

SEE Questionnaire

Human Rights Q3



Is your company in joint ventures, or does it have any business relationships, with a military regime (such as that in Burma, also known as Myanmar)?

Question developed with [Burma Campaign UK](#)

Rationale for question

While foreign investment can play a key role in helping developing countries reduce poverty, it can also have the opposite effect of funding and perpetuating governments that oppress their own people. This is particularly a concern with military regimes, which have often been linked to violations of human rights.

For example, the military regime in Burma (also known as Myanmar) has particularly attracted criticism. Foreign investment and military spending have proven to be closely linked in the country, where the government has spent up to 50% of its budget on the military in some years. With no external threats, the army has used its military capacity to engage in campaigns of ethnic cleansing and subject millions to forced labour.

All companies that undertake ventures with military regimes should do so with caution. Businesses run the risk of contributing directly or indirectly to human rights violations. Even when business activities themselves do not play a role in abuses, companies create significant potential to damage their own reputations through association with an oppressive regime.

Although this question focuses on military regimes, businesses are advised to assess their business operations in any country where the government has a questionable human rights record. Is the investment helping bring about positive change in government practices, or is it perpetuating abuses?

Defining terms

Though it is surprisingly hard to define a 'military regime', as most coercive states have similar elements, essentially, it is a type of government in which absolute power is concentrated in a repressive individual or a small group, and which uses military and police power to dominate civilians, mentally and physically.

Primary and Secondary answer requirements

ANSWERING YES

Companies must:

1. list the military regime or regimes with which they do business;
2. describe the nature of the business conducted;
3. state the type of business relationship with the regime; and
4. state whether they have any policies or practices to guide their business relationships.

Companies may:

1. describe any assessments they have made to gauge the impact of company operations on citizens of the country;
2. indicate how long they have operated in the country; and
3. describe any future plans.

ANSWERING NO

Companies may:

1. describe any specific measures to avoid support of military regimes, e.g. taking this issue into account when making sourcing decisions.

DON'T KNOW is not a permissible answer to this question.

NOT APPLICABLE is not a permissible answer to this question.

NO ANSWER YET is only permissible under extraordinary circumstances and then for only a limited period.