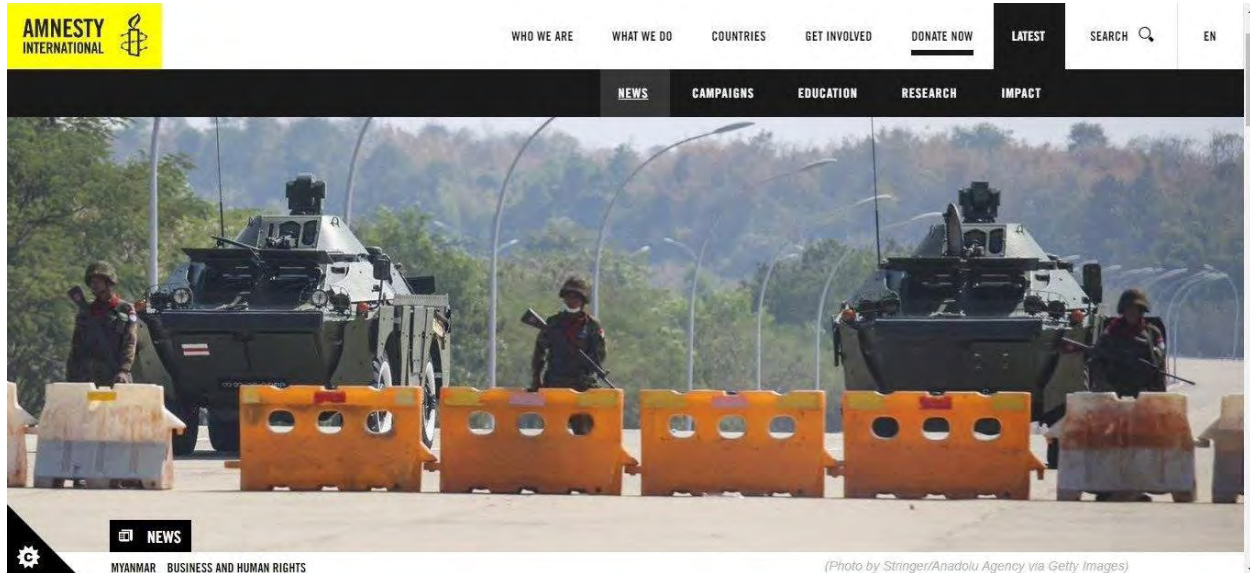




Myanmar: Military under ‘major pressure’ as steel giant cuts ties

16 April 2021, 08:34 UTC

Responding to reports that South Korean steel giant POSCO will end the steel venture its Myanmar subsidiary shares with military-owned conglomerate MEHL, Amnesty International’s Business and Human Rights Researcher Montse Ferrer said:

“POSCO’s decision to cut this tie is the latest blow to Myanmar’s military, which continues to impose its rule through murder and heinous human rights violations. Since staging a coup in February, the military has reportedly killed around 700 people, including dozens of children.

“Given the scale of POSCO’s operations in Myanmar, this announcement is a major step forward. It increases the military authorities’ isolation, and adds to the growing pressure on other companies to end their business links with MEHL.

“POSCO has yet to announce the full details of its plans to disengage from its steel venture and whether it will continue to pay lease payments to MEHL. The company also has yet to address its broader footprint in Myanmar in other sectors. However, this is still a warning sign to all companies and investors who have business partnerships with MEHL. All of these businesses should do the right thing and responsibly cut these links immediately.

“As pressure builds on businesses, and as the military continues to commit appalling human rights violations, the UN Security Council must stop lagging so far behind. It must impose, without further delay, a comprehensive global arms embargo on Myanmar, as well as targeted financial sanctions on senior military officials responsible for atrocity crimes. The Security Council must also urgently refer the situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court.”

Background

On 16 April 2021, POSCO [announced](#) that its Myanmar subsidiary, POSCO C&C, would end its relationship with military-owned Myanma Economic Holdings Limited (MEHL). This decision follows months of international pressure from Amnesty International and other organizations, who have engaged POSCO, its investors and stakeholders, calling on the company to cut ties with the Myanmar military.

On 24 March 2021, the UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution on the human rights situation in Myanmar by consensus, which highlighted that no company active in Myanmar or with business links to Myanmar should do business with the military (also known as the Tatmadaw) or one of their business entities, until and unless those businesses are restructured and transformed.

In September 2020, Amnesty International's [Military Ltd.](#) report demonstrated that POSCO, as MEHL's business partner, was linked to the financing of Myanmar's military units implicated in crimes under international law and other serious human rights violations.

The Myanmar military staged a coup on 1 February 2021 and has been increasingly using lethal force, including battlefield weapons, against overwhelmingly peaceful protesters and onlookers, reportedly killing over 700 people, including dozens of children. It has also arbitrarily detained over 3,000 individuals, including government officials, human rights defenders, activists, journalists, artists, medical workers and others.