

27 Jan 2022: TotalEnergies & Chevron are divesting – what does this mean?

TOTALENERGIES & CHEVRON ARE DIVESTING
What does this mean?

Live Press Conference
Thursday, January 27th 2022

11 AM (Paris Time)
4-30 pm (Yangon Time)
2 AM (California Time)

FIVE SPEAKERS WITH MODERATOR, DEBBIE

- Sophie Brondel**
Info Birmannie coordinator
- Ko Maw Htun Aung**
Managing Director Oil Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE), NUG
- Ben Hardman**
Lawyer and Myanmar Legal & Policy Advisor, EarthRights International
- Mulan**
Youth Activist, Blood Money Campaign
- Ko Ye**
Natural Resource Activist, Blood Money Campaign
- Moderator - Debbie Stothard**
Founder of ALTSKAN Burma, Advocate & Trainer (Women's Leadership, Business & Human Rights)

BLOOD MONEY **HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION** **INFO BIRMANNIE**

- Transcript -

[00:00:00] **Debbie Stothard:** So welcome everybody. This meeting is being recorded and live-streamed on more than eight Facebook groups. So we welcome everybody's interest. For those of you who are here, I'm looking at your names. And I know that you're all Burma activists. You are people who've been engaged on human rights and democracy in Burma/Myanmar, particularly so since the coup started on 1st of February, 2021.

[00:00:31] So I don't need to give you a history lesson. We know the situation is bad. Atrocity crimes are happening all over the country and the Blood Money Campaign is one of the campaign organizations working in partnership with the broader movement to cut off supplies of cash to the illegal military junta, because if they have access to cash, they simply use it for aviation fuel, weapons and ammunition to commit atrocity crimes around the country.

[00:01:05] Now the latest development, the shock announcement by the two giant companies, TotalEnergies and Chevron, that they are divesting from Myanmar took place a few days ago and causing a lot of excitement, consternation, worry, speculation.

[00:01:27] And we hope that the speakers at this press conference will be able to answer your concerns and your questions from very different perspectives. First up, we have Ko Ye, a natural resource activist with the Blood Money Campaign. Ko Ye, you have been working for many years with grassroots communities to resist human rights violations caused by business activities and to promote natural resource transparency.

[00:02:00] How do you view this latest development? Over to you Ko Ye? And I'm timing you.

[00:02:09] **Ko Ye:** Thank you, Debbie. And thank you all brothers and sisters around the world who are supporting the Myanmar Spring Revolution. This is very important, the two energy giants leaving from Myanmar announcement for leaving from Myanmar. Not yet they are leaving.

[00:02:28] So in, my view it's very important to look over the history. So in after the 1988, the revolutions, that there was huge sanctions put in by the Western government, including US, and EU, UK and others,. To say the democratic countries putting attention on Myanmar, but was just not working effectively. Because these two giants, Total, Chevron landing in the early 2000s.

[00:03:04] And they are supporting military by the huge revenues to running the country, to running the regime. That's just the main reasons that the previous revolution, the 88 revolution is not successful. The people have sacrificed. So right now the, after the coup has happened, this history of this crime, that's supporting, by those two company Chevron, Total. They are continuing the same history as previously, but last week they announced that they are going to leave from Myanmar. I'm pleased to see that these two companies finally stop directly funding to the terrorist military junta, and also given the legitimacy.

[00:04:03] They are stopping that, I'm pleased to see, and then we also see that another company does this morning. That Woodside is also leaving, following this lead. So it is important. So in my experience, in my view, that the cutting this oil and gas revenue is directly linked to that. Whether we are success or victory of the days revolution or not.

[00:04:30] So if this, the blood money, we call the revenue from the natural resources, especially oil and gas - it's very important to stop it. That can be, how to say, less bloodshed. And our victory will be very soon if those monies are cut off.

[00:04:54] But this is, these two companies, their announcement, we're seeing as this is one of the success, not really a victory. This is one of the success for the people Myanmar, for the campaigning, for our social justice, our democracy, and the stopping the terrorist military junta atrocity crimes they are committing.

[00:05:21] So, we hope and we are expecting, sanctions on the MOGE.

[00:05:27] It is very important. So that leaving of, the announcement of the leaving of the two giants Total, Chevron is not stopping the revenue right now. This is why the point of sanctions on the MOGE is very important right now. So to stop it successfully. So that is why the governments from EU, and US and UK and all the democratic countries around the globe need to put the sanctions on the MOGE.

[00:06:05] This is a very important one. And also we've seen that recently that US Treasury Department, US government has just said that any kind of

payment that reach to the junta through the state-owned enterprise, that could be money laundering. So even this affects whether those banks will transfer funds to the junta-controlled accounts, including MOGE.

