



23 December 2024

Myanmar junta receives new planes from Airbus' close partner AVIC, aiding indiscriminate airstrikes

The Myanmar military junta has commissioned into service as many as 8 new aircraft supplied by the Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC), a close partner and investee of the European aerospace giant Airbus.

An examination of [junta-controlled media](#) from the anniversary of the Myanmar Air Force, held on 15 December 2024, shows one Hongdu K-8 light attack aircraft (tail number MAF/3941), [up to six](#) FTC-2000G light combat aircraft (which include tail numbers MAF/1407, MAF/1411, MAF/1412 and MAF/1413) and one Shaanxi Y-8 military transport plane (tail number MAF/5922).

These types of aircraft are [regularly used by the military junta](#) in its indiscriminate airstrikes on the civilian population. [Between February 2021 and August 2024](#), the junta has killed at least 1749 civilians in thousands of airstrikes with total impunity.

The latest transfer of new AVIC aircraft shows that the company is continuing to aid and abet the junta's ongoing war crimes.

Despite growing public scrutiny and evidence of the serious human rights implications of its investment in AVIC, Airbus has [publicly denied any wrongdoing](#).

An [investigation](#) by Justice For Myanmar and Info Birmanie has linked Airbus to AVIC, while it has delivered multiple aircraft to the Myanmar military, including since its 2021 coup attempt and despite European Council Regulation (EU) No 401/2013 concerning restrictive measures on Myanmar.

This has led to protests that demand Airbus use its leverage over AVIC to stop its continued supplies of military aircraft, arms and maintenance, repair and overhaul of aircraft to the Myanmar junta.

In a recent [public statement](#), Airbus defended its relationship with AVIC, which it describes as "a Chinese state-owned group of civil aviation, aerospace and defence companies" and confirmed that it holds a 5% stake in AviChina Industry & Technology Company Limited (AviChina). This makes Airbus the biggest international shareholder of this key subsidiary of AVIC.

While Airbus insists its financial stake and ongoing business dealings with AVIC "are exclusively focused on civil aviation and services", AVIC's business activities are inseparable from its military applications, particularly given China's policy of military-civil fusion which integrates civilian research and military industries.

In this context, we fail to see how Airbus can guarantee its business with AVIC is limited to civil aviation. We note that Airbus has failed to take this situation into account in its duty of vigilance plan.

As a shareholder in AviChina, Airbus is accountable to international standards on business and human rights, including the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, which require companies to conduct thorough human rights due diligence on their business relationships.

Airbus' stance contrasts sharply with the actions of other institutional investors, including the Norwegian sovereign wealth fund and prominent Dutch investors and pension funds that have all divested from AviChina over ethical concerns and the human rights risks posed by AVIC's transfer of military goods to Myanmar.

Airbus' defense of its partnership with AVIC raises serious questions about its commitment to mitigate the risk that its investments contribute to human rights harms.

Airbus' public denial of any ethical responsibility has only escalated calls for accountability, including protests in Myanmar and London, and an [open letter](#) to the CEO of Airbus, Guillaume Faury, from over 300 international and local civil society organisations including Justice For Myanmar and Info Birmanie, to end all investments in companies that enable the war crimes committed by the criminal Myanmar military junta.

The letter calls on Mr. Faury to take "responsibility to ensure that you do not enable atrocity crimes through financial and strategic links to AVIC and directly associated companies such as AviChina."

If Airbus were to comply with international standards of human rights, it must use its leverage over AVIC to stop the continued flow of arms, military aircraft and maintenance supplied to the Myanmar military by AVIC and AVIC subsidiaries.

More information

Read the #Airbusted report in English and French [here](#)