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- **US President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and two high level State Department officials travel to Asia and explain Washington's new Burma policy.**
- **The US says it will consider lifting sanctions only if the SPDC releases Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners, ceases hostilities in ethnic areas, and engages in genuine dialogue with all pro-democracy and ethnic nationality groups.**
- **Daw Aung San Suu Kyi sends a second letter to SPDC Chairman Than Shwe. The letter reiterates Daw Suu's willingness to cooperate with the SPDC and requests a meeting with the Senior General.**
- **The UN General Assembly's Third Committee condemns the SPDC's ongoing human rights violations and calls on the junta to undertake a transparent, inclusive, and comprehensive review of the 2008 constitution.**
- **A new ILO report says forced labor complaints have soared by 129% compared with the same period last year. The SPDC continues to stifle complaints through harassment and imprisonment.**
- **The Global Fund returns and countries pledge more money to cyclone Nargis victims as rights groups and activists warn them about SPDC interference and harassment.**
- **An independent report states that during 2008, landmine casualties increased by 64% in Burma.**
- **Burma ranks as the third most corrupt country in the world according to a new survey.**
- **China begins construction of the oil and gas pipeline in Arakan State amid ongoing land confiscation in the area by the SPDC.**

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KEY STORY

US presses SPDC on reforms

In November, US President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and two high level State Department officials traveled to Asia and explained Washington's new Burma policy to key stakeholders in Burma, and to ASEAN and regional leaders. [For more information and analysis of the new US Burma policy, please see Altsean briefer *New US policy: an alibi for regional complacency*].

- **3-4 November:** A US delegation headed by US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Asia and the Pacific and Ambassador for ASEAN Affairs Scot Marciel conducted a two-day "exploratory" mission to Burma.

- **12 November:** US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton discussed Burma in Manila during a two-day visit to the Philippines.
- **14-15 November:** US President Barack Obama spoke on Burma during a speech in Tokyo. While attending the first ever US-ASEAN Summit in Singapore as part of his Asia tour, he reiterated calls for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners.

Obama, Clinton, and Campbell and Marciel all delivered a consistent message to the SPDC: Washington will consider lifting sanctions only when the SPDC has released Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners, and engaged in genuine dialogue with all pro-democracy and ethnic nationality groups.

Obama defies ASEAN, calls for Daw Suu's release

On 14 November in Tokyo, US President Barack Obama called on the SPDC to unconditionally release all political prisoners including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, end conflicts with ethnic groups, and have a “genuine dialogue” with pro-democracy forces and ethnic nationalities. Obama said these steps were a “precondition for any softening of sanctions” against the junta.¹

On 15 November, Obama held talks with SPDC PM Gen Thein Sein on the sidelines of the US-ASEAN Summit and urged the SPDC to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners.² In a joint statement, ASEAN and the US said the 2010 elections “must be conducted in a free, fair, inclusive and transparent manner in order to be credible to the international community.”³ ASEAN leaders scuttled any mention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's continued detention in the Summit's final statement.⁴

Clinton holds the line

On 12 November in Manila, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton renewed her call for the SPDC to unconditionally release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.⁵ Clinton also said that Washington had no plans to drop sanctions but was trying to encourage the SPDC to enter into a dialogue with “all the stakeholders, including Aung San Suu Kyi.”⁶

Campbell and Marciel deliver the message

On 3 November, Campbell and Marciel met with numerous SPDC officials including Minister for Science and Technology Thaung in Naypyidaw.⁷ They also met with various officials and representatives from pro-junta groups but failed to meet with SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe.⁸

On 4 November, Campbell and Marciel met SPDC PM Gen Thein Sein before departing for Rangoon.⁹ Campbell said that he offered the SPDC improved relations with the US if the regime moved toward democracy. He also called on the SPDC to open a dialogue with pro-democracy forces and ethnic nationalities. Campbell urged the junta to allow Daw Aung San Suu Kyi more freedom to meet with her party's senior executives.¹⁰