[00:06:30] So we're really pleased to see that, and this is important for us and the people of Myanmar to stopping the bloodshed in Myanmar. That every day, our people, the children, women, the people across the country, in the, all the area of Myanmar are dying everyday. They are looting our belongings, our wealth.

[00:06:56] So this is everything that, how to say, junta, the terrorist junta is enabling that, attacking the people, bombshell the people and villages and destroying our livestock and the rations. Everything is enabled because of this revenue. So that's why we need to stop this revenue as soon as possible. Thank you Debbie.

[00:07:24] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you, Ko Ye. I see you were timing yourself also. I thank you very much for your discipline. What I wanted to note there is Ko Ye says this is a success, but it's not yet a victory. And for that victory to take place, we do need to halt flows of cash to the military, especially the oil and gas sector.

[00:07:50] So it's my pleasure to invite Ms. Mulan, a youth activist with the Blood Money Campaign, Mulan is a young activist campaigning to stop the cash flow to the junta. Does the decision make Total and Chevron the good guys for pulling out over to you?

[00:08:13] **Mulan:** Hi, Debbie. Yeah, to answer your question frankly, is no. There are a lot of things that are, they could have done to help keep us safe, but did they do it early on? No. They could have listened to our call and demands early on since March, but did they do it? No. Now TotalEnergies and Chevron are saying that they have approached the French government to impose sanction on MOGE.

[00:08:43] We really welcome that statement and we want to support all we can for US and French government to impose sanctions on MOGE. We want them to stop funding the military, stop ordering PTTEP to pay MOGE. Instead, what they have done instead, is taking the easy way out.

[00:09:03] Our campaign, Blood Money Campaign aims to pressure international corporations and companies that associate business with the illegitimate criminal junta be it directly or indirectly to stop financing the Crimes against Humanity in Myanmar. So we focus on foreign source of revenue, a large chunk that giants like TotalEnergies, Chevron, POSCO, PTTEP, Petronas companies to stop funding the gas revenue to the junta.

[00:09:34] And instead to pay, we ask, keep that revenue in the escrow account until democracy is restored back in Myanmar. This is our call. This is

our demand. We never intended for TotalEnergies or Chevron to exit out of Myanmar. We only wish to be preventing the junta from assessing gas revenue that find its atrocity crimes.

[00:09:55] Since the February coup 2021, human rights groups, activists, seriously asked to TotalEnergies and Chevron to stop gas revenue bank-rolling to the junta but, they ignore and just only give excuses and make their profit with blood money in Myanmar. And people are being killed every day with their support in gas revenue to the criminal junta. They have a responsibility to do transitional justice and social justice.

[00:10:24] And after they announced statement in May, most of people think they suspend gas payments to junta. Actually, that was a trick. That was a trick to human rights groups and people to stop voices. And now they did again like this, they announced to divest from Myanmar because to stop global people voices and their shareholders, investor pressure.

[00:10:48] We call, TotalEnergies, Chevron, exiting Myanmar was not our primary goal. We call to keep gas revenue in protected accounts, escrow accounts, not to get accessed from the criminal junta. Their announcement is a major, it's a just major development since February 2021, along the human rights violations and crimes against humanity by junta.

[00:11:13] As Sayar told, this is a success for the people in Myanmar, as we all campaign for social justice, and it's a rebuke to the junta for the atrocity, for the atrocities it has committed and we cautiously welcome their diverse announcement. We are pleased to see that Total and Chevron will finally stop directly funding the criminal military junta, and giving it legitimacy. We are pleased to see that other companies like Woodside are following this lead, and all the divesting companies must responsibly exit and need to manage cash flow, not to reach to the criminal junta before they leave. And also they need approval for divestment from the government of Myanmar so that this means they have to get approval from National Unity Government. Just in line with their history, total and Chevron are ignoring the voices of Myanmar people.

[00:12:14] The path they have chosen risks additional funds being stolen by the junta, because it may give a bigger share to MOGE. TotalEnergies and Chevron divestment announcement was not included to stop bank-rolling to junta before their exit and also without accountability and responsible response to our people, voices and call.

[00:12:38] That means they are still, they are just still funding Crimes against Humanity in Myanmar. TotalEnergies, and Chevron are now trying to run away from Myanmar after making profit over three decades from Myanmar soil for them and contributing and financing the junta committing human rights violations and war crimes.

[00:13:04] And also in coming 2025, Yadana gas field is expected to run out of gas. That's why they exit from Myanmar after they got all their profit over three decades. So to be a responsible exit, they must follow natural resources, honour our Myanmar peoples' demands, if they are really applying business and human right guideline, as they announced on paper.

[00:13:30] So we call for gas companies to pay revenues into protected accounts, escrow accounts. So did also the NUG. They ignored these calls and instead treated the junta, as if it is the government of Myanmar and order payments to the junta each month. This was a choice, it means they are funding junta atrocity.

