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Russia and Myanmar Sign Military Cooperation Agreement

By AFP

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Sergei Shoigu and Myanmar's acting President Min Aung Hlaing. **Maxim Blinov / POOL / TASS**

Russia and Myanmar have signed a five-year military cooperation agreement, state media reported Tuesday, sealing an alliance that analysts say has been crucial to the junta's grip on power.

Myanmar's military took power in a 2021 coup that triggered a civil war. Since then, the junta has relied on support from both Russia and neighboring China to keep its armed forces supplied.

Russia's Defense Ministry announced the new military pact after Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu visited Myanmar on Monday, the state-run news agency TASS reported. The pact will last until 2030.

"Russia fully supports the Myanmar leadership's determination to protect its territorial

integrity and strengthen national sovereignty and security," Shoigu told junta officials, according to TASS.

"You can fully count on Moscow's comprehensive assistance, including in the international arena," Shoigu said.

State media in Myanmar confirmed the deal for "enhancement of defense cooperation" but provided few details about the agreement.

Myanmar's junta has just completed a month-long election, touting the exercise as a return to democracy and a chance for peace after five years of military rule and civil war.

But the election was blocked from vast areas controlled by rebels, and was widely criticized abroad for excluding jailed democratic figurehead Aung San Suu Kyi and her party, which won the last elections in 2020.

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