

BURMA BULLETIN

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

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

Issue 44

August 2010

- **SPDC Election Commission sets the election date for 7 November and the deadline for candidate registration for 30 August.**
- **The pre-election period continues to be characterized by restrictions, threats, harassment, and media censorship.**
- **Due to time and financial constraints, parties not aligned with the junta will only be able to contest in less than 50% of the constituencies in National and Regional Parliaments.**
- **The Union Democracy Party decides to contest in only three constituencies to protest the SPDC's oppressive election laws.**
- **About 15 SPDC high-ranking generals, including the junta's third and fourth ranking members, step down from their posts to stand for elections.**
- **The SPDC stops issuing visas for post-Nargis humanitarian relief workers.**
- **Key ethnic ceasefire groups resist the junta's resumed push for the groups to transform into Border Guard Forces.**
- **The US endorses the establishment of a UN Commission of Inquiry on war crimes and crimes against humanity in Burma. EU, Canada, and Indonesia MPs also endorse a Commission of Inquiry.**
- **International community expresses ongoing concerns about the legitimacy of Burma's elections.**
- **The SPDC announces that it will suspend its new visa-on-arrival program for tourists in the run up to the elections.**
- **The junta warns factory workers that they will be fired and blacklisted if they launch or participate in labor protests.**

For comprehensive monitoring of the 2010 elections, please visit the "[2010 Election Watch](#)" at www.altsean.org

IN THIS ISSUE

KEY STORY

- 1 Election timeline
- 2 Threats and harassment
- 2 Additional restrictions
- 3 More censorship
- 3 Discontent grows
- 3 Protests
- 3 Pre-election military reshuffle

INSIDE BURMA

- 4 NLD boycott campaign
- 4 Junta stops aid visas
- 4 DKBA splits over BGF

HUMAN RIGHTS

- 5 Arrest and prison sentences
- 5 Religious freedom
- 5 Detention conditions
- 5 Freedom of information

DISPLACEMENT

- 6 Rohingya woes in Bangladesh

INTERNATIONAL

- 6 US endorses Col on Burma
- 6 Int'l concerns over elections

ECONOMY

- 7 Thailand hedges on gas
- 7 US fines Barclays bank
- 7 China investment
- 8 SPDC suspends visa-on-arrival
- 8 SPDC threatens workers

8 OTHER BURMA NEWS

9 REPORTS

Receive the Burma Bulletin monthly!
email publications@altsean.org
Online copies are available for
download at www.altsean.org

KEY STORY

Election timeline favors pro-junta parties

On 13 August, the SPDC Election Commission set the election date for 7 November.¹ The Election Commission also set a 30 August deadline for political parties to submit their list of candidates for the

¹ AP (13 Aug 10) Myanmar Schedules Elections; AP (13 Aug 10) Myanmar sets November 7 poll date; NLM (14 Aug 10) UEC announces date to hold multiparty democracy general elections; NYT (13 Aug 10) Myanmar Junta sets election date; VOA (13

election.² Various party leaders criticized the short deadline for candidate registration because political parties had insufficient time to organize and recruit candidates to field in the elections.³

Due to time and financial constraints, the parties that are not aligned with the SPDC will only be able to contest less than 500 seats out of the 1,187 seats at stake in the National and Regional Parliaments.⁴ In contrast, the SPDC-proxy Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) and the pro-junta National Unity Party (NUP) will field over 2,000 candidates between them.⁵

Threats and harassment

- **4 August:** A commentary in the state-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar warned that anyone who disrupts the upcoming elections would face up to 20 years in prison.⁶
- **5 August:** SPDC military intelligence officers and police monitored the Rakhine Nationals Progressive Party as it opened its party office in Kyauktaw, Arakan State.⁷
- **7 August:** The SPDC Election Commission told four leaders of the National Democratic Force that they must sign a pledge to protect the 2008 constitution, not to oppose the government, and not to contact illegal organizations.⁸
- **8 August:** Special Branch police in Rangoon's Hlaing and Kyimyindine Townships intimidated members of the Democratic Party (Myanmar) by visiting their homes and questioning them.⁹
- **12 August:** It was reported that local SPDC authorities and USDP members questioned and intimidated villagers who met with Shan National Democratic Party members in Eastern Shan State.¹⁰
- **14 August:** It was reported that local SPDC officials questioned residents who met with canvassers from the Union of Myanmar Federation of National Politics and 88 Generation Student Youths (Union of Myanmar) while they campaigned in Rangoon's Hlaing Tharyar Township.¹¹
- **19 August:** Plainclothes police and military intelligence personnel monitored the opening of a National Democratic Force office in Mandalay.¹²

Additional restrictions

On 18 August, the SPDC Election Commission issued Notification 91/2010, which prescribed the rules for election campaigns. As with the earlier regulations on campaign activities [See *June 2010 Burma Bulletin*]. Notification 91/2010 says that:¹³

- Candidates who want to address the public must apply for permission at least seven days in advance;
- Candidates must avoid causing disturbances near government offices, factories, markets, schools, sports grounds, hospitals, and religious places;
- Candidates cannot give speeches or distribute materials that criticize the constitution, "tarnish" the image of the state or the military, or "harm security";
- Candidates cannot chant slogans, march or carry flags as part of their rallies.

