

BURMA BULLETIN

XXXXXXXX A month-in-review of events in Burma XXXXXXXX

ALTERNATIVE A S E A N N E T W O R K O N B U R M A
campaigns, advocacy & capacity-building for human rights & democracy

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- The SPDC presses ahead with its plan for ensuring military control over Burma's political future through the upcoming elections. Over 20 SPDC ministers and deputy ministers resign their military posts to run as civilians in the elections.
- SPDC PM Thein Sein heads the Union Solidarity and Development Party, which will contest the elections as the political arm of the junta-backed USDA.
- International community condemns the SPDC Election Laws as measures that will prevent free and fair elections.
- ASEAN calls on the SPDC to conduct "free, fair and inclusive" elections.
- Major ceasefire groups reject the SPDC's fifth deadline to agree to transform their forces into Border Guard Forces under SPDC Army-control.
- Despite facing dissolution as a political party, NLD leaders vow to continue to work for national reconciliation, human rights, and democracy in Burma.
- Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's health raises concerns after she is visited by her doctor twice in eight days and undergoes a heart check-up.
- Nearly two years after cyclone Nargis, aid agencies still struggle under the SPDC's severe restrictions to provide much needed aid in the Irrawaddy delta.
- The EU decides to extend sanctions against the junta for another year.
- The SPDC signs new deals with Vietnam, China, and Thailand, while India announces that it will invest in new hydropower projects in Burma.

For comprehensive monitoring of the 2010 elections, please visit the "2010 Election Watch" at www.altsean.org. The Election Watch also summarizes developments according to elements of UN, OSCE, and EU guidelines.

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KEY STORY

2010 elections: The Generals in suits and ties

In April, the SPDC pressed ahead with its plan for ensuring military control over Burma's political future through the upcoming elections.

On 26 April, SPDC PM Gen Thein Sein and over 20 other ministers and deputy ministers resigned their military posts to run as civilians in the elections.¹ By contesting the polls as civilians, the regime could occupy more than the 25% of the seats already reserved for them in the Parliament and strengthen their domination over the body.² However, those who resigned retained their ministerial posts.³ On 29 April, the newly “civilized” Thein Sein filed registration papers for the formation of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP),⁴ which is believed to be the political arm of the junta-backed Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA).⁵

As of 30 April, a total of 32 parties - 27 new parties and five existing parties - had filed registration applications to contest the elections. Most of the parties that filed registration papers are ethnic groups that plan to contest only in regional elections or pro-junta organizations.⁶ So far, the SPDC Election Commission has approved registration of three parties: the pro-junta National Unity Party, the Lahu National Development Party, and the Mro or Khami National Solidarity Organization.⁷

Meanwhile, the SPDC Election Commission continued to ensure the regime’s control over the electoral machine by permitting only civil servants to serve as polling officials. On 7 April, the Election Commission began a three-day training in Naypyidaw for 252 officials from the court, immigration, and general administration departments who will be appointed polling station officials.⁸ On the same day, the Election Commission announced the formation of 14 sub-commissions at State and Division levels and 67 sub-commissions at the District level.⁹

Restrictions on media intensify

A veteran editor at a weekly journal reported that the SPDC Censorship Board was imposing controls on domestic media that were “tighter than ever before.”¹⁰ After submitting articles on the NLD’s decision not to register as a political party to the SPDC Censorship Board for approval, journals Myanmar Newsweek and Yangon Times were forced to report that the NLD’s decision would disrupt the election.¹¹

Ethnic organizations oppose elections

- The **Arakan League for Democracy** decided not to register as a political party. ALD Secretary Aye Thar Aung said the party would not contest the upcoming elections because the SPDC constitution and election laws were “not fair or just.”¹²
- The **Chin National League for Democracy** said it would not participate in the upcoming elections because the SPDC was dishonest.¹³

¹ DPA (26 Apr 10) Myanmar ministers resign military posts, source says; Reuters (27 Apr 10) Myanmar ministers to resign from military: government source; AP (27 Apr 10) Myanmar leaders shed uniforms ahead of vote; BBC (27 Apr 10) Burma leaders 'shed uniforms for polls'; Xinhua (28 Apr 10) Myanmar Officially Confirms PM Quits Military Post; DVB (27 Apr 10) Burmese PM quits military post; Mizzima News (28 Apr 10) PM and cabinet ministers resign from military posts