[00:13:52] BMC has directly contacted Total numerous times, they haven't responded to our questions or concern. Responsible divestment is not possible when a company ignores Myanmar stakeholders and refuses to engage. So before they leave Myanmar, before they leave from Myanmar during six months Total and Chevron must stop ordering payment to the junta. Six months will be another 250 million USD dollar into accounts the junta control. This is more complicity in the junta crimes. So they must stop treating the junta like the government and order funds into protected accounts as our Myanmar people demand. Thank you, Debbie.

[00:14:41] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you so much Mulan for that impassioned call that the Chevron and TotalEnergies cannot just wash their hands of the mess that they contributed to in Burma/Myanmar.

[00:14:56] But actually, as part of their divestment process need to ensure that they do not let a single cent of that estimated US 250 million dollars go into the claws of the military junta, but instead put it into a protected account for democratically elected government, such as the NUG to control. So this is extremely important, given that people on the ground have been boycotting paying taxes and their electricity bill to the military junta and are being threatened to death for, threatened with death, for refusing to pay out taxes and their electricity bill to the illegal regime. However, companies like TotalEnergies and Chevron, these giants continue to allow cash to flow to them.

[00:15:53] So the obligation here, as Mulan is demanding, is for these companies to listen to the voice of the people, the Blood Money Campaign has been approaching them repeatedly, and it's not like they don't know what's going on.

[00:16:07] Now, we are also very privileged and honored to introduce to you U Maw Tun Aung. U Maw Tun Aung is the managing director of Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise under the National Unity Government.

[00:16:25] So, is this withdrawal what NUG called for, and how, if you, as the managing director of MOGE had a say under the energy, what would you be telling the company to do.

[00:16:46] **Maw Tun Aung:** Thank you, Debbie. And also thank you everyone who is tuning in today, and it was my pleasure to be speaking on this distinguished panel regarding MOGE. For some of you who might be wondering how come Maw Tun becomes a managing director - I am also a Deputy Minister of Ministry of Electricity and Energy for the NUG government, but recently in December our government has a presidential decree that had conferred the, all the representative power of the MOGE upon me. And that's why I become, I am managing director of MOGE.

[00:17:31] So regarding the questions, I think we have to look back why, you know, like the civil society organization, why NUG is calling for the, the protect, the money from the oil and gas companies be put into, protected account, or stream to NUG.

[00:17:53] Because, this isn't a very obvious reason. The reason if we look back the history the oil and gas money are the majority of the the foreign currency for Myanmar government, successive Myanmar government and also military regime. And also, what do they use that money for? And they use it mainly for buying arms, and also this is the source of corruption in the past decades.

[00:18:23] So some of you who are familiar with following Myanmar would also know the scandal of state-owned economic enterprises in the, having the other accounts where they stash away billions of dollars in those, unaccountable accounts. So if you look back the history of Myanmar and then you will also see the role that MOGE has played in sustaining the military in power and also how this has become the source of corruption and how this industry has enriched and bred a lot of tycoons that are now assisting the military junta in acquiring arms from foreign countries.

[00:19:10] So from the very beginning we have been calling for responsible investments and by declaring responsible investment policy from NUG. We do not ask any foreign firms to leave Myanmar.

[00:19:24] What we are asking is a responsible investment that really honours the human rights and that goes along with the benefit of the people. So we do not ask for the withdrawal of any foreign firms and that is, has not been in the NUG policy. But we ask strictly that the foreign funds, when they are doing business in Myanmar, by any means not to partner with the military junta as well as not to benefit indirectly to the military.

[00:19:59] So that is what we have asked for from the very beginning. And also, NUG asked for all the stakeholder and we have declared that State Administration Council (SAC) has been first and foremost, the terrorist organization. And by now you all have agreed that by killing, over a hundred over a thousand people already with cold-blooded manner, and also putting all of these students, state bureaucrats, as well as activists and politicians. And there are more than 10,000 people now behind bars because of these, you know sham charges including former presidents and State Counsellor Daw Aung

San Suu Kyi. So I think from the beginning, we have declared SAC as the illegal organization, as well as terrorist organization.

[00:20:57] So companies, like who are greatly benefiting SAC regime to sustain are already implicated in domestic terrorism law, and also money laundering law. So we have also reminded in our statements, after statements. So this is what an NUG asked for from the very beginning, because NUG is the, right now, is the only organization, only legitimate representative of the people and to recognize NUG as the people's representative government.

[00:21:32] So that is what NUG has asked for to international community, as well as people who are working, doing business inside of Myanmar. And also NUG stand during this, you know, Blood Money Campaign period, NUG stand with the call of the civil society organization across the globe to, you know, to stop the money flowing into the accounts of the military junta hands.

[00:22:02] So we stand together with many who have participated in Blood Money Campaign. We also call for, if the company, oil and gas company, the cannot pay money yet to NUG, then they should consider putting that money into the protected account like escrow account. But then, you know the reason it's not just, our demands are not directed, not just to Total and Chevron.

