



Myanmar junta deepening ties with Russia as major software contract awarded to sanctioned group

The US and Canadian sanctioned Russian entity Astra Group has been contracted by the Myanmar junta to build a National Single Window, an online system that would process all of Myanmar's import and export paperwork through a single portal.

The portal would link the ministries and agencies that license and clear trade and are illegally under junta control.

The Single Window is being backed by the Russian regime through its Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Economic Development, and through its embassy and trade mission in Myanmar.

According to Astra Group's press release, the platform is designed so that "new state digital services" can be rolled out on the same architecture in the future. This poses the risk that Astra Group may end up playing a much bigger role in the junta's digital dictatorship beyond the Single Window.

The system would likely process sensitive personal data, such as the identity card and passport copies and bank statements that Myanmar's trade licensing rules require importers and exporters to submit, so there may also be a risk of Russian access to that data.

The contract was signed by the junta customs department in Naypyidaw on August 12 with the Myanmar branch of Astra Consulting LLC, part of Astra Group, in partnership with a Myanmar company, Fortitech Company Limited, and "Garuda Solution".

Astra Group's first deputy chief executive officer, Nikolay Pryanishnikov, was present in Myanmar for the signing, according to his social media account.

Astra Consulting registered a branch office in Myanmar in June 2026, ahead of the contract signing, the Myanmar and Russian company registries show.

Astra Group is a software company with close ties to the Russian military and intelligence apparatus. It is known for the Astra Linux operating system, which it presented to the military junta during a high-level visit to Myanmar earlier this year.

Astra Group's own marketing materials name the Russian Ministry of Defence and the Federal Security Service (FSB) among its key clients, alongside the state space corporation

Roscosmos, the state nuclear corporation Rosatom, Tactical Missiles Corporation, Rostec's United Instrument Manufacturing Corporation and the arms manufacturer Almaz-Antey.

According to the EU's 2022 sanctions designation of JSC RPA Rusbitech, where Astra Linux was developed, "the main Russian Army Headquarters information systems are based on Astra Linux. The company is also known for manufacturing of APE-5 type command points actively used for communication in the field during Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine."

The Russian corporate registry shows Astra Consulting is licensed by two Russian security agencies. FSTEC, a military agency under Russia's defence ministry, issued it two licences in October 2024 and January 2025 covering the development and production of tools for protecting confidential information, and the technical protection of such information. In September 2025, the FSB licensed it to develop, produce and distribute cryptographic and protected telecommunications systems.

Despite these documented links to the Russian defence ministry and intelligence, Astra Consulting is not yet directly sanctioned in any jurisdiction.

The USA sanctioned Astra Group in May 2024 for operating in a sector of the Russian economy determined to support Russia's military industrial base. Canada sanctioned Astra Group in early 2026 under its Russian regulations.

Under US sanctions, an entity owned 50 per cent or more by a designated company is itself blocked. Justice For Myanmar was unable to obtain ownership details of Astra Consulting, as its shareholder records in Russia's corporate registry were restricted on 29 July 2024. Access to the identity of its director was restricted on the same date.

While the UK has not sanctioned Astra Group, it did sanction Denis Frolov in June 2024 for owning or controlling Astra Group, which it found operates in a sector of strategic significance to the Russian regime. Depending on Astra Consulting's ownership, sanctions against Denis Frolov could also extend to the company.

The blueprint for a Myanmar single window was produced in 2020 by the World Bank with support from Australian Aid and UK Aid, before the military's 2021 coup attempt.

Astra Group claims its own specialists worked out the architecture of the Myanmar system with Myanmar counterparts, and neither Astra Group nor the junta has disclosed to what extent, if any, the blueprint is being followed.

The Myanmar Single Window contract also creates risks for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as the Astra Group system is supposed to connect to the ASEAN Single Window, a system for regional trade facilitation that was developed with the support of

the US Agency for International Development, and through which member states exchange certificates of origin and customs declaration documents.

The junta's award to Astra Group should raise concerns in the bloc about what access a sanctioned Russian group would have to the ASEAN Single Window, and to the customs and trade data that flows through it, if the two systems are connected.

War criminal Min Aung Hlaing driving deeper ties with Russia

The Single Window project is a priority of Min Aung Hlaing during the first “100 days” of his rebranded junta.

The contract was signed ahead of Min Aung Hlaing's first visit to Russia since the illegal junta's sham election and signals deepening complicity between the junta and the Kremlin.

Russia is one of the junta's biggest arms suppliers and has supplied fighter jets that are used in the junta's widening aerial campaign of terror that kills civilians and destroys civilian infrastructure with total impunity.

The junta's airstrikes are intensifying with Russian support. The UN reported that junta airstrikes killed at least 982 civilians in 2025, a 53% increase compared with 2024. It was also the deadliest year for children since the attempted coup.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar previously reported arms trade from Russia to Myanmar worth US\$406 million between February 1, 2021, and December 2022, which included new Su-30 fighter jets and spare parts for MiG-29 fighter jets.

The Russian military also conducted the first joint army training exercise with the junta in July 2026 that involved attacking an enemy with assault troops, snipers and drones.

By knowingly supplying arms that the junta uses in the commission of international crimes and training junta troops committing atrocities, Russia is aiding and abetting those crimes.

Justice For Myanmar condemns Russia's continued complicity and demands accountability.

Governments need to respond to the Kremlin's attempts to gain a foothold in Southeast Asia through the illegal Myanmar junta, which provides new economic opportunities for sanctioned Russian companies like Astra Group to bypass Western sanctions, and to take a stand against Russian complicity in the junta's international crimes.

Justice For Myanmar calls for the EU, UK and Australia to follow the USA and Canada and sanction Astra Group, for new sanctions against Astra Consulting, and for urgent targeted sanctions against the junta and its suppliers of arms, funds and aviation fuel.

The USA, UK, Canada and the EU need to update existing designations against the junta's previous executive, legislative and judicial body, the State Administration Council, which has since been rebranded.

ASEAN must stop legitimising the illegal junta and ban it from all meetings and events.

The junta's contract to Astra Group demonstrates the threat it poses to ASEAN's Single Window and regional security and cooperation more broadly.

Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says: "The Myanmar junta undermines Western sanctions on Russia, and the Russian regime undermines sanctions on Myanmar.

"Now a sanctioned company whose software the Russian army runs on is set to build the system that every import and export in Myanmar would pass through.

"This should alarm ASEAN and every government that has sanctioned Russia's military-industrial base.

"Min Aung Hlaing and Putin, both sanctioned war criminals, are partners in crime. They commit mass atrocities while enriching themselves from the theft of public assets on a grand scale.

"The same regime that is committing aggression in Ukraine is supporting an illegal junta to escalate its attacks on the Myanmar people, exchanging methods of brutality with the junta's troops, and profiting from the blood of Myanmar people through dirty deals.

"It's time governments step up, impose new and coordinated sanctions against the Myanmar junta, and target those enabling its deepening links with Russia, including Astra Group and Astra Consulting."

More information:

Justice For Myanmar is a covert group of activists using research, data visualisation and reporting to expose the companies and criminals profiting from brutality, war crimes and mass-scale suffering.

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