² BBC (27 Apr 10) Burma leaders 'shed uniforms for polls'; AP (27 Apr 10) Myanmar leaders shed uniforms ahead of vote

³ Reuters (27 Apr 10) Myanmar ministers to resign from military: government source; AP (27 Apr 10) Myanmar leaders shed uniforms ahead of vote; Xinhua (28 Apr 10) Myanmar Officially Confirms PM Quits Military Post; DVB (27 Apr 10) Burmese PM quits military post; Irrawaddy (27 Apr 10) Thein Sein to Head Political Party?; Chinland Guardian (26 Apr 10) Shedding Skin: Junta Ministers Quit Army Ranks

⁴ DPA (29 Apr 10) Myanmar's premier registers party to contest upcoming polls; AP (29 Apr 10) Myanmar TV says pro-junta group registers for vote; NLM (30 Apr 10) Applications to form political parties, continued existence as political party scrutinized, passed

⁵ DPA (29 Apr 10) Myanmar's premier registers party to contest upcoming polls; Chinland Guardian (29 Apr 10) 'Ex-Gen.' PM Leads New Political Party;

⁶ Irrawaddy (26 Apr 10) EC Approves Three More Party Registrations

⁷ NLM (29 Apr 10) UEC passes registration for formation of MKNSO as political party; NLM (29 Apr 10) Applications for formation of political parties, continued existence as political party scrutinized, passed; NLM (30 Apr 10) Applications to form political parties, continued existence as political party scrutinized, passed

⁸ Irrawaddy (09 Apr 10) Gov't Officials Training for Polls; NLM ((08 Apr 10) UEC opens Election Laws, Rules and Manual Guide Course

⁹ NLM (08 Apr 10) Union Election Commission issues announcement on formation of state and division sub-commissions; NLM (08 Apr 10) Union Election Commission issues announcements on formation of and assignments to district sub-commissions Irrawaddy (09 Apr 10) Gov't Officials Training for Polls

¹⁰ Mizzima News (06 Apr 10) Censorship at peak but for pro-poll coverage

¹¹ Irrawaddy (31 Mar 10) Burma's Press Censored on NLD Decision

¹² Narinjara News (12 Apr 10) Leading Arakanese Party Decides Not to Register for Election

¹³ Mizzima News (22 Apr 10) Chin Progressive Party not to waste poll advantage

- The **Ethnic Nationalities Council**, a coalition of ethnic political organizations, announced that the council would not accept the SPDC election laws as they were patently one-sided laws drawn by the junta for its benefit.¹⁴

International community condemns SPDC election laws

Officials and elected leaders from ASEAN, Japan, the EU, and the US broadly condemned the SPDC election laws as legal instruments that prevent free and fair elections in Burma.

- **1 April:** Thai FM Kasit Piromya said that he was concerned about the national reconciliation and the inclusiveness of the political process in Burma. He noted that the SPDC electoral laws were discriminatory because they provided amnesty only to the military leadership and not to the opposition.¹⁵
- **2 April:** US Deputy Assistant Secretary for Southeast Asia and Ambassador for ASEAN Affairs Scot Marciel said that the SPDC's election laws were "a step backwards" and were preventing the NLD from participating.¹⁶
- **5 April:** Japan Ambassador to the UN Yukio Takasu said that because of the SPDC election laws the polls could not be considered inclusive.¹⁷
- **7 April:** A petition to ASEAN leaders endorsed by 105 MPs from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore said that with the promulgation of "biased" election laws, "the regime has forfeited its best opportunity to show willingness to engage in an inclusive process of national reconciliation."¹⁸
- **15 April:** US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific affairs Kurt Campbell said the US was "disappointed" by the steps taken by the SPDC with regard to the election laws and dialogue between all stakeholders.¹⁹
- **26 April:** The EU expressed its "serious concerns" that election laws did not provide for free and fair elections and noted that the SPDC still had to take the steps necessary to make the planned elections a credible, transparent and inclusive process.²⁰