[00:22:34] But we also said the same thing to POSCO. We said the same thing to PTTEP and also Petronas, in doing the same thing. Because by the look of the announcement from Total, these companies, already knew that Myanmar is no longer a conducive environment for business to responsibly operate inside Myanmar.

[00:23:02] So for a big oil and gas company that are extracting the wealth of the people they should be particularly careful and they are particularly responsible not to transfer the money to SAC. And that has been what NUG has been calling for.

[00:23:30] So I don't think to answer your questions, no, NUG didn't call for withdrawal of these companies from Myanmar. But the good thing is that they then realize the grave human rights violation of the junta. And then they knew that, this junta is not a true representative of the the people's government.

[00:23:56] So we welcome that realization. But there are some, actions to be followed from that announcement since these companies such as Total and Chevron already recognize that the country is run by the junta, illegitimate government, they are responsible that the remaining, in the remaining six months or so, the money from oil and gas will not flow into the hands of the bloodthirsty murderous regime.

[00:24:31] So this is what we demand for the responsible divestment means that in their remainder of time they will consult with NUG, the true

representative of the people of Myanmar and also, and do so responsibility.
Thank you.

[00:24:51] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you so much. And I apologize for my breach of protocol. Laphai Maw Tun Aung, is of course Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy under the NUG and serving as managing director of MOGE, the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise. And he reminds us that companies that continue to allow, to channel funds to the illegal military junta are committing a crime under national law and are actually guilty of money laundering.

[00:25:28] And he urges theof the giants Chevron, TotalEnergies and in fact Woodside and all the other companies to consult with the NUG, instead of just withdrawing willy-nilly, to actually consult and work with the NUG to ensure that their divestment is responsible.

[00:25:50] Next up, we have Sophie, Miss Sophie Brondel, coordinator of Info Birmanie, an organization that has been working in solidarity with people for Burma in the past 25 years. And Info Birmanie, a French organization has been actively engaged with dealing with the French company, TotalEnergies, and the French government. Sophie, does the withdrawal let France and the EU off the hook in terms of targeted sanctions? Over to you Sophie.

[00:26:27] **Sophie Brondel:** Thank you, Debbie, for your question. As a matter of fact, the withdrawal of Total does not leave France and EU off the hook, and it's quite the contrary. And the decision of withdrawal of Total puts the focus on what France's position has been for the last month and what it should be now. France has blocked sanctions at the EU level, protecting Total's position and interest in Myanmar so far.

[00:26:55] So we know that if EU has failed so far to target the gas sector in Myanmar, it is because of France's position. Now Total has said itself just the day before announcing that it would leave Myanmar, that it was supporting sanctions. And now that total, it says it is leaving France must change its position and call for targeted sanctions on MOGE.

[00:27:21] As we all know, these recent weeks there has been specific call on president Biden and on President Emmanuel Macron to push for sanctions on the gas sector. So this call is coming widely from Myanmar civil society and French NGOs have been also voicing this call in France. There is no obstacle at the European Union now to take sanctions on MOGE and France has to make a strong push for these sections. Now it is very urgent because as we all know, the gas revenues are continuing to flow.

[00:27:56] There is an other issue at the European level concerning the possibility of adopting targeted sanctions on the payments that MOGE receives by targeting the banking sector. We know that Human Rights Watch has done intensive advocacy and research work on these specific sanctions.

[00:28:15] And it seems that at the European level, there is a limitation which could be due to the the sanctions at EU level can not have an extra territorial impact, meaning that EU could not impact on non-European companies. So this is a debate between experts and it has to move on, but in the end, we would say that on this specific aspect of EU sanctions in the end, it's a matter of political will.

[00:28:41] If the European Union has to change its regulation to target the banking sector, if that is a necessity for the gas revenues to stop flowing in and financing the junta, then these sanctions also have to be supported, but utmostly, urgently, France must and can support the sanctions on MOGE. And now, since Total is withdrawing, France can not find an excuse because of Total's presence in Burma.

[00:29:10] So this is a very urgent call and it's much needed, and we will be pushing for that along with our partners in Myanmar and at the French level. Thank you Debbie.

[00:29:23] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you Sophie. So the ball is in your court, Macron and Sophie Brondel and the activists are coming after you. So please, it's time to sanction. France needs to support sanctions against MOGE.

[00:29:40] Now, when we're talking about revenues, sanctioning and all of those things, we always need a lawyer in the room to help us unpack and demystify some of these aspects. So we have with us, Mr. Ben Hardman, lawyer, and Myanmar legal policy advisor for EarthRights international. Ben, the companies have previously used all kinds of technical excuses to avoid halting payments to the regime. Is it too late now to do anything about it, please let us know.