¹ Mizzima News (16 Nov 09) US-ASEAN meet fails to call for Suu Kyi's release

² Mizzima News (16 Nov 09) US-ASEAN meet fails to call for Suu Kyi's release

³ Reuters (15 Nov 09) Obama meets Myanmar PM, calls for Suu Kyi's release

⁴ Mizzima News (16 Nov 09) US-ASEAN meet fails to call for Suu Kyi's release

⁵ Reuters (12 Nov 09) Clinton urges Myanmar to free Suu Kyi; DPA (12 Nov 09) US warns Myanmar elections won't be credible without Suu Kyi; AFP (12 Nov 09) Clinton calls for release of Myanmar's Suu Kyi

⁶ Reuters (12 Nov 09) U.S., Myanmar leaders may cross paths at ASEAN: Clinton; VOA (12 Nov 09) US leaders may interact with Burmese at Singapore summit

⁷ IANS (04 Nov 09)_ US envoy meets Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi; NLM (05 Nov 09) US Assistant Secretary of State for Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and party meet with social organizations, National Convention Convening Commission, Commission for Holding Referendum, TCG and Spoke Authoritative Team of SPDC, national race groups before leaving Nay Pyi Taw for Yangon

⁸ NLM (05 Nov 09) US Assistant Secretary of State for Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and party meet with social organizations, National Convention Convening Commission, Commission for Holding Referendum, TCG and Spoke Authoritative Team of SPDC, national race groups before leaving Nay Pyi Taw for Yangon; DPA (04 Nov 09) US envoy meets Myanmar pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi

⁹ Irrawaddy (04 Nov 09) Suu Kyi, Campbell Hold Two-hour Meeting

¹⁰ AP (04 Nov 09) Top US officials meet Myanmar junta, Suu Kyi

In Rangoon, Campbell and Marciel met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at the Inya Lake Hotel in Rangoon.¹¹ They also met separately with NLD representatives and ethnic nationality leaders.¹² The NLD leaders told the two US officials to include the revision of the 2008 constitution as one of the main topics of discussion in its engagement with the SPDC. They stressed that without revising the constitution there could be no free and fair elections and no start to the process of national reconciliation.¹³ NLD Central Executive Committee member Win Tin made it clear that the party would not participate in the 2010 elections unless the junta revised the constitution.¹⁴ Ethnic nationality leaders expressed a similar point of view and pointed out that the problems with the constitution need to be addressed before the 2010 elections.¹⁵ They also urged the two US officials to include dialogue with ethnic nationality groups as a key component of the new US policy with Burma.¹⁶

On 5 November, after leaving Burma, Marciel said that elections in Burma could not be regarded as free and fair if Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD were not allowed to participate.¹⁷ Marciel also said that the US would not lift its sanctions on the regime unless the SPDC makes concrete progress toward democratic reform.¹⁸

INSIDE BURMA

Daw Suu reaches out

Following up on her 25 September letter to Sr Gen Than Shwe [See *September 2009 Burma Bulletin*], on 11 November Daw Aung San Suu Kyi sent a second letter to the SPDC Chairman. In the letter, Daw Suu reiterated her willingness to cooperate with the SPDC “for the benefit of the country” and requested a meeting with Than Shwe.¹⁹ Daw Suu also sought permission to meet with other members of the NLD Central Executive Committee at her lakeside home.²⁰

Despite Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s willingness to work with the SPDC to find a solution to Burma’s political crisis, the junta continued to toy with her:

- **2 November:** The SPDC barred NLD Vice-Chairman Tin Oo from participating in a meeting between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the party’s Central Executive Committee.²¹ As a result, Daw Suu cancelled the meeting.²²
- **9 November:** The SPDC Foreign Ministry Director-General Min Lwin hinted that the junta might release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to allow her to play a role in the 2010 elections. “There is a plan to release her soon [...],” Min Lwin said in Manila.²³ However, hopes for Daw Suu’s release were quickly dashed on 12 November, when Min Lwin backtracked and said that he had been misquoted.²⁴

