



Chin Human Rights Organization
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Indonesian Arms Producers Accused of Illegal Sales to Myanmar Authorities Urged to Launch Investigation

Press Release for Immediate publication

Jakarta, 2 October, 2023: Civil society groups and a former Indonesian Attorney General have lodged a complaint with Indonesia’s Human Rights Commission against three state-owned arms manufacturers -- PT Pindad, PT PAL and PT Dirgantara Indonesia -- which they allege may have sold supplies to Myanmar’s military, in violation of Indonesian and international law.

The Chin Human Rights Organisation (CHRO), the Myanmar Accountability Project (MAP) and Marzuki Darusman, today filed a detailed complaint, calling on Indonesia’s Human Rights Commission to investigate. The allegations involve the promotion and suspected sale of handguns, assault rifles, ammunition, combat vehicles and other equipment to the Myanmar military over the last decade, including potentially after the attempted coup in February 2021.

According to Marzuki Darusman, former Indonesian Attorney General, “as state-owned enterprises, these companies are under the direct control of the Indonesian government and subject to the oversight and approval of the government. The fact that defence equipment has been actively promoted after the genocidal campaign against the Rohingya and the 2021 coup is cause for serious concern and casts doubt on the Indonesian government’s willingness to comply with its obligations under international human rights law and humanitarian law. Indonesia’s Human Rights Commission has a mandate to investigate and I urge it to do so”.

An open-source investigation and leaked documents reveal the arms may have been brokered through the Myanmar company, True North Company Limited, owned by Htoo Htoo Shein Oo. He is son of the Myanmar junta’s planning and finance minister, Win Shein, who is currently subject to sanctions by the United States, Canada, and European Union. The complainants and Justice For Myanmar also urge governments to impose sanctions on True North and its owners as an arms broker of the Myanmar military.

The role of True North as a private company negotiating deals between the Myanmar military and Indonesia's state-owned arms companies raises suspicions of potential corruption that should be investigated by Indonesian authorities.

During the period of some of the alleged arms sales, Indonesia was an active member of the UN Human Rights Council and was one of four ASEAN countries that voted in favour of a General

Assembly Resolution which called “on all UN member states to prevent the flow of arms to Myanmar”.

“Our investigation has turned up damning evidence that suggests shocking double-standards”, said Chris Gunness, Director of MAP. “Myanmar is in human rights freefall, with atrocity crimes and bestial abuses on an industrial scale. An investigation by Indonesia’s Human Rights Commission is imperative. In a recent ruling, the Indonesian Constitutional Court gave a green light for universal jurisdiction cases; it called for regional efforts towards accountability in Myanmar and for solid Indonesian connections if the courts in Jakarta are to hear cases against the Myanmar military. With this complaint, we are answering the Constitutional Court’s demands”.

Salai Za Uk Ling, Deputy Director of CHRO urged action also. “Myanmar’s human rights catastrophe deepens with each passing hour and with the UN Security Council and General Assembly looking to ASEAN members to push for justice for the people of Myanmar, we appeal to the Indonesian authorities to launch an investigation and open their courts to justice for their brothers and sisters in South East Asia_ With so little happening politically, it is time for the courts to act”.

Gunness concluded, “The Indonesian government needs to fully investigate PT Pindad and other Indonesian companies that may have aided and abetted the Myanmar military’s atrocities through the supply of arms and related equipment. Indonesia is the current Chair of ASEAN and part of the Troika under next year’s Laos chairpersonship to facilitate the implementation of the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus. As such, Indonesia should prove to the people of Myanmar that it is taking genuine action by coming clean about the supply of arms and related equipment to the military, ensuring accountability for complicity in the military’s international crimes, and banning all future sales.”

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