[00:30:16] **Ben Hardman:** Thanks Debbie. The short answer is no, but I think first it's worth taking a moment to see what they've done so far. As the other speakers have said, the junta is not the Myanmar government. International community hasn't recognized it as such, and Total and Chevron's contracts are with the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, which is merely a department of the Myanmar government.

[00:30:44] They've tried to suggest it's a company, it's an independent entity, but it's not. And so MOGE being a government department, well, that means that Total is effectively treating the junta as the government of Myanmar by making payments to accounts it controls. Total has no obligation to do that every month that orders the buyer PTT to make those transfers.

[00:31:11] It's very much open to Total to say, well, this isn't the recognized government, we're going to pay these into protected accounts. And if that's a problem that can be resolved with arbitration, cause obviously as you'd expect with international oil and gas contracts, they have arbitration clauses. Total is simply choosing not to use them.

[00:31:30] It's compounded that by together with Chevron spreading disinformation that has impeded sanctions. And so we're talking about things like suggesting that Myanmar gas is vital to Thai energy exports when it's not. It could be fairly easily replaced with liquid natural gas. It would just come at a cost to Thailand. It's certainly not vital.

[00:31:50] I mean, Chevron's even said we're taking these actions because we're concerned about our workers in Myanmar. It doesn't have any workers in Myanmar. That's just Total that has those. And so this combination of ordering payments when there's simply no need to, to a, what is a criminal offender combined with the disinformation is clear complicity in atrocity crimes. Now with their exit, as they will draw on, they are handling their shares over to the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and to PTTEP, the other party to this joint venture. It's worth pointing out that could give a further revenue stream, an increased revenue stream to the junta, but it's not a large one.

[00:32:36] Most of the revenues come from the Myanmar government's stake as they state revenue collector, not as a contractor. And so what that really means is at worst, we don't think that the increasing payments will be more than around the equivalent to one monthly payment per year. And so if we see effective sanctions or if we see gas companies take action, then that really is quite a small change.

[00:33:04] So yeah. Is it too late? Just as they could have at any point ordered funds into escrow accounts, they can do so now with the final six months that would reduce their complexity in atrocities. It would set a precedent for other companies, for other gas projects and for any new operator that comes in.

[00:33:22] They previously said well, if we do that, we risk being forced out. Well, they're leaving anyway now. So they have no reason to delay any further. Looking forward, Total has set in place a process that does two things. First of all, they give up their share in the investment. And secondly, they are trying to give up their role as operator.

[00:33:42] So those are two separate contractual issues, but for both of them, they need the approval of the government of Myanmar. And so what Total and Chevron could do is stop dealing with the junta as if it's the government and start listening to the NUG and civil society. It's contract certainly don't require it to give up its role of operator at the say-so of the military regime and then help it loot further assets by bringing in a new operator.

[00:34:10] At the very least, it shouldn't bring in a new operator that doesn't agree to divert payments and comply with the sanctions. Again, that should be done in consultation with Myanmar stakeholders and in accordance with the demands of the NUG.

[00:34:23] I think it's worth also pointing out that just three working days after these companies announced they were leaving, we saw the US Treasury state that such payment could constitute money laundering.

[00:34:37] And so obviously the oil and gas lobbying has influence and they can make sure they're keep using that influence rather than a campaign to block sanctions, that Chevron has actively done, by making sure that the sanctions are enacted. And as other speakers have said, the onus remains on the EU and the US to make sure effective sanctions are put in place now.

[00:35:01] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you, Ben. So we can see here an interesting point that the oil companies have been engaged in a campaign of misinformation to mislead people and also mislead governments as to their actual power. And they had, they always had the power to put the money into an escrow account to recognize the NUG and not recognize the illegal junta, as the government of the day.

[00:35:32] So we already see that it's still not too late for the oil companies to behave properly. And instead of trying to use this withdrawal as a smoke screen, to allow them to continue to profit the military. So I have, we invite questions from the floor, please. Put it in the chat box and I'll call on you.

[00:35:59] We did receive questions, pre-sent questions, and I'm going to call a question from Thomson Reuters. And I invite all everyone to actually all the speakers to weigh in. Just put up your hand, if you want to answer .The question is, with more companies withdrawing from Myanmar's exploration blocks is Myanmar's energy security at risk? Could you please comment on Myanmar's long-term energy security risks? I think this is a question for Ko Ye, Laphai Maw Tun Aung, and perhaps Ben. Who would like to answer first? Any hands up?

[00:36:50] Yes, please Ko Ye. Go ahead.

[00:36:53] **Ko Ye:** So for the energy security or something like that. Those companies always talking about, they are not leaving, they are not following the people demands because of the welfare of the people, Myanmar people and electricity and other excuse, the security of their staff members, those are lies. I can say those are lies. It's clear. Now, in Myanmar, even the jungle, there's no electricity The terrorist junta, they intentionally cut off the electricity across the country, including Myanmar and other areas. So it's clear, how can they do it, those companies, they are putting the money to the junta.