¹¹ Mizzima News (04 Nov 09) Visiting US diplomats meet Aung San Suu Kyi

¹² Mizzima News (04 Nov 09) US urged to call for revision of constitution; DVB (05 Nov 09) US told Burma elections ‘not most important factor’

¹³ Mizzima News (04 Nov 09) US urged to call for revision of constitution

¹⁴ Mizzima News (04 Nov 09) US urged to call for revision of constitution

¹⁵ DVB (05 Nov 09) US told Burma elections ‘not most important factor’

¹⁶ DVB (05 Nov 09) US told Burma elections ‘not most important factor’

¹⁷ SMH (06 Nov 09) US pushes junta for release of Suu Kyi

¹⁸ AP (05 Nov 09) U.S. will not lift Burma sanctions: report

¹⁹ BBC (16 Nov 09) Burma’s Suu Kyi calls for talks; VOA (16 Nov 09) Burma’s Aung San Suu Kyi Requests Meeting With Military Head; Al Jazeera (17 Nov 09) Suu Kyi asks to meet Myanmar rulers; Mizzima News (17 Nov 09) Than Shwe should not let go of Suu Kyi’s offer: Observers

²⁰ AP (16 Nov 09) Myanmar’s Suu Kyi seeks meeting with junta chief; Nation (17 Nov 09) Democracy icon asks to meet junta leader for “sake of country”; DVB (18 Nov 09) Suu Kyi’s letter goes public

²¹ NLM (05 Nov 09) US Assistant Secretary of State for Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and party meet with social organizations, National Convention Convening Commission, Commission for Holding Referendum, TCG and Spoke Authoritative Team of SPDC, national race groups before leaving Nay Pyi Taw for Yangon

²² Irrawaddy (05 Nov 09) Suu Kyi Rejects NLD Meeting; State Media; DVB (06 Nov 09) Suu Kyi rejects meeting with party

²³ AP (09 Nov 09) Myanmar diplomat: Junta may free Suu Kyi for poll; Al Jazeera (10 Nov 09) Myanmar’s Suu Kyi ‘may be freed’

²⁴ Reuters (13 Nov 09) Myanmar’s Suu Kyi’s lawyers file detention appeal

SPDC reshuffles

In mid-November, it was reported that Lt Gen Myint Swe, the Commander of the Bureau of Special Operation 5 and a protégé of Sr Gen Than Shwe, had replaced Lt Gen Tin Aung Myint Oo as the SPDC Quartermaster General. Tin Aung Myint Oo maintained his position as SPDC Secretary-1.²⁵ The appointment of Myint Swe made him the top candidate to succeed Than Shwe as the SPDC Army's next Commander-in-Chief.²⁶

The SPDC also demoted Brig Gen Khin Yi from National Police Chief to Deputy Religious Affairs Minister. The re-assignment of Khin Yi was linked to his suspected role in allowing ousted Rangoon Divisional Police Chief Col Win Naing to flee abroad while in his custody.²⁷

SPDC extends BGF deadline

Ethnic ceasefire groups continued to resist the SPDC's Border Guard Force (BGF) ultimatum. As a result, the SPDC was forced to extend its 31 October deadline for the groups to accept the proposal to the end of December.

- **7 November:** The United Wa State Army (UWSA) and the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) met in Panghsang, Shan State. Both groups told the SPDC that their militias had to remain independent of the SPDC Army for the BGF proposal to be acceptable²⁸ The SPDC ignored the proposal.²⁹
- **14 November:** SPDC Army and UWSA officials met in Tang Yan in Northern Shan State and failed to reach an agreement on the BGF issue. The SPDC extended the deadline to accept the BGF proposal until the end of December.³⁰ However, the UWSA and NDAA said that they had compromised too much already and called on the SPDC Army to leave their territories.³¹
- **21 November:** UWSA and NDAA leaders meeting in Panghsang, Shan State, reaffirmed their position that they are willing to transform into BGF units without SPDC Army oversight.³² They said they would “not accept junta officers at the battalion levels [...] or admit junta state officials to run their domains.”³³

