

From: Mark Farmaner

Sent: 23 November 2018 22:10

To: Thomas Van Den Driessche <tvd@newtec.eu>

Cc: Erwin Vandendriessche <evan@newtec.eu>

Subject: RE: Your campaign and our campaign

Dear Mr Van den Driessche

We are very aware of the situation in underserved regions. We work with many of the ethnic communities in those regions who are suffering what a year-long investigation by the United Nations concluded is genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The vast majority of these crimes are committed by the same Burmese military to whom you are providing services. You will have seen the quote in our letter from the independent UN investigators that this is indefensible.

Your response to our letter was not a constructive one. I have been at Burma Campaign UK for 20 years. Over this time we have engaged with hundreds of companies. Instead of offering dialogue, stating that you were unaware of your links to the military, or stating that you would end your involvement with them, instead you threatened us with legal action. You also gave inaccurate information, stating that Mytel was part owned by the government.

Of course we are not saying that your company went into Burma with bad intentions. If you thought you were working for the government rather than the military it could be an honest mistake.

However, the situation now is that you are providing services to the Burmese military, via a company they partly own, Mytel. I am happy to speak with you further and enter into dialogue, but not while you threaten us with legal action merely for stating that you are linked to the Burmese military, which is a fact. You need to withdraw this threat.

This is not one of those corporate social responsibility situations where steps can be taken to mitigate your impact, fund a local health clinic etc. You are either working with the military, or you are not. You are. If you are helping them to make profit, you are helping them generate income which helps enable them to carry out their violations of international law. As well as the moral argument for not assisting the military in this way, your company also faces the risk of reputational damage, and at some point in the future the European Union and other countries may reimpose sanctions on doing business with the military.

Your company would earn plaudits, from organisations and individuals much higher profile ourselves, were you to make the decision to end your involvement with the military. You would be seen to be in a corporate leadership role in response to a modern day Rwanda type situation. The only process to discuss is your company making a commitment to end its involvement with the Burmese military, and discussing how you implement that commitment. In the past some companies have opted to withdraw and want publicity to be seen to be doing the right thing. Others have preferred to privately end their involvement and we have respected that.

If we receive a commitment from you that you will end your involvement with the military within a reasonable timeframe, we will not place your company on our 'Dirty List'. The current planned publication date is 3rd December. Embargoed copies of the list will be circulated at the end of November.

I urge you to read the UN Fact Finding Mission report on Myanmar, published 18th September. It is not easy to read. The descriptions of the actions of the military, which you provide services to, are horrific. Please reflect if you want to be working for these people. I am sure that this is not the kind organisation you want to be in business with.

Mark