[00:37:45] Their excuse is not cutting electricity for the people, but it's happening. It's nothing. So we have be very clear that since the beginning, especially that Yadana project, those money never go or never used for the people. Those money never reach to the people. Those money, that's selling that the oil and gas money, it's just buying the weapons that's killing our people. That's quite clear. So energy security, to those company is nothing.

Especially the Yadana project, they are totally not associated with that due to my understanding. So there has excuses. They are not living from Myanmar or not, not even, they are not following our demand, putting the money into the protected account because there will be the cutting of the electricity and others.

[00:38:47] So right now what they are doing is that. Yes, as you said, they are just wash their hands and leave. It's don't happen. This is our resources for all my people, you have to follow what people is demanding and they have to stop treating the junta terrorist group as a legitimate government, they are not government.

[00:39:13] So we have a government that's National Unity Government, so everything, whatever decision they are making, because they have a contract with the Myanmar state. Everything. They make decision whether they are leaving or whether they are putting money into the escrow account or giving to the NUG or their share is transferred into the PTT or MOGE. Those areas, all the decisions, they must consult and endorse by the NUG, because this is our resources, it's not theirs. So it's very clear. So what are you say there are, those people is facing difficulties every day. Yangon, there's no electricity and no power in the very important areas because junta is cutting. They can do anything.

[00:40:07] So stop lying. No excuse by those companies, all the company natural resource company, the excuses for the sake of the people of Myanmar. Those are lies, it's clear for me. Thank you Debbie.

[00:40:25] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you. Before I give the floor to Maw Tun Aung, I'm going to ask for April and Mon Zin to, please translate the question from DVB and also which has been written in Burmese.

[00:40:39] And so please help me out there because I can't read Burmese. In the meantime, I'd like to give the floor to the NUG Deputy Minister for Energy and Electricity and managing director of , Laphai May Tun Aung, over to you.

[00:40:58] **Maw Tun Aung:** Yeah. I think this is a very interesting questions, but we have a very good answer already because looking back to the, how Myanmar oil and gas developed, it started in 1993 and then we have Yadana start producing in 1997. And since then we could easily assume that Myanmar has enough energy to, supply the whole country. But what happened between the production 1997 and all the way 2015 or 2020? We still face energy insecurity across the country.

[00:41:43] So by looking at the statistics, we still have only 50% of the households in Myanmar are connected to the main grid. So that means over the past two, three decades, Myanmar has not only Yadana which is operated by Total, we have now Shwe, which is operated by POSCO Daewoo. But then looking at the energy situation in Myanmar, there is no correlation. Why there is no correlation between additional oil and gas and people having energy, our

country having energy security? Because first and foremost the source of the problem is having military junta in power because they have no interest whatsoever in the development or the welfare of the people.

[00:42:38] So because the data also backs up this claim. We have enough energy during the past 20 years, but they are all used for export to get the foreign currency, to replenish the military, to stock up the military and also to breed the military related, tycoons and cronies.

[00:43:06] So it is very obvious for Myanmar energy security, the enemy is having a military junta in power, is the most dangerous thing for Myanmar energy security. I think once we relinquish them of power, we have enough energy and as well as we have other measures to make Myanmar not deprived of energy.

[00:43:36] Thank you.

[00:43:37] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you for that. I have Ben Hardman in the queue and then Mulan and I will and I'll open the floor to questions after that.

[00:43:47] **Ben Hardman:** Yeah. Just to follow up on what Maw Tun Aung was saying, is that the main impediment to Myanmar energy security, which has been insecure for many years is the regime.

[00:43:56] Since the coup began, hydro-power developers have pulled out, there were many plans and contracts in place for solar power. Those have all been canceled. And so that's affecting energy security. The regime is currently choosing to spend foreign revenue on waging war, against the Myanmar people rather than importing LNG.

[00:44:17] So again, that's affected the energy security, the problem isn't the companies putting out, the problem is the continued presence of the military.

[00:44:27] **Mulan:** Yes. I want to make some little comments. Yes, Yadana provides only around half of Yangon power only, and also public survey research already showed that 98% of people want to suspend gas payments to MOGE account that is now controlled by criminal junta, even the electricity is cut off. Any companies, Total, Chevron, PTT can't turn electricity off.

[00:45:01] The companies pay or not to junta as we are already suffering electricity cutoff and Myanmar people are aware that the humanitarian consequence of military rule will be worse than electricity being cut off. In ground situation Myanmar people are refusing to pay electricity bill rather than allows those funds to reach the junta, for as long as the junta is funded by gas revenue, Myanmar will not have energy security. Thank you.

