



# Special Advisory Council for MYANMAR

## New SAC-M Report: China's Support for the Myanmar Military's Production of Aerial Bombs

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A new Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (SAC-M) investigation exposes how a Chinese state-owned company is enabling the Myanmar military to manufacture aerial bombs at a secretive weapons factory in central Myanmar. The aerial bombs produced at the Defence Industry 21 (DI 21) factory are used in significant numbers by the Myanmar Air Force in airstrikes against civilians—attacks that may meet the threshold of serious international crimes.

SAC-M's report, *Factory of Death: China's Support for the Myanmar Military's Production of Aerial Bombs*, details how support from Chinese state-owned arms company China South Industries Group Corporation (China South), principally through its fully owned subsidiary Hunan Vanguard, has been essential to establishing and maintaining the production of aerial bombs at DI 21. DI 21 is run by the military junta's Office of the Chief of Defence Industries (OCDI).

China South is wholly owned by the State Council of China – that is, the central government of China. Therefore, any provision of aerial bombs or associated production assistance from China South to the OCDI is subject to the authorisation of the Chinese Government.

**"China South is a state-owned company—it answers to the government of China," said Yanghee Lee of SAC-M. "By providing aerial bombs and technical production assistance to the OCDI, China South is complicit in the junta's grave violations against civilians. China must immediately end all support for Myanmar military arms manufacturing."**

The Myanmar military has suffered major defeats at the hands of revolutionary forces following its failed coup in February 2021. In response, its air force has increasingly deployed airstrikes on populated areas, targeting crowded markets, schools, places of worship, camps for internally displaced persons, and hospitals. Chinese weapons, technology and expertise are aiding this.

DI 21, located in Myanmar's central Magway region, manufactures the majority of the



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junta's aerial bombs. DI 21 also produces a variety of 250 kg and 500 kg general purpose and special purpose bombs, including fuel air-explosive bombs and domestically designed cluster munitions.

Photographic and testimonial evidence obtained by SAC-M confirm that production support for DI 21 – including support to set up aerial bomb production – has principally been supplied by Hunan Vanguard. This support has entailed Hunan Vanguard technicians providing on-site technical assistance for the full range of bomb production at DI 21 between 2014 and 2019, and DI 21 engineers travelling to Hunan Vanguard production facilities in China to undertake on-site munitions production training in 2015 and 2019. Credible information obtained by SAC-M also shows that China South, through Hunan Vanguard, has continued to provide remote technical assistance to DI 21 staff since 2019.

**“When the Myanmar people look to China, they hope to see a force for genuine peace and stability,” said Marzuki Darusman of SAC-M. “Instead, they see the sponsor of their suffering. The bombs laying waste to their communities are manufactured with China's help at DI 21. Memories of these atrocities will stay with the Myanmar people long after the junta is gone and the conflict is over. Is this the legacy China wants in Myanmar?”**

Over many decades, the Myanmar military has built up a network of 25 DI factories in an effort to become self-sufficient in arms production. While this has reduced the military's dependency on imported arms, evidence obtained by SAC-M confirms that the OCDI remains fully reliant on foreign supplies, particularly micro-electronics, for the sustained production of aerial bombs.

The majority of the DI factories are located in the Bago and Magway regions of Myanmar's central lowland, long considered the military's traditional stronghold. But now, for the first time since their inception, DI factories face the threat of attack from battle-hardened revolutionary forces advancing on the country's interior.

**“China's support won't save the junta,” said Chris Sidoti of SAC-M. “If China wants to play a constructive role in Myanmar's future, it must use its influence to stop Min Aung Hlaing from dropping even one more bomb. Disrupting aerial bomb production at DI 21 is critical to saving civilian lives. China must also immediately cut off all transfers of weapons, munitions, technology, and production assistance to the junta.”**

SAC-M also calls on other states to end all transfers, including micro-electronics, to the





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Myanmar military. Foreign governments should prosecute any company registered in or operating from their jurisdictions that provide support to the military and its OCID, including the companies identified in this report, for aiding and abetting the commission of potential war crimes by the Myanmar military.



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