Aug 10) Burma's Military Government to Hold November 7 Election; FT (13 Aug 10) Burma announces Nov. 7 date for first elections in 20 years; Bangkok Post (13 Aug 10) Burma to hold election November 7; DVB (13 Aug 10) Election date announced; IMNA (13 Aug 10) Myanmar TV 4 announces 2010 Burmese election date; Mizzima News (13 Aug 10) Burma election on 7-11

² AP (13 Aug 10) Myanmar Schedules Elections; AP (13 Aug 10) Myanmar sets November 7 poll date

³ AP (22 Aug 10) Veteran Myanmar politician says gov't party to win; IMNA (14 Aug 10) Election date announcement pressures opposition parties; Irish Times (14 Aug 10) Suu Kyi's party to boycott Burma poll in November; Irrawaddy (16 Aug 10) Opposition Parties Spread Election Forces Thinly; BreakingNews.ie (13 Aug 10) Burmese election date 'too soon' for Suu Kyi's party

⁴ Irrawaddy (23 Aug 10) Election Results will be Predictable

⁵ DPA (31 Aug 10) Myanmar's pro-junta parties field army of candidates

⁶ AP (04 Aug 10) Myanmar sends poll warning

⁷ Narinjara News (07 Aug 10) RNDP Opens 11 Township Offices in Arakan State

⁸ Irrawaddy (20 Aug 10) NDF Leaders Told to Appeal Second Time

⁹ Irrawaddy (11 Aug 10) Democratic Party Complains of Intimidation

¹⁰ SHAN (12 Aug 10) Elections in Shan State East to be 'one way ticket'

¹¹ Mizzima News (14 Aug 10) USDP gives loans to farmers who sign their votes away

¹² AFP (19 Aug 10) Myanmar opposition widens reach before poll

¹³ AP (19 Aug 10) Myanmar lays down stringent campaign rules for November election; DPA (19 Aug 10) Myanmar announces restrictions on election campaigning; NLM (19 Aug 10) Rights to assemble and canvass for Hluttaw candidates; Al Jazeera (19 Aug 10) Myanmar announces strict poll rules; Xinhua (19 Aug 10) Myanmar sets procedures for parliamentary candidates for canvass

More censorship

In August, the SPDC Censorship Board took the following actions:

- Suppressed the publication of donation appeals made by several party officials in the media.¹⁴
- Prevented news outlets from reporting on party leaders who criticized the SPDC Election Commission's decision to hold the election on 7 November.¹⁵
- Barred news journals Monitor, Hot News, and Voice from publishing the National Democratic Force party's logo in their reports.¹⁶

Discontent grows

In light of the increasing SPDC's restrictions on election activities, some party leaders who had initially intended to contest the elections decided not to participate in the polls.

- **5 August:** Union Democracy Party Chairman Phyo Min Thein resigned over concerns that the upcoming elections would not be free and fair due to the oppressive SPDC election laws.¹⁷ On 26 August, Union Democracy Party's newly appointed Chairman Thein Htay said that the party had decided to field only three candidates nationwide to protest the SPDC election laws.¹⁸
- **26 August:** National Democratic Force leader Khin Maung Swe said he would not stand for election because of the SPDC Election Commission's restrictions.¹⁹

Protests

- **6 August:** Unidentified people in Kyaukpyu, Arakan State, posted posters and distributed leaflets that urged people to boycott the elections.²⁰
- **12 August:** Generation Wave kicked off its campaign in Rangoon by posting posters and distributing leaflets that urged people not to vote.²¹
- **15 August:** Villagers in Manaung Township, Arakan State, put up posters that expressed opposition to the junta-backed Union Solidarity Development Party and National Unity Party.²²

Pre-election military reshuffle

On 27 August, the SPDC carried out a major reshuffle that affected more than 70 senior military officers.²³ About 15 SPDC high-ranking generals stepped down from their posts and were replaced by junior officers. Among those who resigned were the junta's third and fourth ranking members, Gen Thura Shwe Mann and Lt Gen Tin Aung Myint Oo.²⁴ SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe and Vice Sr Gen Maung Aye remained in their positions.²⁵ As a result of the reshuffle, the high-ranking generals

