeks after the UN Human Rights Council passed a [resolution](#) that called on the Myanmar military to immediately cease all air strikes.

An October 2022 air strike against a concert in Kachin State killed over 80 people. Large tax payments from the drink giants help the junta buy arms, fuel and equipment and pay soldiers, supporting ongoing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Justice For Myanmar calls on ThaiBev, Heineken, Carlsberg and LOTTE to follow the guidance of the National Unity Government and their international human rights responsibilities, and end payments to the military junta.

Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says: "Heineken, Carlsberg and ThaiBev are paying the equivalent of tens of millions of dollars in taxes annually to the Myanmar military junta, which is a terrorist organisation that has been committing war crimes and crimes against humanity against the people of Myanmar with total impunity.

"The illegal junta desperately needs revenue to sustain its campaign of murder and destruction, and these taxes from drink giants help fund the bombs, bullets and jet fuel the junta needs to attack the people.

"Since there is a specific goods tax for beer and spirits, the junta gets a massive share of the revenues of Heineken, Carlsberg and ThaiBev in Myanmar.

"These are funds that belong to the people of Myanmar and should be paid to the National Unity Government (NUG), which is the legitimate government. Instead, Heineken, Carlsberg, ThaiBev and LOTTE are ignoring NUG's guidance and bankrolling the illegal junta, making themselves complicit in its international crimes and undermining democracy.

"It is also concerning that the companies are partnered with the Thein Tun family, who have deep links to the Myanmar military, evidence of Heineken, Carlsberg, ThaiBev and LOTTE's historic human rights due diligence failures in Myanmar.

"We call on Heineken, Carlsberg, ThaiBev and LOTTE to fulfil their international obligations under the OECD Guidelines and UN Guiding Principles, and end their substantial payments to the military junta, which is a terrorist organisation."

More information:

Read our investigation, [Heineken, Carlsberg and ThaiBev pay tens of millions of dollars in tax to Myanmar junta](#)

Justice For Myanmar | media@justiceformyanmar.org
<https://www.justiceformyanmar.org/> | Mirror: <https://justiceformyanmar.github.io/justiceformyanmar.org/>
<https://twitter.com/justicemyanmar> | <https://www.facebook.com/justiceformyanmar.org/>

[Justice For Myanmar](#), a group of covert activists campaigning for justice and accountability for the people of Myanmar, is calling for an end to military business and for federal democracy and a sustainable peace.