

Press Release by German Solidarity with
Myanmar Democracy e.V.
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Is the German Federal Foreign Office financing a training programme for Myanmar's military junta through the Max Planck Foundation?

Research by the NGO *Justice for Myanmar* puts the Foundation and the Federal Foreign Office in a tight corner.

The organization *Justice for Myanmar* (JFM) has published a research report, discovering the *Max Planck Foundation for International Peace and the Rule of Law's* invitation to the Myanmar military regime, to attend a workshop on maritime law and security. This workshop is supposed to take place in Singapore from 28th of November to 2nd of December 2022 as part of a cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations *ASEAN*. Prior to this workshop various trainings have already taken place, in which representatives of Myanmar's military have allegedly participated.

According to *Justice for Myanmar*, the *Max Planck Foundation for International Peace and the Rule of Law*, with financial support from the German Federal Foreign Office, will cover the travel and accommodation costs for medium and high-ranking members of the military junta, including the Ministry of Defense. They are under the command of the *State Administration Council* (SAC), the executive body of the illegitimate military junta, which has attempted to brutally seize power since February 2021, has no democratic legitimacy and is violently fighting against democratic resistance in Myanmar.

Members of the *State Administration Council* are on the sanctions list of the European Union, as are various ministers of the military junta. It remains unclear whether EU sanctions have been breached by inviting members of the same sanctioned Council.

By inviting members of the Myanmar military regime, the attempted military coup is more or less recognized and their representatives are legitimized. The military junta is responsible for war crimes and serious human rights violations against the civilian population of Myanmar. In addition, the military regime is involved in various criminal businesses, is destabilizing the entire region by triggering large-scale refugee movements, and cannot be considered as a suitable cooperation partner in regional security issues.

The chairperson of the association *German Solidarity with Myanmar Democracy e.V.* Ms. Nyein Chan May commented on 26th of November 2022 in Bonn, Germany:

"We thank our colleagues from *Justice for Myanmar* for their invaluable investigative research! Cooperation in the field of maritime law in Southeast Asia is important. But is it really justifiable that travel and accommodation costs for representatives of the brutal

Myanmar military regime are paid for at such a workshop with German taxpayers' money, and that the German government strengthens their desperate recognition attempts?

The military junta has no democratic legitimacy at all, and supporting its representatives clearly contradicts the values-based foreign policy of the German government and the values of the Max Planck Society.

Unfortunately, despite enquiries and communication with the *Max Planck Foundation for International Peace and the Rule of Law* and the Federal Foreign Office, we have received neither a clear explanation of the facts nor confirmation that the workshop should not take place under these circumstances. However, as we assume the information is correct, we call on the German government to immediately exclude all representatives of the Myanmar military junta from the planned workshop, or to replace them with pro-democracy representatives.

Even though this training program is being conducted in cooperation with *ASEAN*, the *Max Planck Foundation for International Peace and the Rule of Law* is the main organizer of the workshop and, most importantly, it is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office. Therefore, the *Max Planck Foundation for International Peace and the Rule of Law* and the German Foreign Office, have a responsibility to immediately revoke the invitation of the Myanmar military representatives and to prevent their participation.

We appeal to the German government to live by its core values as a democratic nation, and to align those values guiding Germany back to who we truly are. Otherwise, Germany is sending a fatal signal to all those who are bravely fighting for democracy and human rights in Myanmar!"