¹⁴ Irrawaddy (17 Aug 10) Junta Censors Complaints on Election Date

¹⁵ Irrawaddy (17 Aug 10) Junta Censors Complaints on Election Date

¹⁶ Mizzima News (23 Aug 10) State censor board bans use of bamboo-hat logo, seal

¹⁷ Reuters (05 Aug 10) Opposition party chief quits; DPA (06 Aug 10) Chairman of Myanmar pro-democracy party bows out; AFP (05 Aug 10) Myanmar dissident quits as head of democracy party; Bangkok Post (05 Aug 10) Burma dissident quits as head of democracy party; RTTNews (06 Aug 10) Myanmar's Pro-democracy Party Leader Quits Over Harsh Election Rules; Mizzima News (06 Aug 10) UDP chief withdraws from upcoming polls, quits party; DVB (06 Aug 10) Burma opposition party chief quits; Irrawaddy (05 Aug 10) UDP Chairman Resigns, Citing Unfair Election; Radio Australia News (06 Aug 10) The head of a Burmese opposition party quits over unfair polls

¹⁸ DVB (26 Aug 10) UDP blasts 'stubborn' election authority; Irrawaddy (26 Aug 10) Pro-democracy Parties to Avoid Clash

¹⁹ Reuters (26 Aug 10) Myanmar opposition in disarray as polls approach; Mizzima News (25 Aug 10) NDF leader gives up on polls citing bureaucratic obstacles; Mizzima News (26 Aug 10) Khin Maung Swe discusses his election withdrawal

²⁰ Narinjara News (13 Aug 10) Anti-Election Campaign in Arakan

²¹ Chinland Guardian (15 Aug 10) Vote-No Campaign Posters Distributed In Rangoon

²² Narinjara News (19 Aug 10) Handwritten Posters Opposing USDP

²³ AFP (28 Aug 10) Myanmar army reshuffle 'biggest in decades': officer; AFP (27 Aug 10) Myanmar army reshuffle ahead of vote: officials; Telegraph (29 Aug 10) Burmese generals conduct reshuffle to secure hold on power

²⁴ AP (28 Aug 10) Myanmar generals shed uniforms ahead of polls; Reuters (27 Aug 10) Myanmar junta leaders quit military posts – source; DPA (27 Aug 10) Myanmar generals retire to contest polls (Roundup); Telegraph (29 Aug 10) Burmese generals conduct reshuffle to secure hold on power; Al Jazeera (28 Aug 10) Myanmar ministers 'quit army'; DVB (27 Aug 10) Shwe Mann quits "to become Burma president"; Hindu (27 Aug 10) Reshuffle in Myanmar; RTT News (27 Aug 10) Myanmar's Ruling Generals Step Down Ahead Of General Elections; Mizzima News (27 Aug 10) Burma reshuffles top military brass

²⁵ AFP (28 Aug 10) Myanmar army reshuffle 'biggest in decades': officer; Al Jazeera (28 Aug 10) Myanmar ministers 'quit army'; Telegraph (29 Aug 10) Burmese generals conduct reshuffle to secure hold on power

who resigned are expected to participate in the polls and assume key positions in the regime after the elections.²⁶

INSIDE BURMA

NLD boycott campaign

On 19 August, the NLD officially announced that it would boycott the elections because the 2008 constitution and the SPDC election laws do not guarantee democracy and human rights in Burma.²⁷ On 24 August, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi endorsed the NLD's election boycott and told her lawyer Nyan Win that people who wanted to support the NLD should refrain from voting.²⁸ NLD leaders continued their nationwide tour to explain their election boycott to grassroots activists. Various NLD delegations met with local NLD activists in Pegu and Tenasserim Divisions and in Arakan State.²⁹

Junta stops aid visas

On 16 August, the SPDC stopped issuing visas for post-Nargis humanitarian relief workers. The SPDC Ministry of Social Welfare Relief and Resettlement informed UN agencies and international NGOs that the post-Nargis recovery efforts would shift to "development" efforts.³⁰ The Ministry said that no Nargis-related visas would be extended and no new visas would be granted because coordination for these activities would now fall to different SPDC Ministries.³¹ At the end of August, it was reported that military intelligence officials were searching the Irrawaddy delta area for about 100 foreign relief workers who had overstayed their visas.³²

Despite the SPDC's new emphasis on "development", recent assessments conducted in the delta, including the Tripartite Core Group's Periodic Review IV [See *July 2010 Burma Bulletin*], concluded that some areas of Labutta and Bogale Townships in Irrawaddy Division were still in an emergency state.³³

