



## **BIMSTEC and its member states deepen complicity in Myanmar military's international crimes**

Justice For Myanmar condemns the decision of the Thai government, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and its other member states to allow Myanmar junta head Min Aung Hlaing to attend the BIMSTEC Summit, deepening the bloc's complicity in the junta's international crimes.

BIMSTEC member states also remain complicit in the junta's international crimes, with Thailand, India and Sri Lanka providing arms, equipment and funds that sustain the junta's terror campaign.

Min Aung Hlaing's trip to Bangkok for the April 4 Summit comes one week after Myanmar was devastated by a 7.7 magnitude earthquake and many bodies remain buried under rubble. The junta's response to the earthquake has involved the obstruction of humanitarian aid and rescue efforts, and continued airstrikes, including in areas affected by the earthquake.

Min Aung Hlaing is responsible for the commission of international crimes, including genocide against the Rohingya and ongoing war crimes and crimes against humanity against people across the country. He is under investigation by the International Criminal Court, whose prosecutor's office has requested an arrest warrant, and an arrest warrant has also been issued by an Argentine court. Min Aung Hlaing and the junta are sanctioned by multiple countries, while they continue to illegally control the funds of Myanmar's major state-owned enterprises to finance their terror campaign against the people.

The BIMSTEC Summit is being held at the Shangri-La Hotel in Bangkok, owned by Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, the same company that operates the [Sule Square real estate development](#) in Yangon on land leased from the Myanmar Army.

The inclusion of Min Aung Hlaing in the BIMSTEC Summit exacerbates the pattern of complicity from the regional bloc.

BIMSTEC allowed Min Aung Hlaing to sign the [BIMSTEC Charter](#) in 2022, have his foreign minister join the [last Summit held in Sri Lanka](#) the same year, and even allowed the junta to [host a meeting of security chiefs](#) in 2024. The BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs meeting aimed at strengthening regional cooperation in areas that included counter terrorism, even as the Myanmar junta – a [terrorist organisation](#) under Myanmar and international law –

designated the National Unity Government as a terrorist organisation and amended Myanmar's counter terrorism law to launch attacks against the democratic resistance.

The bloc also allowed a Myanmar junta representative to sign the BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters in 2022, which facilitates regional cooperation in locating and identifying persons, information sharing, search and seizure, and making detained persons available to give evidence or assist in investigations.

These actions almost certainly have provided the junta with access to intelligence and military and police cooperation, while veiling it with false legitimacy as it continues to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity with total impunity. By doing so, BIMSTEC is aiding and abetting the junta's commission of those international crimes.

BIMSTEC members are also complicit in the Myanmar military's international crimes.

Thailand is a major supplier of arms to the junta and the Thai government bankrolls its atrocities.

According to a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar, companies registered in Thailand transferred US\$120 million in weapons and related materials to Myanmar in the 2023 financial year.

Thailand's publicly listed oil giant PTT Exploration and Production Public Company Limited (PTTEP) operates major offshore gas projects in Myanmar, selling gas to its majority state-owned parent company, PTT, funding junta atrocities.

PTTEP is the biggest investor and operator of the Yadana, Zawtika and M3 gas projects, and has even continued drilling wells, ensuring that profits will keep flowing. This makes the Thai government directly complicit in the junta's war crimes and crimes against humanity.

PTT must stop funding the junta by withholding all funds in a protected account, or PTTEP must responsibly exit.

India is one of the main suppliers of arms and military equipment to the Myanmar military, along with Russia and China. Recent shipment data obtained by Justice For Myanmar confirms that supplies from Indian state-owned arms companies to the Myanmar military continue unabated.

In January 2025, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) shipped two electro-optical surveillance systems used for maritime surveillance to the Myanmar army's Directorate of Procurement. This follows multiple shipments in 2024 to the Myanmar military.

Available shipment data also confirms that BEL has shipped significant quantities of supplies to Myanmar in 2024, including antennas, telescopic masts, cable assemblies, power supply

systems and various electronic- and electromechanical- systems. Items were shipped to arms broker companies including Alliance Engineering, Light Head Group of Companies and Mega Hill General Trading.

The Indian government is also enabling the junta's brutal tactics through the training of military personnel in India.

Photographic evidence seen by Justice For Myanmar confirms that military personnel affiliated with the Myanmar military's in-country arms industry have received training at the Indian Army Educational Corps Training College and Centre in Pradesh in 2024, and at the Indian Military College of Electronics and Mechanical Engineering in Hyderabad in 2022.

Reporting by Justice For Myanmar in March 2024 also cast light on India's active role in supplying the junta with arms and related military material, including through the Indian Air Force and Indian state-owned public sector undertakings since 2021.

Justice For Myanmar continues to call on the Indian government to stop aiding and abetting the junta's international crimes, to impose an arms embargo on the junta and to stop all training for the Myanmar military.

Sri Lanka has also supplied arms and equipment to the military and must impose an immediate arms embargo.

Shipment data obtained by Justice For Myanmar confirms that Sri Lanka, through the Haleys Free Zone Ltd, has exported propellers and rotors, other aircraft parts and kerosene to the arms broker Light Head Group of Companies as recently as 2024. In January 2023, Haleys Free Zone also exported an integrated avionics display to Light Head Group of Companies. Justice For Myanmar has reason to believe that these items have been imported on behalf of the Myanmar military for use by the Myanmar Air Force.

Hayleys Free Zone, a legal entity established in Sri Lanka and registered with the Sri Lankan Export Development Board, operates as an offshore location to provide global logistics services.

**Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says:** "We strongly condemn the decision to allow Min Aung Hlaing to participate in the BIMSTEC Summit.

"It is deplorable that BIMSTEC and the Thai government are welcoming a war criminal responsible for committing atrocities, including genocide against the Rohingya.

"This legitimises and emboldens a military junta that the people of Myanmar have been resisting for over four years.

“Since the military’s coup attempt, BIMSTEC has provided the junta with political and military support, aiding and abetting its international crimes.

“BIMSTEC member states also remain complicit, with Thailand, India and Sri Lanka providing arms, equipment and funds that sustain the junta’s terror campaign, in breach of international law.

“Thailand, India, Sri Lanka and other governments must cut all funds, arms and equipment to the junta immediately, which are enabling the killing of civilians and the destruction of whole communities.

“It is imperative that governments and international organisations end complicity with the military junta and prioritise the lives of Myanmar’s people.”

Correction: This press release has been updated to remove Pakistan, which is not a member of BIMSTEC.

**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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