



[The European Union Calls for an International Arms Embargo on Myanmar's Military Government Following Their Recent Massacre](#)

Over the preceding week, the European Union (EU) has called for an international arms embargo against the military junta in Myanmar, following their recent massacre of civilians and humanitarian workers. The disturbing incident took place on Christmas Eve in which at least 35 people were killed – including multiple children and humanitarian workers from the aid group Save the Children. Rights activists and spokespeople from other such organizations have expressed that unfortunately, this massacre is not an isolated occurrence. On the contrary, it has been common for the military to shoot unarmed civilians, take part in forcible disappearances, burn residential homes to the ground, and engage in intimidating acts of violence against citizens. In totality, since the Myanmar military junta overthrew the country's civilian government back in February of 2021, it has killed over 1,300 people and arbitrarily imprisoned an additional 11,000 or more. Victims of the heinous violence have included anti-coup and pro-democracy protesters, bystanders, humanitarian aid workers, journalists, political opponents, and others. In response, the EU and other Western nations have imposed targeted sanctions on junta figures and halted financial assistance to the Myanmar government, and now outrage and calls to do more have grown further in light of some of the latest developments.

Describing the junta's actions as 'appalling acts of violence,' the EU is supporting an arms embargo against the military regime and increasing the severity of its own sanctions already in place against the military. The EU has imposed sanctions and arms embargoes on Myanmar in various forms since the early 1990s. In 2012, most of the sanctions were lifted but the arms embargoes were maintained. Most western governments have restricted weapons transfers to Myanmar's military because of crimes against humanity committed against the Rohingya, an ethnic Muslim minority. The EU arms embargo and sanctions would widen the scope of the restrictions already in place. The EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs stated that international action is required and the EU is ready to impose additional constraints on the military regime.

Aid groups have asked the United Nations Security Council to respond to the military violence with an arms embargo, but it is doubtful that this will happen because of the body's structure and composition. Back in July of 2021, the United Nations General Assembly voted to prevent arms shipments to Myanmar but the vote – entirely symbolic – was not considered by the Security Council. This is due to the fact that both China and Russia hold veto power on the Security Council, and are the main arms providers to Myanmar in addition to India. For this reason, major progress on the issue at the United Nations-level is extremely difficult to achieve, and some analysts have surmised that this may be one of the key factors prompting the EU and the United States to try and initiate action on their own.

News of horrible violence meant to scare the civilian population into submission, like the Christmas Eve attack, have been the normal tactics of the military junta. Another human rights group reported that on December 7th, in a different region of the country, the military killed 11 civilians by burning them alive. Reporting this violence to the world has been very difficult since the military all but closed domestic media, and therefore the presence of prominent and well-respected aid groups is critical to documenting the inhumanity being perpetrated by the Myanmar military against its own people.