[00:45:31] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you, Ko Ye. I'm going to hold on to you, can I just hold you off for a minute? And because we do need to open the floor to Min Hteh Mone from DVB has asked the question. I would like them to ask the question in Burmese to you, and then you can answer .For those of the people who don't understand Burmese, please go to the interpretation globe icon, and click English so that you can hear the question of DVB.

[00:46:08] Can you can you unmute and ask your question, please?

[00:46:16] Hello?

[00:46:24] Yes, please. Go ahead.

[00:46:27] **DVB:** [Burmese Language]

[00:46:52] [Burmese Language]

[00:47:40] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you Min Hteh Mone we have hands up from Ko Ye and then from Deputy Minister Maw Tun Aung. Ko Ye can you please reply? And then we'll go to the Deputy Minister.

[00:47:54] **Ko Ye:** Okay, Debbie. So this question better answered by the Minister. So I just want to add that your previous question about the energy security. So Total should be looking over the next to the village next to their camp.

[00:48:10] The village next to their camp. There's no electricity over the three decades. So stop lying for the sake of the people. Electricity, energy security - nothing. So people around their camp is living in the dark for more than three decades. That says what you mean, how to say the energy security for the answer for the DVB. I question for the DVB better to be answered by the Minister. Thank you.

[00:48:47] **Maw Tun Aung:** [Burmese Language]

[00:49:00] [Burmese Language]

[00:49:04] [Burmese Language]

[00:49:08] [Burmese Language]

[00:49:48] [Burmese Language]

[00:50:44] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you. Deputy Minister Maw Tun Aung. Mulan, you had your hand up, please take the floor.

[00:51:10] **Mulan:** [Burmese Language]

[00:51:27] [Burmese Language]

[00:51:41] [Burmese Language]

[00:51:50] [Burmese Language]

[00:51:53] [Burmese Language]

[00:51:58] [Burmese Language]

[00:52:03] [Burmese Language]

[00:52:19] [Burmese Language]

[00:52:51] [Burmese Language]

[00:53:20] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you Mulan. We've hit the top of the hour and we should be winding up our press conference, but I wanted to draw your attention to an explainer because we can't cover all the details in just this one press conference. There is a backup document issued by the Global Myanmar Spring Revolution and the Blood Money Campaign, an explainer on Total and Chevron's withdrawal, and you can see it in the chat box. So please feel free to download. We also note the fact that this is being streamed on several Facebook groups and at the moment there are about more than a thousand people listening in on the Facebook live.

[00:54:07] Before we wind up for the, for this press conference. Are there any more questions from the floor? Please raise your hand or indicate in the chat box?

[00:54:22] No more questions.

[00:54:24] Okay, so please, thank you all for joining. Thank you to our speakers. And oh, there's a question from Spring Media. Can you unmute and ask your question?

[00:54:45] Is Spring Media, still in the house?

[00:54:50] Yes, no Spring Media.

[00:55:04] Oh, anyway, Spring, you asked the question, so please unmute and ask from the floor. Don't be shy. Don't be ana.

[00:55:33] **Spring:** [Burmese Language]

[00:55:42] [Burmese Language]

[00:56:07] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you. Spring for that question. Ah, yes. Deputy Minister Maw Tun Aung.

[00:56:16] **Maw Tun Aung:** [Burmese Language]

[00:56:18] [Burmese Language]

[00:56:22] [Burmese language]

[00:56:37] [Burmese Language]

[00:56:53] [Burmese Language]

[00:57:01] [Burmese Language]

[00:57:22] [Burmese Language]

[00:57:36] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you, Minister, Deputy Minister. Ben.

[00:57:40] **Ben Hardman:** Yeah, it does seem unlikely that a Chinese or Russian company is going to want to come in. As we have said, the gas is running out. It's not a particularly attractive commercial proposition, especially for new companies that have no history of working in Myanmar in the gas extraction sector.

[00:57:56] Whereas PTTEP, the Thai company is already a party to these contracts, it already operates one of Myanmar's other gas fields. So the expectation is that it will be PTTEP. There's already part of the Yadana contracts that will take over as the Deputy Minister said. Yeah, for starters sanctions would make that a less attractive proposition.

[00:58:20] There's also the decision that Total has to make as to whether or not it brings in a new operator. Will it hand over the data, the information? To give a comparison Chevron is handing over a gas deal in Thailand. The Erawan gas field, the largest gas field in Thailand. It's also handing it over to PTTEP and because of the commercial dispute, it's making that takeover very difficult.

[00:58:50] It's delayed access. It's delayed handing over data, it's caused production to decline. So those are difficult decisions that, what should Total do. But there's not its position to make those decisions it should do them in consultation with Myanmar civil society and simply ask the NUG, who has to, as a government of Myanmar, approve all these contractual changes.

[00:59:18] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you, Ben.

[00:59:18] I'd just like to give all the speakers one minute to, for their final remarks and remind folks that there are links to petitions that that the Global Myanmar Spring Revolution and the Blood Money Campaign would like you to sign. I'm going to start with Ko Ye. Any final remarks Ko Ye?

