

April 26, 2022 | Myanmar

## **Star Sapphire Group's military links exposed**

### ***Targeted sanctions urgently needed to stop revenue and arms flows to junta***

Star Sapphire Group of Companies, a crony conglomerate linked to the family of junta leader Min Aung Hlaing, plays a key role in brokering arms deals for the Myanmar military and operates businesses with the Myanmar military and its conglomerate, Myanma Economic Holdings Limited (MEHL).

Star Sapphire Group is controlled by Dr Tun Min Latt and his wife Dr Win Min Soe, who have a longstanding partnership with the prominent Thai businessperson Upakit Pachariyangkun, now a senator.

Leaked documents show that Tun Min Latt has brokered arms deals with major Israeli and Chinese companies, including Elbit Systems, Israel Shipyards, Israel Aerospace Industries and NORINCO, aiding and abetting the Myanmar military's atrocity crimes against the people of Myanmar.

Tun Min Latt has built his business through decades-long corrupt deals with the Myanmar military.

Tun Min Latt is the son of former air force lieutenant colonel Khin Maung Latt, who was director-general of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism under the former military junta.

In 1999, in his role as director-general of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism under the former military junta, Tun Min Latt's father, Lt Col Khin Maung Latt, signed a deal to build Allure Resort, an illegal casino in Tachilek, a town bordering Thailand.

Tun Min Latt was a beneficiary of the deal, developing and operating the casino with Upakit Pachariyangkun.

In November 2017, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, under the National League for Democracy, handed the casino to the Myanmar Army's Office of the Quartermaster General, diverting the state's 6% share of profits away from the Union Budget, hidden from parliamentary scrutiny.

The Allure Resort, and its connection to Star Sapphire's wider network of business interests, raise serious money laundering and illicit financing concerns.

In 2013, under the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) government, Tun Min Latt signed a build-operate-transfer deal to develop Hotel Dawei, on land owned by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Lease payments continue to provide a source of revenue to the junta's home affairs ministry, which is responsible for the Myanmar Police Force.

Since the military's February 2021 coup attempt, the Myanmar Police Force has committed atrocity crimes, including deliberate killings and torture of democracy activists.

In ethnic areas of south-eastern Myanmar, Star Sapphire subsidiaries have operated mines under profit sharing arrangement with the military since 2001, helping to fund the military's grave human rights violations and destroying the environment.

One of Star Sapphire's mining companies, Royal Mawtaung Mining (formerly Star Thiri Investment), was co-founded by Khin Thiri Thet Mon, the daughter of junta leader and war criminal Min Aung Hlaing. No public information was found regarding its activities.

In the energy sector, Star Sapphire Group's Myanmar Business Consultant Group is the local partner of the Hong Kong-listed company VPower Group and the Chinese state-owned firm China National Technical Import and Export Corporation (CNTIC) in a liquified natural gas project involving MEHL.

Myanmar Business Consultant Group channels funds to MEHL for the land and will transfer the facility to MEHL at the end of the lease, providing the military with a lucrative future asset.

In Tanintharyi Region, Star Sapphire is developing a 200 MW combined cycle power plant with United Power of Asia, a Thai publicly listed company associated with Tun Min Latt and Upakit Pachariyangkun.

**Justice For Myanmar spokesperson Yadanar Maung says:** "Tun Min Latt and his associates have spent decades enriching themselves through the Myanmar military's systemic corruption.

"They have provided the military with both revenue and arms that have fuelled atrocity crimes against the people of Myanmar, and are therefore complicit in those crimes.

"The military junta is a terrorist organisation that continues to commit international crimes with total impunity, including deliberate killings, indiscriminate airstrikes and shelling, torture, arbitrary detention and rape.

"Urgent targeted sanctions must now be imposed against Dr Tun Min Latt, Star Sapphire Group of Companies and their directors and shareholders.

"Tun Min Latt has used Thailand as a base for illicit business activities, including operating an illegal casino with Upakit Pachariyangkun and the Myanmar army, and banking with Siam Commercial Bank. This must stop.

"As a senator, Upakit Pachariyangkun's business dealings with Tun Min Latt and the Myanmar military require public scrutiny.

"We urge Thai civil society to take action and ensure Upakit is held accountable for his corrupt business dealings and complicity in the Myanmar military's international crimes.

“Tun Min Latt's use of Thailand and Singapore for his business with the Myanmar military is yet another case of ASEAN's failed five-point consensus, one year on, continuing to enable military-linked business.

“ASEAN's failed “consensus” has only served to block and delay effective action from the UN and international community, while conflicts of interest within ASEAN governments embolden the junta to continue its terror campaign against the people.

“The international community must stop hiding behind ASEAN and impose targeted sanctions and a global arms embargo to block the flow of arms and funds to the terrorist junta, and to support the Myanmar people's Spring Revolution.”

**More information:**

Read our investigation into Star Sapphire Group [here](#)

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**Justice For Myanmar, a group of covert activists campaigning for justice and accountability for the people of Myanmar, is calling for an end to military business and for federal democracy and a sustainable peace.**