DKBA splits over BGF; other groups remain defiant

The SPDC resumed its push for ethnic ceasefire groups to transform into SPDC Army-backed Border Guard Forces (BGF). On 18 and 21 August, the SPDC held ceremonies in Hlaingbwe Township, Karen State, to officially mark the transformation of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) into a BGF.³⁴ At least 40 child soldiers joined the ranks of the SPDC Army as the result of absorbing the DKBA as a BGF.³⁵ However, many DKBA troops refused to join the SPDC's ranks. Over 100 soldiers from the pro-junta DKBA battalions defected to the DKBA Brigade-5, which is opposed to the BGF [See *July 2010 Burma Bulletin*].³⁶

²⁶ AP (28 Aug 10) Myanmar generals shed uniforms ahead of polls; Reuters (27 Aug 10) Myanmar junta leaders quit military posts – source; WSJ (30 Aug 10) Myanmar Shuffles Generals; DPA (27 Aug 10) Myanmar generals retire to contest polls (Roundup); AFP (27 Aug 10) Myanmar army reshuffle ahead of vote: officials; Al Jazeera (28 Aug 10) Myanmar ministers 'quit army'; VOA (29 Aug 10) Analysts See Burma Military 'Juggernaut' Heading to Elections in November; UPI (27 Aug 10) Myanmar generals resigning in numbers

²⁷ Irrawaddy (19 Aug 10) NLD Election Boycott Official; Mizzima News (20 Aug 10) NLD officially boycotts polls after strategic talks

²⁸ AFP (25 Aug 10) Myanmar's Suu Kyi suggests NLD supporters don't vote

²⁹ Mizzima News (02 Aug 10) NLD leaders take roadshow to grass roots members in Arakan State; Mizzima News (04 Aug 10) NLD reaches out to grassroots members; Mizzima News (18 Aug 10) NLD leaders conduct voter education campaign

³⁰ IRIN (20 Aug 10) MYANMAR: Nargis now a development issue, says Yangon

³¹ IRIN (20 Aug 10) MYANMAR: Nargis now a development issue, says Yangon

³² Irrawaddy (27 Aug 10) US Updates Burma Travel Information

³³ IRIN (20 Aug 10) MYANMAR: Nargis now a development issue, says Yangon

³⁴ NLM (19 Aug 10) Border Guard Forces of South-East Command formed

KIC (20 Aug 10) DKBA transforms to BGF; DVB (19 Aug 10) DKBA officially becomes Border Guard Force; NLM (22 Aug 10) Border Guard Forces of South-East Command formed in Paingkyon of Kayin State

³⁵ Mizzima News (27 Aug 10) Border Guard Force accepts children from DKBA

³⁶ Irrawaddy (28 Aug 10) Tension Mounts Between Regime and Ceasefire Militias; Mizzima News (11 Aug 10) Fresh DKBA troops reject junta Border Guard Force; Irrawaddy (07 Aug 10) Karen Armies Unite to Face Threat of War; DVB (06 Aug 10) Burma junta 'bribing' DKBA renegade; DVB (03 Aug 10) Burmese troops hunt DKBA renegade; KIC (11 Aug 10) Twenty soldiers leave DKBA 999, join Brigade 5

In Shan and Kachin States, the United Wa State Army (UWSA), the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), and the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) remained defiant to the BGF mandate. On 24 August, both the UWSA and the NDAA announced they would continue to oppose the BGF even though SPDC officials warned them that they would be labeled “outlaw organizations” if they did not accede to the BGF plan by the first week of September.³⁷ On 27 August, the KIO rejected the SPDC’s demands that the group disarm.³⁸

HUMAN RIGHTS

Arbitrary arrest and prison sentences

- **10 August:** Na Sa Ka personnel in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, arrested a 48-year-old local Muslim leader on charges of having ties with exiled pro-democracy groups. He was released on 20 August after being repeatedly tortured.³⁹
- **11 August:** Rangoon’s Western District Court sentenced 11 Rakhine youth activists to prison sentences ranging from three to nine years on charges that included possession of explosives and unlawful association.⁴⁰

Religious freedom

- **2 August:** SPDC authorities in Akyab, Arakan State, closed the Mahamuni Buddha Vihara Monastery following the arrest of Buddhist monk U Pyinya Sara [See *July 2010 Burma Bulletin*].⁴¹
- **13 August:** It was reported that Muslim Rohingya in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, could not observe Ramadan because local SPDC authorities forced them to perform sentry duty near the Burma-Bangladesh border fence. Authorities also imposed additional restrictions on movement of Rohingya which made it difficult for them to go to the mosque for prayer.⁴²
- **23 August:** Police in Buthidaung Township, Arakan State, arrested Buddhist monk, U Kaymathayra, 46, on unspecified charges.⁴³