[00:59:44] **Ko Ye:** The most important right now is putting the MOGE in sanctions.

[00:59:48] So this is the most important. So we the people of Myanmar and our friends across the globe, our brothers and sisters. We need to put continuous pressure on the, those sanctions on MOGE. This is the most important thing we're working on. And then the other companies in Myanmar, those oil and gas and another companies in Myanmar, they need to consider the situation. What Total and Chevron's statement is clear. Because of the human rights situation in Myanmar, they are living. This, they clearly state that. So those are terrorists, military junta. They are the worst group or terrorist group in this history.

[01:00:40] And they the most unsuccessful coup attempt group and that everyone who is associated with those illegal terrorist group, there will be the consequences for the those other companies who is paying money to the junta. So this is why please consider the Myanmar people.

[01:01:05] Please engage with the NUG to protect themselves, yourselves. I mean, the companies, they should be collaborating with the NUG to protect their situation. So that's what I'm going to say. Thank you, Debbie.

[01:01:21] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you Ko Ye, over to you Mulan for final remarks

[01:01:28] **Mulan:** Yes. TotalEnergies' duty and responsibility are to follow the people orders, keep gas revenue in escrow account during the six months before they leave. And they must manage to stop cashflow to junta before over to PTTEP as now they are preparing. And also PTTEP must comply, targeted and MOGE sanctions, and US, EU has also duty to implement sanctions on MOGE.

[01:01:56] In the past they also intentionally left do sanctions on MOGE after 1988 pro democracy movement, but now US, EU must implement sanction MOGE to defend democracy. These natural resources belong to the people of Myanmar, not this illegal murderous, criminal junta. International businesses, international business, and corporation must listen to the Myanmar people's voices, and follow people's desire and orders. That is the duty for responsible business.

[01:02:27] Thank you.

[01:02:28] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you, Mulan over to you. Deputy Minister Maw Tun Aung.

[01:02:32] **Speaker 1:** Final remarks.

[01:02:41] **Maw Tun Aung:** Hi, my final remark is that the, I would like thank everyone, stakeholders who campaign heartedly, to make this happen. But as we all hear, as we all heard today, that this battle is not over yet, and we really need to make sure that the money does not flow to the people that are not entitled.

[01:03:09] And also we have to make sure that the international community sanction MOGE very quickly. Not waiting any longer because time is the essence. And also, as we all know that the junta is ramping up, is buying arms and ammunitions. So where do they get money from? They mostly get the money from the oil and gas companies.

[01:03:39] So when gas company should be aware that, know, like Total and Chevron has already made the HRIA assessment so that if you stay longer in Myanmar, you will be part of this bloodstained operation conducted by the SAC and your reputation is in jeopardy. And as well as you'll be implicated in some of the domestic terrorism laws and as well as money laundering.

[01:04:06] So this is just my final remarks. And thank you.

[01:04:14] **Debbie Stothard:** Oh, sorry. I apologize. Over to you Sophie Brondel, Info Birmanie, for your final remarks?

[01:04:21] **Sophie Brondel:** Well, my final remark would be to recall that France is supportive of stronger sections at the EU level now, but it's perhaps more focusing on individuals being sanctioned. So now it's time for MOGE. And and I would just like to say again, that the events, the course of events are changing as we can see, there's still a lot to be done, but we can see that the voices of the Myanmar people, of the Myanmar civil society are there, they are stronger than ever, I would say.

[01:04:50] And that now it's time to hear them on the sanctions on the gas sector as well. And we will all do what we can so that, that can happen.

[01:05:01] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you. Sophie, finally to you Ben.

[01:05:04] **Ben Hardman:** Thanks, Yeah. Total and Chevron, two world's largest companies, has spent the last 12 months funding atrocity crimes, spreading disinformation and suggesting that they're helpless to do anything about it. That needs to stop now, not in six months time.

[01:05:20] **Debbie Stothard:** Thank you. There you have it. The logic of the withdrawal is on the basis of the human rights situation.

[01:05:28] Yet these oil companies will continue to fund the perpetrators of those human rights violations, and they need to stop that. Whether it's a decision by the company, but more importantly, that it should be a decision of the governments of the European Union, including France, and of course of the government of the US to apply sanctions on Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise .

[01:05:52] Thank you to all of you for joining us in zoom and to the more than a thousand people who joined us on Facebook Live. Thank you to the organizers of this press conference and thank you to our interpreter. So we're saying goodbye now and the Blood Money Campaign and the Global Myanmar Spring Revolution will end this session with a series of videos. Thank you. Good night. Good evening. Good morning. Take care. And thank you so much for joining one of many press conferences and webinars that are happening in the lead up to the first anniversary of the coup. So take care of everybody and bye.