INSIDE BURMA

Ceasefire groups reject fifth BGF ultimatum

In April, the vast majority of Burma's major ethnic ceasefire groups ignored the SPDC's fifth deadline for the groups to agree to transform their armies into Border Guard Forces (BGF) under SPDC Army-control. The United Wa State Army (UWSA), the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), and the New Mon State Party (NMSP) all rejected the SPDC's demands.²¹ Even the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), which has close ties with the junta and initially accepted the BGF proposal, has now rejected the BGF plan.²² As the standoff continued, the SPDC Army has increased its presence in Kachin, Shan, Karen and Mon States in an attempt to coerce the groups to capitulate.²³

¹⁴ SHAN (01 Apr 10) Ethnic council opposes junta electoral laws

¹⁵ AP (02 Apr 10) Thailand to Press Burma to Open Elections

¹⁶ Mizzima News (05 Apr 10) US to renew bid for thaw in relations

¹⁷ Inner City Press (05 Apr 10) On Myanmar, Japan "Disappointed" by Election Law, But Not on Council Agenda

¹⁸ AFP (07 Apr 10) ASEAN MPs tell leaders to consider expelling Myanmar

¹⁹ AFP (15 Apr 10) US warns Myanmar junta it can review dialogue

²⁰ Council of European Union (26 Apr 10) 8979/10 (Presse 90)

²¹ Irrawaddy (20 Apr 10) Wa Still Say "No" to Border Guard Force; Mizzima News (22 Apr 10) KIO repeats 'No' to border force offer; IMNA (22 Apr 10) Tavoy residents prepare for flight; Irrawaddy (24 Apr 10) Ethnic Rebel Groups Defy Junta's Order; Irrawaddy (24 Apr 10) Mon Reject Militia Plan

²² DVB (29 Apr 10) Karen fleeing to border in their 'thousands'; Irrawaddy (29 Apr 10) Rift between Junta and DKBA Deepens

²³ DVB (06 Apr 10) 100-strong army convoy in Kachin; Irrawaddy (20 Apr 10) Wa Still Say "No" to Border Guard Force; DVB (06 Apr 10) 100-strong army convoy in Kachin; Irrawaddy (20 Apr 10) Wa Still Say "No" to Border Guard Force; IMNA (21 Apr 10) Burmese battalions gather on NMSP territory border before April 22nd deadline

²³ IMNA (21 Apr 10) Burmese battalions gather on NMSP territory border before April 22nd deadline

As the threat of conflict loomed, hundreds of villagers in Mon, Shan, and Karen States sought refuge along the Thai border.²⁴ On 26 April, about 400 Mon refugees arrived at the Halockhani IDP camp on the Thai-Burma border.²⁵ Since 27 April, Karen villagers from Kawkaeik Township, Karen State, have been fleeing to the Thai border as fears grew of clashes between the SPDC Army and the DKBA.²⁶ In Southern Shan State, hundreds of Shan, Lahu, and Wa villagers from USWA-controlled areas in Southern Shan State fled into Thailand's Chiang Mai Province.²⁷ Analysts warned that tens of thousands of refugees would flee into China as well if the SPDC Army attacked the UWSA in Eastern Shan State.²⁸

NLD vows to continue its activities

The NLD's 29 March decision to boycott the elections had an immediate impact on public confidence in the polls. In an early April survey involving 520 people in Rangoon, 48% responded that they do not intend to vote in the election if the NLD did not contest it.²⁹ In addition, key ethnic organizations and pro-democracy groups expressed their strong support for the NLD's decision.³⁰

Despite facing dissolution as a political party, NLD leaders vowed to continue to work for national reconciliation, human rights, and democracy in Burma.³¹ In a 6 April statement, the NLD reiterated that it "will never turn its back to the people or to its struggle for democracy" and pledged "to continue to achieve [...] democracy through systematic, peaceful and nonviolent means." The NLD also apologized to the Burmese people for failing to achieve democracy and national reconciliation due to the military regime's continued repression.³²

On 8 April, the NLD sent a letter to the Chief Justice of Burma's Supreme Court to protest the court's refusal to receive its 23 March challenge against the SPDC election laws.³³ In its 6 April statement, the NLD reiterated that the SPDC election laws were "unfair and unjust."³⁴ On 29 April, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD petitioned Burma's Supreme Court to ask for the annulment of the SPDC Election Law provisions that prohibit individuals who are serving prison terms from being members of a political party.³⁵