Detention conditions

- **Remote prison transfers:** SPDC authorities transferred Shan State Army - North (SSA-N) Maj Gen Sao Hso Ten, 74, to three different prisons in eight days: on 31 July, from Khamti prison, Sagaing Division, to Mandalay’s Obo prison;⁴⁴ on 5 August, from Obo prison to Rangoon’s Insein prison;⁴⁵ on 7 August, from Insein prison to Akyab prison in Arakan State.⁴⁶ Sao Hso Ten suffers from a heart condition and diabetes.⁴⁷
- **Denied medical care:** SPDC authorities in Khamti prison, Sagaing Division, have repeatedly denied political prisoner Myo Win Wai, 25, surgery for a serious medical condition.⁴⁸

Freedom of information

In mid-August, the SPDC Censorship Board suspended the publication of the Modern Times weekly journal for one week. The Modern Times had published an article about a potential storm hitting Burma

³⁷ SHAN (25 Aug 10) Wa, Mongla say No to Naypyitaw’s BGF program; Irrawaddy (21 Aug 10) Junta Rebuffs UWSA Again; DVB (25 Aug 10) Wa and Karen armies face final deadlines

³⁸ Kachin News Group (27 Aug 10) First day’s session of KIO’s party congress rejects junta’s arms surrender order

³⁹ Kaladan News (23 Aug 10) Religious leader arrested by Nasaka in Maungdaw

⁴⁰ Narinjara News (12 Aug 10) 11 Arakanese Youth Sentenced to 3 to 9 Years in Prison

⁴¹ Irrawaddy (04 Aug 10) Arakanese Abbot Arrested, Monastery Sealed; Irrawaddy (20 Aug 10) Accused Arakanese Abbot in Court

⁴² Kaladan News (13 Aug 10) Arakanese Rohingya have difficulty celebrating holy Ramadan in Maungdaw

⁴³ Kaladan News (27 Aug 10) Religious leader arrested, monastery destroyed

⁴⁴ SHAN (03 Aug 10) Imprisoned Shan ceasefire leader shifted; Irrawaddy (03 Aug 10) Shan Leader Moved to Mandalay Prison;

SHAN (09 Aug 10) Imprisoned Shan ceasefire leader transferred to Western Burma

⁴⁵ Irrawaddy (09 Aug 10) Shan Leader Transferred to Three Prisons in One Week; SHAN (09 Aug 10) Imprisoned Shan ceasefire leader transferred to Western Burma

⁴⁶ Narinjara News (09 Aug 10) Imprisoned Shan Leader Arrives in Sittwe; SHAN (09 Aug 10) Imprisoned Shan ceasefire leader transferred to Western Burma

⁴⁷ Irrawaddy (03 Aug 10) Shan Leader Moved to Mandalay Prison

⁴⁸ Mizzima News (21 Aug 10) Political prisoner denied surgery for 1½ years

under the title “Will it come in September?” The Censorship Board interpreted the title as an allusion to another monk-led uprising in the lead up to third anniversary of the Saffron Revolution.⁴⁹

DISPLACEMENT

Rohingya woes in Bangladesh

Bangladesh authorities continued to push back Rohingya fleeing persecution in Burma. In August, Bangladesh authorities arrested more than 27 Rohingya in various parts of Bangladesh and pushed at least 12 of them back to Burma.⁵⁰ Since January, Bangladesh has pushed more than 2,000 Rohingya back to Burma.⁵¹

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

US endorses UN Commission of Inquiry on Burma

On 18 August, US National Security Council Deputy Spokesperson Benjamin Chang said that the US supported the establishment of a UN Commission of Inquiry (CoI) on war crimes and crimes against humanity in Burma. Chang said that the US had started consultations with a “broad array of stakeholders, key players, and other countries on the issue.”⁵²

Support for the US position quickly followed. Eighty-one Canadian MPs noted their support for the establishment of a UN CoI on Burma and MPs from 15 EU countries endorsed the CoI, as well.⁵³ Indonesian Parliament Burma Caucus head Eva Sundari called on the Indonesian government to support the establishment of a CoI.⁵⁴

International community expresses election concerns

The international community expressed an ongoing concern that the elections would not be free or fair.

- **9 August:**
 - Philippines FM Alberto Romulo said the elections would be considered a sham if opposition members would not be allowed to participate in the process.⁵⁵
 - UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-moon said that the SPDC had ignored all of his attempts to engage in a proactive process ahead of the polls.⁵⁶
- **13 August:**
 - Ban Ki-moon reiterated his call for the SPDC to honor their publicly stated commitments to hold inclusive, free and fair elections.⁵⁷
 - US State Department Deputy spokesman Mark Toner said that the elections cannot be inclusive or credible under the current circumstances.⁵⁸
 - Australia’s FM Stephen Smith said that Australia had grave reservations about the election process and the country’s highly restrictive political environment.⁵⁹
- **14 August:**

