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US Quietly Lifts Sanctions on Myanmar Junta Allies Following Trump's Praise

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In a move that has sparked international attention, the United States has lifted sanctions on several Myanmar business figures and military-linked companies, shortly after the country's junta chief sent a glowing letter to U.S. President Donald Trump.

The change, noted in a recent update from the U.S. Department of the Treasury, removed sanctions against KT Services and Logistics, Myanmar Chemical and Machinery Company,

and Suntac Technologies. Also cleared were the companies' top executives, who had previously been described by U.S. officials as close allies of Myanmar's military regime.

These businesses were originally sanctioned in 2022 for their roles in supporting Myanmar's military, which seized power in a coup on February 1, 2021. The coup, led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, overthrew the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The takeover has since fueled a brutal civil war, leaving thousands dead, millions displaced, and half the country living in poverty.

KT Services and Logistics, for example, was sanctioned for paying \$3 million annually to lease Yangon's port from a military-controlled firm. Meanwhile, Myanmar Chemical and Machinery Company and Suntac Technologies were penalised for manufacturing military equipment like tanks and mortars.

Notably, the Treasury's announcement did not provide a reason for lifting the sanctions. However, the decision closely follows a letter from Min Aung Hlaing to Trump, in which the junta leader praised the president's leadership and actions, particularly his efforts to shut down U.S.-funded media outlets that have been covering Myanmar's conflict.

This letter was in response to Trump's recent tariff threats targeting countries without favourable trade deals. In it, the general expressed "sincere appreciation" for Trump's message and called him a strong leader.

The delisting of these individuals and firms has prompted concern among observers who question the timing and the implications of the U.S. move. Some worry it could be perceived as a softening stance toward the junta, especially in light of ongoing violence and suppression inside Myanmar.

The White House has not publicly commented on the reasons for the sanctions being lifted. For now, the decision remains a quiet but significant shift in U.S. posture toward Myanmar's military leadership, one that is likely to stir continued debate on American foreign policy in Southeast Asia.