Daw Suu health concerns

- **1 April:** Dr Tin Myo Win gave Daw Aung San Suu Kyi her routine medical check-up at her Rangoon lakeside home.³⁶ Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was said to be suffering from low blood pressure.³⁷
- **8 April:** Dr Tin Myo Win visited again Daw Suu with two other doctors to conduct an ECG test.³⁸
- **11 April:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was admitted to a Rangoon hospital to undergo a 15-minute heart check-up.³⁹

²⁴ Kachin News Group (06 Apr 10) Junta despatches tanks and trucks to Myitkyina; DVB (05 Apr 10) Food imports to Wa state 'blocked'

²⁵ Irrawaddy (26 Apr 10) Mon Refugees Arrive in Hlokhani

²⁶ DVB (29 Apr 10) Karen fleeing to border in their 'thousands'; Irrawaddy (29 Apr 10) Rift between Junta and DKBA Deepens; KIC (28 Apr 10) 10,000 Karen refugees heading to Thailand

²⁷ Irrawaddy (29 Apr 10) Hundreds Flee Threat of War in Shan State; DVB (26 Apr 10) Mon and Wa refugees flee to Thailand

²⁸ VOA (27 Apr 10) Fears of Violence Renewed Along China-Burma Border

²⁹ Irrawaddy (06 Apr 10) Many won't vote without NLD

³⁰ Mizzima News (02 Apr 10) NLD to plunge itself headlong into social work; Irrawaddy (08 Apr 10) NLD: 'Flag will keep flying'

³¹ Irrawaddy (05 Apr 10) NLD Members Will Continue 'Democratic Struggle'; Mizzima News (06 Apr 10) NLD in plea to public, pledges to press on; Mizzima News (02 Apr 10) NLD to plunge itself headlong into social work; Irrawaddy (21 Apr 10) Final Days at NLD Party Headquarters; Mizzima News (22 Apr 10) NLD Youth rolls out human rights aims; Irrawaddy (08 Apr 10) NLD: 'Flag will keep flying'; Mizzima News (26 Apr 10) NLD turns to grass-roots social work on May 7

³² NLD (06 Apr 10) A message to the people of Burma (unofficial translation); AP (06 Apr 10) Myanmar party sorry for not bringing democracy; Mizzima News (06 Apr 10) NLD in plea to public, pledges to press on

³³ Mizzima News (08 Apr 10) NLD protests rejection of lawsuit against Than Shwe; Irrawaddy (09 Apr 10) NLD Takes Than Shwe Lawsuit to Chief Justice

³⁴ NLD (06 Apr 10) A message to the people of Burma (unofficial translation)

³⁵ AFP (29 Apr 10) Suu Kyi asks Supreme Court to stop party dissolution

³⁶ Kyodo News (12 Apr 10) Myanmar's Suu Kyi briefly admitted to hospital

³⁷ DVB (12 Apr 10) Suu Kyi triggers health concerns; Chinland Guardian (11 Apr 10) Treated for Low Blood Pressure, Suu Kyi's Otherwise Healthy

³⁸ Belfast Telegraph (13 Apr 10) Heart check for opposition leader; Chinland Guardian (11 Apr 10) Treated for Low Blood Pressure, Suu Kyi's Otherwise Healthy; Mizzima News (10 Apr 10) Doctor visits Suu Kyi twice in eight days

Explosive April

In April, bomb and grenade attacks across Burma added to instability ahead of the elections. In Rangoon, a deadly blast injured several regime officials.⁴⁰ In ethnic areas, the attacks targeted Asia World, the conglomerate owned by SPDC crony Steven Law.