⁴⁹ Irrawaddy (16 Aug 10) Journal Banned for “Sensitive” Headline; Mizzima News (17 Aug 10) Journal becomes fourth suspended in six weeks

⁵⁰ Kaladan News (03 Aug 10) Eight Burmese nationals pushed back to Burma; Kaladan News (04 Aug 10) Four unregistered refugees sent to Cox’s Bazaar jail; Kaladan News (23 Aug 10) Seven Burmese nationals arrested on Bangla-Burma border; BD News (28 Aug 10) 8 Myanmar citizens arrested

⁵¹ Narinjara News (11 Jun 10) Bangladesh Conducts Census of Illegal Burmese Citizens in Bangladesh

⁵² PTI (18 Aug 10) US backs creation of UN war crimes commission against Myanmar

⁵³ <http://www.cfob.org/>, European Parliamentary Caucus on Burma (19 Aug 10) European MPs call on EU to support a UN Commission of Inquiry on Burma

⁵⁴ Jakarta Post (20 Aug 10) UN Myanmar probe gains RI support; Liberal Party of Canada press release (27 Aug 10) Liberals call on the Conservative government to support a United Nations Commission of Inquiry on the human rights situation in Burma

⁵⁵ GMA News TV (09 Aug 2010) DFA chief: Without the opposition, Myanmar polls a farce

⁵⁶ Mizzima News (10 Aug 10) UN chief laments lost opportunity for Burma

⁵⁷ Reuters (14 Aug 10) UN chief reacts cautiously to Myanmar election plan

⁵⁸ Irrawaddy (14 Aug 10) US, UN Respond to Burma’s Election Date

⁵⁹ SMH (13 Aug 10) ‘Grave reservations’ on Burma poll

- The British Embassy in Rangoon, on behalf of other EU nations with missions in Burma, told the SPDC that the elections would not be considered legitimate in the eyes of the world unless it can ensure the vote is free and fair.⁶⁰
- Canada's FM Lawrence Cannon said that Canada had serious concerns that the elections will be held under oppressive conditions and will not be conducted in line with international standards.⁶¹
- **17 August:** ASEAN Chair Vietnam underscored the importance of a free, fair and inclusive vote.⁶²
- **20 August:** Japan's FM Katsuya Okada said that if the SPDC holds the general election without releasing political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, it would not be a free, fair, and open election.⁶³

ECONOMY

Thailand hedges on Burmese gas

On 10 August, Thailand's PTT Exploration and Production (PTTEP) announced that it planned to sell some of its shares in five gas exploration blocks off the Gulf of Martaban in Burma to strategic partners to diversify its investment risks.⁶⁴ PTTEP currently holds 100% of all five blocks. Potential investors included China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) and India's GAIL and ONGC. SPDC-run Myanmar Oil & Gas Enterprise (MOGE) will also take up 15-20% of shares under a concession agreement while PTTEP would remain as the blocks' operator.⁶⁵

US fines Barclays over sanctions violations

On 16 August, the US Justice Department disclosed that British bank Barclays had agreed to pay US\$298 million in penalties for doing business with countries under US sanctions, including Burma.⁶⁶ Between 1995 and 2006, Barclays funneled nearly US\$500,000 in illegal transactions involving the military junta by deliberately concealing transaction statements and business records.⁶⁷

It was the second time in less than a year the US has taken action against a European bank with financial ties to Burma. In December 2009, the Credit Suisse Group had agreed to pay US\$536 million after it was revealed to have conducted prohibited financial transactions with numerous individuals subject to US sanctions, including SPDC members and their associates [See *December 2009 Burma Bulletin*].

China investment tops US\$8 billion this year

In mid August, state-run media reported that Chinese investment for the 2009-2010 fiscal year totaled more than US\$8 billion.⁶⁸ The new round of investments included two hydroelectric dams in Kachin State valued at US\$5 billion; oil and gas pipelines from Arakan State to Yunnan Province for US\$2.15 billion, and a copper mine in Monywa for US\$997 million.⁶⁹ These investments will be of little benefit to Burma's people as virtually all the oil, gas, and electricity will go directly to China.⁷⁰

⁶⁰ AP (14 Aug 10) European Union joins global calls for free and fair elections in Myanmar

⁶¹ Canada Ministry of Foreign Affairs (14 Aug 10) Canada responds to release of election date in Burma

⁶² AFP (17 Aug 10) ASEAN welcomes Myanmar poll date

⁶³ Kyodo News (21 Aug 10) Japan urges Myanmar to release Suu Kyi

⁶⁴ Nation (10 Aug 10) PTTEP to sell some shares in Burma gas; Bangkok Post (10 Aug 10) PTTEP seeking partners for Burma project; Irrawaddy (14 Aug 10) Thailand Seeks to Dilute Cost of Developing Burma Gas Fields; Mizzima News (11 Aug 10) Thai state energy company to hedge Burma position

