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Date  
13/11/2021

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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email dated 8 November 2021 and the opportunity for Telenor to share its response to the open letter published by Access Now on 12 October 2021. We responded directly to Access Now on 29 October 2021, and I am attaching the formal response for your reference.

Telenor is committed to respecting human rights, in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Human Rights and complying with the OECD guidelines for multinational companies. Telenor has a process of regular human rights due diligence to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for human rights impacts, in alignment with the UNGPs.

Since the military takeover on 1 February 2021, Telenor has had three key focus areas - to ensure safety and security of our employees in Myanmar, to ensure that the telecommunications network is kept operational for our customers and a society in need of critical connectivity, and to be as open and transparent as possible about the situation in Myanmar and directives received from the authorities. We have been working to minimise the human rights impact on an ongoing basis and have continued to emphasise to the authorities the importance of unimpeded telecommunications, access to information and the rule of law. Telenor has also ensured transparency through updates on our global website<sup>1</sup>, to regularly provide as much information as possible, including the status of mobile network availability in Myanmar.

Telenor has undertaken efforts to be transparent and raising our concerns over the general developments in Myanmar, as well as on specific issues including Telenor's comments on the Cybersecurity Law<sup>2</sup> and internet shutdown<sup>3</sup>. In addition, Telenor has supported several joint statements facilitated by organisations, including the Myanmar Center for Responsible Business<sup>4</sup>, the Global Network Initiative<sup>5</sup> and GSMA<sup>6</sup>.

At Telenor, we live by our Code of Conduct and operate with the same ethical business standards across all our operations. Developments in Myanmar since the military took power on 1 February, unfortunately means that it is no longer possible for us to adhere to these standards, keep our employees safe and at the same time remain as an operator in Myanmar. It has also become clear that Telenor's continued presence would require Telenor Myanmar to activate intercept equipment. Telenor has, since the beginning in Myanmar, requested the implementation of a legal and regulatory framework for the use of such equipment that safeguards customers, protects fundamental human rights and adheres to international law. This framework is not in place in Myanmar and operating such equipment in this situation would constitute a breach of Telenor's values and standards as

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<sup>1</sup> [Directives from authorities in Myanmar - February-August 2021 - Telenor Group](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Telenor Group's response to proposed Myanmar Cyber Security Bill \(Updated 8.3.2021\) - Telenor Group](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Directives from authorities in Myanmar - February-April 2021 - Telenor Group](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Statement by Concerned Businesses Operating in Myanmar - News \(myanmar-responsiblebusiness.org\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Proposed Cybersecurity Law in Myanmar | Global Network Initiative](#) and [Network Disruptions in Myanmar | Global Network Initiative](#)

<sup>6</sup> [GSMA calls on Myanmar to restore internet access - Mobile World Live](#)



a company. Furthermore, activation of the intercept equipment is subject to Norwegian and EU sanctions. Activation of such equipment is therefore unacceptable for Telenor Group, and, as was stated on the 15 September<sup>7</sup>, Telenor would not activate the equipment voluntarily. Ultimately, this conflict between local and international law and human rights principles made continued presence in Myanmar impossible for Telenor Group. It was a last resort and the only way we could prevent having to decide between following local laws or complying with international law and human rights principles.

The sale of Telenor Myanmar to M1 Group<sup>8</sup>, would allow for continued employment for our 750 employees, and access to service with a fourth operator, for 17 million subscribers, as well as essential industries such as hospitals and banks. This decision was not motivated by financial or strategic objectives.

Completion of the sale is subject to regulatory approvals in Myanmar and in the meantime, Telenor Myanmar continues to operate as a Telenor Group subsidiary

The decision to sell Telenor Myanmar has not been taken lightly, and we recognise the difficult situation faced by people in Myanmar in recent months related to deteriorating security and human rights situation, the impacts of COVID-19 and the overall economic challenges. Telenor will continue to work on reducing the human rights impact to the extent possible including through continued engagement with stakeholders, including civil society organisations.

Kind regards,

Manisha Dogra

Vice President, Sustainability Asia

Telenor Group

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<sup>7</sup> [Continued presence in Myanmar not possible for Telenor - Telenor Group](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Telenor Group sells Telenor Myanmar to M1 Group](#)