- **14 April:** A bomb exploded at a checkpoint operated by Asia World in Muse, Northern Shan State. No casualties were reported.⁴¹ On the same day, a bomb at a checkpoint in Kawkaik, Karen State, injured three people.⁴²
- **15 April:** A series of blasts at a pavilion near Rangoon's Kandawgyi Lake killed ten people and injured 170.⁴³ Sources close to the investigation attributed the blasts to three hand grenades that were thrown into the crowd of hundreds of revelers who were celebrating the annual water festival.⁴⁴ The regime accused exiled and armed opposition groups for the attack⁴⁵ and offered a one-million-kyat (US\$1,000) reward for information leading to the capture of those responsible.⁴⁶
- **17 April:** A series of bombs exploded at the Myitsone dam project site, about 18 miles north of Myitkyina in Kachin State.⁴⁷ The attack targeted the office building of Asia World, which is building the dam jointly with China's state-owned China Power Investment Corporation. The blasts destroyed cars and buildings and wounded one Chinese worker.⁴⁸
- **27 April:** Three grenade blasts injured four workers at the construction site of the Thaukyegat hydropower plant, which is being built by Asia World in Pegu Division.⁴⁹ The Karen National Liberation Army claimed responsibility for the attack.⁵⁰
- **27 April:** A man being interrogated by police at a police station in Loikaw, Karenni State, detonated a bomb killing himself and wounding four officers.⁵¹
- **27 April:** A bomb explosion near a district telecommunication office in Kyaikmaraw, Mon State, injured three workers.⁵²

SPDC and Belarus to begin military cooperation

On 5 April a high-level delegation from Belarus began a four-day visit to Burma.⁵³ The Belarus delegation was looking to secure defense contracts with the SPDC.⁵⁴

³⁹ AFP (11 Apr 10) Myanmar's Suu Kyi briefly admitted to hospital: official; Al Jazeera (14 Apr 10) Suu Kyi has heart check-up; Kyodo News (12 Apr 10) Myanmar's Suu Kyi briefly admitted to hospital; DPA (11 Apr 10) Myanmar democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi in hospital, briefly

⁴⁰ Irrawaddy (17 Apr 10) 115 Rangoon Bomb Victims Still in Intensive Care; Mizzima News (19 Apr 10) Military commander critically injured in Rangoon blasts; Irrawaddy (21 Apr 10) Festival Bombing Death Toll Rises; Mizzima News (21 Apr 10) Rangoon blasts were grenade attacks: army engineer

⁴¹ Xinhua (22 Apr 10) Myanmar offers cash reward for capturing water festival bombers

⁴² Xinhua (22 Apr 10) Myanmar offers cash reward for capturing water festival bombers

⁴³ NLM (16 Apr 10) Bomb blasts kill eight, injure 170; NLM (25 Apr 10) Two more bomb blast victims die - 60 others under medical attention; AFP (16 Apr 10) Myanmar urges vigilance after deadly bombs; UPI (16 Apr 10) Myanmar blasts blamed on terrorists; Xinhua (16 Apr 10) Casualties rise to 178 in Myanmar water festival bomb blasts; Mizzima News (21 Apr 10) Rangoon blasts were grenade attacks: army engineer; Irrawaddy (21 Apr 10) Festival Bombing Death Toll Rises; Xinhua (22 Apr 10) Myanmar offers cash reward for capturing water festival bombers

⁴⁴ Mizzima News (21 Apr 10) Rangoon blasts were grenade attacks: army engineer

⁴⁵ Xinhua (22 Apr 10) Myanmar offers cash reward for capturing water festival bombers ; Irrawaddy (22 Apr 10) Public Fed Constant News about Bombing

⁴⁶ Xinhua (22 Apr 10) Myanmar offers cash reward for capturing water festival bombers; DVB (22 Apr 10) \$1000 offered to catch Rangoon bomber; Mizzima News (19 Apr 10) Military commander critically injured in Rangoon blasts

⁴⁷ Reuters (17 Apr 10) Bomb blasts at China hydropower site in Myanmar; Reuters (19 Apr 10) Bomb blasts rock China JV hydropower site in Myanmar

⁴⁸ VOA (17 Apr 10) Bomb Blasts Hit Burma Dam Project; AP (21 Apr 10) Myanmar state media report on bombs at dam site; Mizzima News (19 Apr 10) No casualties in Myitsone bomb blasts; Xinhua (22 Apr 10) Myanmar offers cash reward for capturing water festival bombers; Irrawaddy (17 Apr 10) A Series of Bomb Blasts in Northern Burma; Mizzima News (19 Apr 10) Myitsone blasts injure Chinese worker