⁶⁵ Nation (10 Aug 10) PTTEP to sell some shares in Burma gas; Bangkok Post (10 Aug 10) PTTEP seeking partners for Burma project; Irrawaddy (14 Aug 10) Thailand Seeks to Dilute Cost of Developing Burma Gas Fields; Mizzima News (11 Aug 10) Thai state energy company to hedge Burma position

⁶⁶ AP (16 Aug 10) Barclays to pay \$US298 million in fines; NYT (16 Aug 10) Barclays Agrees to Pay \$298 Million for Violating U.S. Trade Law; Washington Post (16 Aug 10) Barclays agrees to forfeit \$298 million to settle sanction violations charges

⁶⁷ AP (16 Aug 10) Barclays to pay \$US298 million in fines; NYT (16 Aug 10) Barclays Agrees to Pay \$298 Million for Violating U.S. Trade Law; Washington Post (16 Aug 10) Barclays agrees to forfeit \$298 million to settle sanction violations charges; Irrawaddy (21 Aug 10) US Judge Rejects 'Sweetheart' Deal on Barclays Sanction Busting

⁶⁸ Reuters (16 Aug 10) Chinese investment in Myanmar tops \$8 bln this year – data; DPA (15 Aug 10) Myanmar attracts 8 billion dollars in new Chinese investment

⁶⁹ Reuters (16 Aug 10) Chinese investment in Myanmar tops \$8 bln this year – data; DPA (15 Aug 10) Myanmar attracts 8 billion dollars in new Chinese investment

⁷⁰ Irrawaddy (21 Aug 10) US \$8 Billion China Investment Claim is Far-Fetched, says Expert

SPDC suspends visa-on-arrival

The SPDC announced that it would stop its visa-on-arrival program for tourists on 1 September. This has been widely interpreted as a move by the junta to prevent foreign reporters and monitors from entering the country ahead of the 7 November elections.⁷¹ In a year that showed a more than 37% increase in tourist arrivals in the first seven months of 2010 compared to 2009, Burma's tourism industry expressed concern that increased travel restrictions will severely hamper their businesses in the final quarter of 2010.⁷²

SPDC threatens factory workers with blacklist

The regime switched tactics in response to the recent spate of strikes at factories in Rangoon. On 20 August, the SPDC warned factory workers that if they launched or participated in industrial protests they would be fired and blacklisted. Observers said the reason for the new regulation was that the junta wanted to prevent further industrial action without attracting bad publicity from arrests.⁷³

OTHER BURMA NEWS IN AUGUST

1	Local newspaper New Flower News reports that 130,000 people were infected with tuberculosis in Burma in 2009.
1	Na Sa Ka personnel from Area 5 in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, detain a 25-year-old local Rohingya on charges of refusing to perform sentry duty.
2	SPDC authorities close the Mahamuni Buddha Vihara orphanage in Akyab, Arakan State, and transfer 47 of the orphans to Rangoon while detaining the remaining 73 orphans at an Akyab police station.
2	Weekly Eleven journal reports that India's Tata Motors, in conjunction with SPDC Ministry of Industry, will produce sedans, light trucks and buses in Kyaukse Township, Mandalay Division.
2	A 15-member KNLA squad ambush kills nine and wounds 14 soldiers from SPDC Army IB 62 in Hlaingbwe Township, Karen State.
3	NLD leaders led by Vice-Chairman Tin Oo and CEC member Win Tin visit family members of imprisoned ethnic leaders in Rangoon.
4	UK Ambassador to Burma Andrew Heyn meets with NLD Vice-Chairman Tin Oo and NLD members Win Tin and Nyan Win in Rangoon.
4	SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe is briefly hospitalized at the Pun Hlaing International Hospital in Rangoon.
4	A soldier from SPDC Army LIB 529 defects to the Shan State Army-South.
5	A KNLA ambush on an SPDC convoy carrying SPDC Army Commander of Bureau of Special Operations-4 Lt Gen Khin Zaw in Kawkareik Township, Karen State, kills five junta soldiers.
6	A bomb blast near a market in Myawaddy, Karen State, kills two people and injures three.
8	Pro-democracy activists, politicians, and Buddhist monks in Rangoon mark the anniversary of the 1988 uprising with a ceremony in the city's eastern suburb.
9	Bangladesh police arrest a drug trafficker with 1,000 amphetamine tablets in Teknaf while he is entering Bangladesh from Burma.
9	Bangladeshi police arrest a Muslim youth from Burma with 1,800 amphetamine tablets in Lamar Bazar Market in Teknaf.
10	Fifty onion farmers from Magwe Division send a letter to SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe requesting price supports for onions due to export ban.
12	BDR personnel arrest two Bangladeshi drug traffickers and seize 5,000 amphetamine tablets at the Dumdum Mia checkpoint in Teknaf across the border from Burma's Maungdaw Town.
13	Korea Exchange Bank says it will suspend its US dollar remittance service to Burma in October as part of an international crackdown on countries suspected of financing terrorism.
13	Chin National Front reiterates its rejection of each point of the SPDC's "roadmap to democracy" and reaffirms its opposition to the 2010 election.
13	US Senator Mitch McConnell calls the junta's election a charade and says that 7 November will be just

