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Austria's Diamond Aircraft Industries' tech transfer deal with Myanmar military apparent breach of EU arms embargo

A Justice For Myanmar investigation has uncovered new details of Austria's Diamond Aircraft Industries' project with the Myanmar military to locally assemble and produce DART-450 aircraft, in an apparent breach of the EU arms embargo.

The DART-450 are training and reconnaissance planes that would provide the military with support to train Myanmar Air Force pilots, who are essential to the junta's large-scale indiscriminate airstrikes, part of its campaign of terror against the people. The aircraft would also provide the military with aerial surveillance capabilities.

Through a transfer of technology deal, Diamond Aircraft Industries supplied the Myanmar military with composites and parts, as well as technical assistance in Myanmar and the training of military personnel in Austria to assemble aircraft and manufacture key parts.

Diamond Aircraft Industries is an Austrian based aircraft manufacturer owned by the Chinese corporation, Wanfeng Aviation Industry via a UK holding company. Wanfeng Aviation Industry's ultimate owner is the Shenzhen-listed Zhejiang Wanfeng Auto Wheel Company Limited.

Diamond Aircraft Industries' support for the Myanmar military took place after its campaign of genocide against the Rohingya and while it was committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in other ethnic areas with total impunity. The project was running between 2017 and 2020, when it was temporarily disrupted as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Under the EU's arms embargo on Myanmar, in force during the project period, it is illegal to provide arms, dual use goods, and equipment used for internal repression to Myanmar, in addition to restrictions on military training and military cooperation.

Justice for Myanmar has obtained confidential records that confirm that the project would result in the Myanmar air force obtaining DART aircraft that would be locally assembled, with the military producing key composite components and parts in Myanmar over six apparent phases.

In the first phase of the DART-450 project in Myanmar, six DART-450 aircrafts were to be manufactured in Austria and shipped, bulk-packed and by airfreight, to Myanmar for final assembly from 2019. The assembly of one aircraft has been completed in Myanmar with the on-site support of Diamond Aircraft technicians from Austria and Germany.

Justice For Myanmar has identified companies from multiple countries implicated in the project that may also be in breach of sanctions. The companies whose key technical components have been used for the DART-450 project in Myanmar and are based in countries with arms embargoes on Myanmar include Garmin (Switzerland), SIRS Navigation (UK), Electronics International (USA) and Safran (France). Composite materials have been supplied to Myanmar by Engineered Cramer Composites (ECC) (Germany).

According to information obtained for Justice For Myanmar, negotiations between Diamond Aircraft Industries and Swedish company DST Control AB to equip the DART-450 aircrafts with OTUS-U250 sensors have also been initiated.

Justice For Myanmar identified companies whose computer numerical control machines have been used to manufacture and assemble the DART-450 aircrafts at the Shante air base in Myanmar, including Schuko (Germany), Styrotec (Germany) and Felder (Austria).

The Diamond Aircraft Industries deal with the Myanmar military was brokered by Miya Win International, a Myanmar company that has been sanctioned by the UK and has been involved in the procurement of other military end-use equipment from Austria for the Myanmar military, including unmanned aerial vehicles from Schiebel Corporation and a flight simulator from Axis Simulation.

Justice For Myanmar has submitted evidence of the Diamond Aircraft Industries business with the Myanmar military to the European Union's sanctions whistleblower tool and calls for a swift investigation into Diamond and associated companies.

Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says: "Diamond Aircraft Industries' deep engagement with the Myanmar military is a shocking failure of the Austrian government to enforce the EU arms embargo on Myanmar.

"While the Myanmar military was carrying out indiscriminate airstrikes and committing genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity with total impunity, Diamond Aircraft Industries was equipping and training Myanmar military personnel to locally assemble aircrafts that would clearly be used to repress the Myanmar people.

"This is not a standalone case but part of a pattern of Austria's failures to stop its companies from supplying the Myanmar military with equipment and technology, including after the military's illegal coup attempt on February 1, 2021

"Austria needs to urgently investigate all those that have violated EU restrictive measures on Myanmar, hold them accountable, and take concrete steps to prevent the further complicity of Austrian companies and citizens in the Myanmar military's international crimes.

"The UK, Germany, France, Switzerland, Sweden and the USA should also investigate companies in their jurisdictions that are implicated in the Myanmar military's DART-450 project and take action against all breaches of sanctions.

"The EU and its allies should sanction Miya Win International and its owners to help prevent further European transfers of arms and equipment to the murderous junta."

More information:

Read our feature on the Diamond Aircraft Industries program [here](#)

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Justice For Myanmar, a group of covert activists campaigning for justice and accountability for the people of Myanmar, is calling for an end to military business and for federal democracy and a sustainable peace.