⁴⁹ AFP (27 Apr 10) Four wounded in grenade attack on dam

⁵⁰ Irrawaddy (28 Apr 10) Bomb Explodes in Loikaw Police Station; DVB (28 Apr 10) Karen army takes blame for grenade attack

⁵¹ AFP (28 Apr 10) Suicide bomber targets Burmese police; Irrawaddy (28 Apr 10) Bomb Explodes in Loikaw Police Station

⁵² AP (28 Apr 10) Detainee bombs Myanmar police station, kills self; IMNA (29 Apr 10) 3 government workers injured in Kyaikmayaw Township bomb blast

⁵³ Belapan (07 Apr 10) Belarusian delegation discusses military cooperation in Burma

⁵⁴ DVB (08 Apr 10) Belarus in Burma for arms talks; Irrawaddy (10 Apr 10) Belarus Bids to Bypass Arms Boycott with Burma Sales

SPDC still restricting aid access in Irrawaddy delta

Nearly two years after cyclone Nargis, aid agencies still struggled under the SPDC's severe restrictions to provide much needed aid to people in the Irrawaddy delta. On 22 April, a Rangoon-based UN official said that around 180,000 people face immediate water shortages, mostly in Labutta, Bogale and Mawlamyinegyun Townships in Irrawaddy Division.⁵⁵ Despite the dire conditions in the delta, the SPDC continued to restrict the movement of aid workers and delay visas for foreign aid workers.⁵⁶

HUMAN RIGHTS

Arrests

- **17 April:** SPDC authorities in Rangoon arrested journalist and former political prisoner Maung Zeya, 55, and his son Sithu Zeya for taking photos of the locations of the 15 April blasts near Kandawgyi Lake.⁵⁷
- **24 April:** Police in Rangoon's Kamayut Township arrested seven activists in connection with the 15 April blasts.⁵⁸
- **18 April:** Police in Chyinghkrang village near Myitkyina, Kachin State, arrested a local villager in connection with the 17 April bomb blasts at the Myitsone dam project site.⁵⁹

Press and religious freedoms

On 29 April, two independent organizations released reports that highlighted Burma's appalling human rights record with regard to press and religious freedoms:

- Freedom House released its annual report "Freedom of the Press 2010." Burma ranked 195th out of the 196 countries surveyed, surpassed only by North Korea.⁶⁰
- The US Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) released its "Annual report on religious freedom." The reports said that in the past year religious freedom conditions continued to deteriorate. As a result, USCIRF recommended US State Department keep Burma on its list of "countries of particular concern."⁶¹

DISPLACEMENT

Bangladesh rejects UN request to register Rohingya

On 10 April, Dhaka refused a request from the UNHCR to register tens of thousands of Rohingya who had been languishing in settlements outside the two official refugee camps in Cox's Bazaar District.⁶² Despite recent pressure from the international community and rights groups to do more to address the Rohingya crisis, Bangladeshi Foreign Secretary Mohamed Mijarul Quayes said the government would continue to forcibly repatriate unregistered Rohingya refugees to Burma.⁶³ In April, Bangladesh authorities arrested at least 137 Rohingya, and pushed at least 112 of them back to Burma.⁶⁴

⁵⁵ Irrawaddy (22 Apr 10) Delta Faces Immediate Water Shortage

⁵⁶ HRW (29 Apr 10) "I Want to help my own people": State control and civil society in Burma after cyclone Nargis

⁵⁷ RSF (21 Apr 10) Burma: Journalist and son arrested for allegedly taking photos of bombing sites; Mizzima News (22 Apr 10) Release blast site lensmen: Media watchdogs

⁵⁸ Mizzima News (25 Apr 2010) Police hold 7 youths amid post-blast crackdown

⁵⁹ Kachin News Group (21 Apr 10) Myitsone bomb blast suspects arrested; Irrawaddy (22 Apr 10) Five Arrested in Myitsone Dam Investigation

⁶⁰ AP (28 Apr 10) Freedom House: Media under threat worldwide; Freedom House (29 Apr 10) Freedom of the Press 2010

⁶¹ Irrawaddy (29 Apr 10) US Report Blasts Burma's Record on Religious Freedom; USCIRF (29 Apr 10) Annual Report on Religious Freedom – 2010