Internal instability increases drug exports

On 26 November, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released a report titled “2009 Patterns and Trends of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants and Other Drugs in East and South-East Asia.”³⁴ The report said that:³⁵

- In 2008, Burma reported an increase in Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS) use for the sixth consecutive year.
- Illicit manufacture of methamphetamines continued in Burma, particularly in Shan State's Wa and Kokang regions.
- ATS produced in Burma have been smuggled to nearby countries such as Thailand, Bangladesh, Laos, Malaysia, and Vietnam.
- Health and social costs attributed to ATS use in the region have soared. In Thailand, one of the countries most affected by Burma's amphetamine exports, the jump was particularly extreme with

²⁵ Irrawaddy (12 Nov 09) The Junta's No 4 Unexpectedly Resigns; Irrawaddy (20 Nov 09) Myint Swe: The Tatmadaw's Next Top Dog?

²⁶ Irrawaddy (20 Nov 09) Myint Swe: The Tatmadaw's Next Top Dog?

²⁷ Chinland Guardian (13 Nov 09) Police Chief Khin Yi Assumes New Post

²⁸ SHAN (09 Nov 09) Wa follows Mongla's lead

²⁹ Irrawaddy (16 Nov 09) Junta Rejects Autonomous Wa State

³⁰ Mizzima News (16 Nov 09) No agreement yet between junta and UWSA on BGF

³¹ SHAN (19 Nov 09) Wa wants Burmese Army to leave its territory

³² SHAN (25 Nov 09) Wa, Mongla: Don't mess with the beehive

³³ SHAN (25 Nov 09) Wa, Mongla: Don't mess with the beehive

³⁴ AFP (26 Nov 09) Myanmar rebels cashing in illegal drugs stocks: UN; Mizzima News (27 Nov 09) Increased drug threat due to instability in Burma: report; Irrawaddy (27 Nov 09) 'Burma's Political Instability Could Increase Drug Threat'—Report

³⁵ UNODC (26 Nov 09) 2009 Patterns and Trends of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants and Other Drugs in East and South-East Asia

more than 70,000 treatment admissions for the amphetamine use in 2008, up from about 20,000 four years earlier - a 250% increase.³⁶

In addition, the report said that political instability in Shan State might serve as a push factor for illicit drugs and relocation of clandestine manufacturing sites across its borders. UNODC representative Gary Lewis said that Burma's armed ethnic groups have increasingly cashed in their illegal drugs production in anticipation of a SPDC crackdown.³⁷

Calls for protection, transparency accompany new aid initiatives

In November, donors pledged over US\$230 million in new aid initiatives.

- **12 November**, The Global Fund, which pulled out of Burma in 2005 because of SPDC interference, pledged US\$110 million in new aid to Burma over two years to fight HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis.³⁸
- **21 November**: Australian FM Stephen Smith said Australia will pledge an additional AU\$15 million (US\$13.5 million) in humanitarian aid to cyclone Nargis survivors.³⁹
- **25 November**: The Tripartite Core Group and the EU announced that they had raised US\$88 million and US\$21 million respectively for cyclone Nargis relief efforts at the Post-Nargis Assistance Conference (PONAC) in Bangkok.⁴⁰ The same day, the UN said that 178,000 cyclone survivors were still living in makeshift homes in the delta.⁴¹

The influx of new aid initiatives drew warnings from observers who urged that the new aid be closely monitored and that aid workers be better protected. On 24 November, Amnesty International urged international donors attending the PONAC to pressure the SPDC to end its harassment of aid workers and activists providing humanitarian assistance to survivors of cyclone Nargis.⁴² On 25 November, Sean Turnell, professor of economics at Australia's Macquarie University, warned that aid would not effectively reach those who need it most because Burma lacks accountability, transparency, and the political space necessary for the effective delivery of aid.⁴³

