

Press Release

May 14, 2025

**Japanese companies, government insurer and investment corporation
urged to responsibly exit from Myanmar port project
linked to sanctioned military conglomerate**

Mekong Watch
Pacific Asia Resource Center
Justice For Myanmar
Friends of the Earth Japan
Network Against Japan Arms Trade (NAJAT)
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Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC)

Japanese and Myanmar civil society organizations have called on Japanese investors, a government-backed insurer and an infrastructure investment corporation to ensure transparency and uphold human rights standards in their exit from the Thilawa Multipurpose International Terminal (TMIT) project in Myanmar. The terminal has been operated in partnership with Ever Flow River Group (EFR), a crony company with [documented](#) ties to Myanma Economic Holdings Limited (MEHL), a military conglomerate under international sanctions.

On March 19, 2025, the organizations sent letters to Kamigumi Co., Ltd., Sumitomo Corporation, Toyota Tsusho, the government-funded infrastructure investment corporation Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corporation for Transport & Urban Development (JOIN) and Nippon Export and Investment Insurance (NEXI), raising concerns over their involvement in the project and inquiring whether adequate human rights due diligence had been conducted following the Myanmar military's attempted coup on February 1, 2021. The letters also questioned the companies' plans for disengagement, especially in light of a [recent tender](#) issued by the Myanma Port Authority (MPA) for a new long-term operator of the terminal.

The TMIT project was constructed as part of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Myanmar.

After acquiring the operating rights from the MPA, Kamigumi established the TMIT together with STJ Thilawa Terminal Co., Ltd - a joint venture between JOIN, Sumitomo Corporation, and Toyota Tsusho - and the Myanmar company K Efficient Logistics Consortium Company Limited. TMIT [has been operating](#) the terminal since May 2019. K Efficient Logistics Consortium Company Limited, is part of EFR Group.

EFR also partners with MEHL's subsidiary Lann Pyi Marine in developing an integrated inland port complex in Yangon.

The UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar (IFFM) has explicitly recommended that no business engage with MEHL or their affiliates, citing risks of enabling human rights abuses. MEHL and by extension, Lann Pyi Marine, are under sanctions from the US, UK, EU, Canada, and Australia.

Kamigumi, Sumitomo Corporation, and Toyota Tsusho have responded to the inquiry, confirming they are exiting the project and have begun liquidation. They also claimed to have taken measures to uphold human rights and employee safety, including support for staff transitions during disengagement.

However, no details have been provided on how this exit meets international human rights standards including the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises or the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. There is no transparency regarding how project assets will be handled, whether penalties to terminate the concession will be paid to the junta, or how future revenues from the project will be prevented from flowing to military-linked entities.

JOIN has yet to substantively respond to the inquiry. The lack of public accountability from an institution investing public funds is deeply concerning.

NEXI, which insured the project, responded that it had categorized the project as having "minimal or no adverse environmental impact," and therefore did not conduct an environmental review. It also noted that insurance coverage for the project has concluded. However, NEXI failed to address the project's human rights risks, despite its professed commitment to the OECD Guidelines.

The seven organizations urge JOIN and companies involved to carry out a fully transparent and responsible disengagement from TMIT that upholds their duty to protect human rights and commit to preventing any financial benefit to the Myanmar military junta.

The organizations will continue to monitor developments closely and call for public accountability until all parties have fulfilled their human rights obligations.

Yuka Kiguchi, Executive Director of Mekong Watch, said, "Disengagement from high-risk projects in Myanmar must not be treated as a routine business decision. These companies and public institutions have a duty to ensure that their withdrawal does not financially benefit the junta or its cronies. Silence from JOIN and a narrow interpretation of business risk by NEXI fall far short of responsible business conduct."

Yadanar Maung, Justice for Myanmar's spokesperson, said, "The Myanmar military has continued to commit atrocities, intensifying its airstrikes in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake that struck Myanmar in March. Opaque exits that don't respect human rights risk fuelling atrocities. Companies and the Japanese government must disclose how they are avoiding any complicity in the junta's international crimes, in line with human rights standards and norms."

*Below are the official responses from Kamigumi Co., Ltd., Sumitomo Corporation, Toyota Tsusho, JOIN and NEXI.

Kamigumi Co., Ltd.	Letter (Japanese and English)	Response (Japanese)
Sumitomo Corporation	Letter (Japanese and English)	Response (Japanese)
Toyota Tsusho	Letter (Japanese and English)	Response (Japanese)
JOIN	Letter (Japanese and English)	Response (Japanese)
NEXI	Letter (Japanese and English)	Response (Japanese)

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