⁶² RFA (12 Apr 10) Rohingya Rejected Again; Daily Star (11 Apr 10) No fresh listing of Rohingyas: Foreign Secy says Dhaka won't recognize undocumented entrants; Zee News (10 Apr 10) B'desh rejects UN plea to register Myanmar as refugees

⁶³ RFA (12 Apr 10) Rohingya Rejected Again

⁶⁴ Kaladan News (06 Apr 10) Thirteen Rohingyas arrested on border; Kaladan News (08 Apr 10) Two Arakanese Rohingyas jailed; Narinjara News (23 Apr 10) Bangladesh Pushes Back 37 Burmese Citizens; Kaladan News (27 Apr 10) Forty Rohingyas pushed back to Burma

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ASEAN calls for free and fair elections

ASEAN leaders met at their bi-annual summit in Hanoi on 8-9 April. The body failed to address the junta's election laws but called on the SPDC to hold "free, fair, and inclusive" elections.⁶⁵ However, several ASEAN leaders acknowledged that the results of the election would directly affect ASEAN. Thai FM Kasit Piromya said, "ASEAN reputation and solidarity is linked to the creditability [sic] of the poll."⁶⁶ Malaysian PM Najib Razak said, "The important thing is for the process itself to be a very sound process, a credible process, and to be free and fair so that it will enhance Myanmar and ASEAN."⁶⁷

EU extends sanctions on SPDC

On 26 April, the Council of the European Union extended its existing sanctions against the SPDC for another year. The Council also reiterated its call for the release of all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The EU also said that it intended to send an exploratory mission to Burma in order to "hold high level talks in the hope of building trust and helping the political process move towards its intended goals."⁶⁸

ECONOMY

New deals with Vietnam, China, Thailand and India

In April, the SPDC signed new deals with Vietnam, China, and Thailand while India announced that it planned to invest in two hydropower projects in Burma.

- **2 April:** The SPDC signed seven MoUs with Vietnam related to investment promotion and economic cooperation in various sectors.⁶⁹
- **21 April:** India's state-run National Hydropower Corporation (NHPC) announced plans to invest US\$5.6 billion to build two hydropower projects in Burma.⁷⁰ NHPC already began feasibility studies on the two new dams which would have a total electricity generating capacity of around 1,040 megawatts, 80% of which would be exported to India.⁷¹
- **25 April:** State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar reported that the SPDC Ministry of Electric Power No. 1 signed an MoU with China's Sinohydro, Thailand's EGAT International, and a heretofore unknown entity identified as the International Group of Entrepreneur to jointly implement the Hatgyi hydropower project on the Salween River.⁷²

OTHER BURMA NEWS IN APRIL

1	Around 900 Karen refugees from Tha Song Yang camp, Tak Province, Thailand, return to Burma.
2	Committee for Representing People's Parliament holds a meeting at the NLD headquarters in Rangoon to discuss cooperation with the NLD, ethnic political parties, and other pro-democracy groups.
2	Vietnam PM Nguyen Tan Dung arrives in Burma for a three-day visit.
5	NLD Central Executive Committee forms a 17-member committee headed by party Vice-Chairman Tin Oo to manage the NLD's property and finances.
6	A villager in Kyaukkyi Township, Pegu Division, is injured after stepping on a landmine.
7	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi says she is "very glad" the NLD decided to boycott the upcoming elections.
7	Indonesian FM Marty Natalegawa says that the SPDC should live up to its commitments that the

⁶⁵ Kyodo News (09 Apr 10) ASEAN leaders tread softly on Myanmar, urge election be inclusive

⁶⁶ Nation (09 Apr 10) Asean leaders offer to assist Burma's election

⁶⁷ Straits Times (09 Apr 10) Myanmar faces scrutiny

⁶⁸ Council of European Union (26 Apr 10) 8979/10 (Presse 90)

