

Justice For Myanmar calls for investigation into USDP's use of state assets and racism

Oct. 22, 2020, Yangon, Myanmar: The Myanmar military's proxy party, the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), is linked to systemic military corruption, has acquired and earned revenue from state assets and stokes racism, in potential contravention of Myanmar's Political Parties Registration Law. Justice For Myanmar calls for a thorough investigation of USDP's economic interests and use of divisive language. The government must dismantle the party if any violations are found.

The USDP was formed in 2010, inheriting assets from the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), transferred from the state as part of the grand corruption of the former military dictatorship. The USDA, a military-controlled mass organisation, had extensive business dealings, including ownership of Myan Gon Myint group of companies. Assets formerly under Myan Gon Myint that are currently being used by USDP include cargo scanners that the party leases to the customs department for use in ports. In the 2016-2017 financial year, the customs department paid USDP and several other companies 6 billion kyat (US \$4.3 million) in fees for scanners, according to media reports.

Under article 12(a)(v) of Myanmar's Political Parties Registration Law, party registration can be cancelled if it is "*found that the organization obtained and used directly or indirectly money, land, house, building, vehicle, property owned by the State*". The USDP's acquisition of state property and continued income from the state is a potential violation of Myanmar law.

Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says: "*The USDP is the party of the military cartel and is part of the military's systemic corruption and conflict of interest. USDP continues to profit from its acquisition of public assets, at an immense loss for the people of Myanmar. The USDP's abuses of power must be investigated, and officials must be held accountable and the party dissolved if it is in violation of Myanmar's laws. All public assets must be returned to the people of Myanmar.*"

The USDP continues to stoke racism and religious discrimination in their campaign. In an Oct. 9 2020 campaign rally, USDP Chair Brig Gen Than Htay (rtd) stated that his "blood" is not mixed with blood from foreign countries. This follows similar racist speeches he gave in 2018 and 2019 that included statements of racial purity, to the detriment of minorities who are excluded under Myanmar's system of racial discrimination built by the Myanmar military.

Article 12(a)(iv) of the Political Parties Registration law stipulates cancellation of party registration for failure to follow article 6 of the law, which includes abstention "*from writing, delivering speech or organizing and instigating that can cause conflict or that can affect dignity and moral relating to nationality, religion, individual or public*".

JUSTICE FOR MYANMAR

To date, no legal action has been taken against the USDP's stoking of ethnic and religious divisions and instigation of hate.

Yadanar Maung continues: *“The USDP’s stoking of ethnic and religious hatred is abhorrent and illegal. The fact that no legal action has been taken against the party and its officials is evidence of the impunity that USDP continues to enjoy as part of the Myanmar military cartel. For Myanmar to build a federal democracy and a sustainable peace, the military must be placed under civilian control and fully divested from the economy. The cartel, including its party, the USDP, must be dismantled.”*

Note to editors

See more in our web feature, *The Cartel’s Party*: www.justiceformyanmar.org/stories/usdp-the-cartels-party

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.

ENDS

For more information please contact:

Yadanar Maung

Email: media@justiceformyanmar.org

Website: <https://www.justiceformyanmar.org/>

Mirror: <https://justiceformyanmar.github.io/justiceformyanmar.org/>

Twitter: [@justicemyanmar](https://twitter.com/justicemyanmar)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/justiceformyanmar.org/>