

US Decision to Lift Sanctions on Myanmar Junta Allies Sparks Concern

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The United States has lifted sanctions on several individuals and companies linked to Myanmar's military regime, drawing criticism from rights groups and lawmakers who say the move undermines efforts to hold the junta accountable for human rights abuses.

The delisting came just two weeks after Myanmar's top military leader, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, sent a letter to President Donald Trump, thanking him for his leadership and

requesting a reduction in tariffs. In the letter, the general also praised Trump's decision to shut down U.S.-funded media outlets reporting on the crisis in Myanmar. While U.S. officials insist the timing is a coincidence and part of a routine review process, the decision has raised eyebrows around the world.

Among those removed from the sanctions list are KT Services & Logistics and its founder, Jonathan Myo Kyaw Thaug, previously sanctioned for leasing Yangon's port from a military-owned company. Other companies delisted include Myanmar Chemical & Machinery Company and Suntac Technologies, both previously sanctioned for their roles in military procurement and support of the junta's war economy.

Human rights advocates argue that lifting sanctions on these figures sends the wrong message at a time when the junta continues its brutal campaign against civilians. Since the military seized power in 2021, thousands have been killed, more than 3.5 million people have been displaced, and half the country now lives in poverty.

The military has also been accused of using air strikes against schools and shelters, with deadly attacks reported as recently as July. Despite sanctions on aviation fuel, Amnesty International reports the junta continues to import supplies, enabling further strikes.

John Sifton, Asia advocacy director at Human Rights Watch, called the delisting "extremely worrying," and said those removed were not minor players. "They have helped sustain the junta's war economy," he said.

Critics also warn that easing financial restrictions could allow the regime easier access to foreign currency, which remains essential for purchasing weapons from allies like China and Russia. Analysts say maintaining financial pressure is one of the most effective tools the United States still holds.

Although sanctions remain on Min Aung Hlaing and key military-owned banks, the recent delistings have left many questioning the U.S. commitment to promoting accountability and democracy in Myanmar.