⁶⁹ VOV (02 Apr 10) Vietnam, Myanmar step up bilateral cooperation

⁷⁰ WSJ (21 Apr 10) NHPC May Build Power Projects in Myanmar

⁷¹ WSJ (21 Apr 10) NHPC May Build Power Projects in Myanmar

⁷² NLM (25 Apr 10) MoA signed for implementation of Hutgyi Hydropower Project

	upcoming elections be free and democratic.
7	ASEAN Sec-Gen Surin Pitsuwan says that the junta's human rights record continues to haunt ASEAN.
7	Two SPDC Army soldiers in Tonzang Township, Chin State, desert.
7	ASEAN inaugurates the women's and children's rights commission.
8	Indonesian FM Marty Natalegawa suggests that foreign observers should monitor Burma's upcoming elections.
8	A villager in Kyaukkyi Township, Pegu Division, is injured after stepping on a landmine.
9	SPDC Army Northern Regional Command Commander Maj Gen Soe Win tells Baptist preachers in Kachin State to tell church followers that they should support the SPDC.
9	SPDC authorities release NLD members Aung Khin Bo and Mi Mi Sein from prison.
9	Indonesian FM Marty Natalegawa says that there should be constant and continuous dialogue between the relevant stakeholders in Burma.
9	Thai FM Kasit Piromya says that ASEAN wants to see a democratic and credible election in Burma.
9	ASEAN FMs sign a protocol establishing a "dispute settlement mechanism" within the ASEAN Charter to resolve disputes between ASEAN members.
10	Five assailants, including the local SPDC Chairman, beat a 23-year-old villager to death in Buthidaung Township, Arakan State.
11	SPDC authorities in Labutta Township, Irrawaddy Division, close two churches in Gondoh and Padokegone villages.
12	Thai Army soldiers seize about 400,000 methamphetamine tablets being smuggled into Thailand from Burma in Mae Sai District, Chiang Rai Province.
13	Chinese Foreign Ministry says it hopes Burma's elections will lead to national reconciliation to ensure national stability and development.
15	A local man rapes a 13-year old Rohingya refugee girl near the Nayapara refugee camp in Bangladesh.
19	Thailand confirms that it will not extend migrant worker registration to undocumented migrant workers.
19	Malaysian PM Najib Razak and Japanese PM Yukio Hatoyama urge the SPDC to hold free, fair and inclusive elections.
20	Rohingya living in the settlement near Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh report that five children have died from diarrhea.
21	Three-hundred women protest electricity shortages outside a local SPDC building in Akyab, Arakan State.
21	Singapore's Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong and Japanese FM Katsuya Okada agree that upcoming elections in Burma must be transparent, free, and fair.
21	US State Department spokesman P J Crowley says that the Obama administration would continue its policy of engagement and economic sanctions against the SPDC and hopes that dialogue will yield positive results.
22	Shan State Army-North Commander Maj Gen Loimao agrees to join the BGF at a meeting with the SPDC Army Northeast Regional Command Commander Maj Gen Aung Than Tut in Lashio, Shan State.
23	SPDC Army and UWSA forces exchange fire in Monghsat Township, Eastern Shan State.
23	A court in Maungdaw, Arakan State, charges eighteen women with anti-social activities for working as sex workers for SPDC Army personnel.
24	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi says that Thailand's current political crisis shows that a constitution drawn up by the military cannot bring stability to a country.
24	SPDC Army and UWSA forces clash in Monghsat Township, Eastern Shan State, after the SPDC Army allegedly mistakes UWSA soldiers for soldiers from the Shan State Army South.
24	National Democratic Front announces its support for the ceasefire groups' rejection of the SPDC's BGF ultimatum, and the NLD's rejection of the election, and resolves to continue its armed struggle against the SPDC.
25	Travel agencies in Burma report that private airlines have stopped running routes between Rangoon and Naypyidaw because there are not enough passengers.
26	ASEAN Sec-Gen Surin Pitsuwan says that the organization is not a "magic wand" for the region's problems and could not ensure free elections in Burma.
28	Magwe Divisional Court upholds the 20-year-prison sentence imposed on DVB reporter Hla Hla Win by a lower court in Pakokku.
28	SPDC attends the 16th SAARC Summit in Thimpu, Bhutan, as an observer.
29	Rangoon City Development Committee allows work repairs on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's house to proceed.
29	Thai Army soldiers from the Pha Muang Task Force kill three suspected Wa drug smugglers in a clash near the Thai-Border in Chiang Mai Province and seize 200,000 amphetamine tablets.

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“Displaced Childhoods: Human Rights and International Crimes against Burma’s Internally Displaced Children”, Partners Relief and Development and Free Burma Rangers

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