⁷¹ Reuters (23 Aug 10) Myanmar suspends visas on arrival before election; DPA (22 Aug 10) Myanmar's tourist arrivals up 37 per cent; AP (25 Aug 10) Yangon suspends visa on arrival

⁷² DPA (22 Aug 10) Myanmar's tourist arrivals up 37 per cent; Mizzima News (24 Aug 10) Visa on arrival stopped as poll date nears

⁷³ Irrawaddy (27 Aug 10) New Decree to Prevent Industrial Action

	another day marked by continued junta oppression and hardship for Burma's people.
14	Over 1,000 local workers at the Cherry Yoma oil field in Kale Township, Sagaing Division, demonstrate to protest inadequate compensation.
14	A bomb explodes in front of a DKBA checkpoint on the outskirts of Three Pagodas Pass, Karen State. No casualties are reported.
14	An SPDC Army Captain from LIB 267 is killed in a gunfight with fellow soldiers in Kawthaung Township, Tenasserim Division.
16	The Shan Women's Action Network and Shan Human Rights Foundation launch a campaign denouncing the new Mong Nai-Kengtung railway as an expansion of the SPDC's war apparatus in Shan State.
18	Na Sa Ka personnel force villagers from Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, to pave the Maungdaw-Bawli Bazaar Road.
20	Human rights activists demonstrate in Dili, East Timor, to protest the visit of SPDC FM Nyan Win.
20	Indonesian PM Eva Sundari says that ASEAN's policy of constructive engagement with the SPDC has failed to bear any fruit.
20	East Timor President Jose Ramos-Horta says that his country is seeking to improve relations with the SPDC, including commercial ties.
21	Thai police detain eight Burmese migrant workers after 300 workers hold a demonstration at a prawn-processing plant in Samut Sakhon over reductions in their overtime pay.
21	A local villager is killed after stepping on a landmine in Kyaukkyi Township, Pegu Division.
23	Local weekly Eleven News reports that the SPDC has completed the first draft of its Universal Periodic Review submission.
23	Na Sa Ka personnel in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, summarily execute two local villagers who were arrested for alleged robbery.
24	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with her lawyer Nyan Win at her lakeside home.
24	SPDC authorities release Myint Maung and Thura Aung, two activists who gave legal assistance to farmers in Allen Township, Magwe Division.
24	SPDC authorities release more than 100 people from jails nationwide. No political prisoners are among those released.
24	A senior US official says that he does not foresee any discussions with the SPDC in the near future.
25	Riot police and private security personnel seriously injure two workers while dispersing a protest of over 1,000 workers at the Cherry Yoma oil field in Kale Township, Sagaing Division,
25	A bomb blast in Three Pagodas Pass, Karen State, injures three SPDC Army soldiers from IB 32.
26	India's FM SM Krishna says that India is keeping an eye on Burma after recent reports about an alleged nuclear weapons program in the country.
29	The 5th Escort Task group of the Chinese Navy, made up of two warships, makes a friendly call at Rangoon's Thilawa Port.
31	US State Department spokesman PJ Crowley says that a dictator in civilian clothing is still a dictator and even though SPDC leaders are resigning from the military the restricting political space is still a problem for Burma.

REPORTS ON BURMA RELEASED IN AUGUST

“Upholding the Responsibility to Protect in Burma/Myanmar”, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/VVOS-88ERJA/\\$File/full_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/VVOS-88ERJA/$File/full_report.pdf)

“Burma’s 2010 Electoral Framework: Fundamentally Undemocratic”, National Democratic Institute (NDI)

http://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_Burma_Elections_0810.pdf

“Burma Army tracks across Shan State”, Shan Women’s Action Network (SWAN) and Shan Human Rights Development Foundation

<http://www.shanwomen.org/files/Burma-Army-tracks-across-Shan-State-English.pdf>

“Tyrants, Tycoons and Tigers”, Kachin Development Networking Group (KDNG)

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/36393627/Tyrants-Tycoons-and-Tigers>

“Monthly Recovery Update June/July 2010”, Tripartite Core Group (TCG)

[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/NROI-88N92H/\\$File/full_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/NROI-88N92H/$File/full_report.pdf)