Landmine casualties increase

On 12 November, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) released its annual Landmine Monitor Report.⁴⁴ The report's findings as it pertained to Burma stated that:⁴⁵

- The SPDC was the world's only government to both produce and use antipersonnel mines in 2008.
- Both SPDC Army troops and ethnic armed opposition groups continued to use antipersonnel mines through 2008 and 2009.
- In 2008, there were 721 reported casualties, a 64% increase from the 438 casualties recorded in 2007.
- There were 2,325 casualties (175 killed, 2002 injured, and 148 unknown) from 1999 to 2008.
- Twenty-three Townships in Chin, Karen, Karenni, Mon, Arakan, and Shan States, as well as in Pegu and Tenasserim Divisions, suffered from antipersonnel mine contamination.

³⁶ UNODC (26 Nov 09) 2009 Patterns and Trends of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants and Other Drugs in East and South-East Asia

³⁷ AFP (26 Nov 09) Myanmar rebels cashing in illegal drugs stocks: UN

³⁸ DPA (15 Nov 09) Global Fund returns to Myanmar with 110 million dollars; Irrawaddy (19 Nov 09) Global Fund Returns to Burma with Large Grant; DVB (16 Nov 09) Aid group to resume Burma funding

³⁹ AAP (20 Nov 09) Australia's \$20 Million Aid to Pakistan, Burma; Mizzima News (23 Nov 09) Australia to provide \$15 million as Nargis aid to Burma; Gov Monitor (23 Nov 09) Australia to provide \$15 million humanitarian assistance for Burma; DVB (24 Nov 09) Australian aid to Burma eyed with caution

⁴⁰ Reuters (25 Nov 09) Myanmar cyclone survivors still need shelter - U.N.; DVB (25 Nov 09) EU and ASEAN raise \$100m for Nargis relief; Bernama (25 Nov 09) Asean mobilises over US\$88 million for Cyclone Nargis survivors

⁴¹ Reuters (25 Nov 09) Myanmar cyclone survivors still need shelter - U.N.; DVB (26 Nov 09) 178,000 Nargis victims lack decent shelter; Al Jazeera (26 Nov 09) UN calls for more Myanmar storm aid

⁴² Mizzima News (24 Nov 09) AI urges Int'l donors to pressurize junta; Irrawaddy (24 Nov 09) Stop Arresting Cyclone Aid Activists: AI

⁴³ Mizzima News (26 Nov 09) Aid trickles in despite desperate need of Nargis victims

⁴⁴ Irrawaddy (13 Nov 09) Burma: A Landmine Tragedy

⁴⁵ ICBL (12 Nov 09) Landmine Monitor 2009 - Burma/Myanmar

SPDC recruitment of child soldiers continues

Recent UN reports and resolutions on child soldiers in Burma showed that the SPDC has not kept its promise to end its recruitment of child soldiers.

A 28 October report from the UN Security Council Working Group (SCWG) on Children and Armed Conflict in Burma expressed concern regarding reports of new recruitment of children by the SPDC Army.⁴⁶

On 19 November, the UN General Assembly's Third Committee passed a resolution [See below *UNGA Committee condemns SPDC*] that called on the SPDC Army to end the recruitment of child soldiers and "to intensify measures to ensure the protection of children from armed conflict." The resolution also called on the junta to cooperate with the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict by granting her/him access to conflict areas where child soldiers are recruited.⁴⁷

On 16 November, Aye Myint, a labor activist in Pegu Division, said that the SPDC Army had conscripted at least 112 underage youths between May and November of this year.⁴⁸

HUMAN RIGHTS

Arrests and prison sentences

- **13 November:** The SPDC sentenced protester Kan Myint to an additional eight-year-prison term under the Unlawful Association Act. Kan Myint, a member of the Myanmar Development Committee, will now serve a total of 18 years in prison.⁴⁹
- **16 November:** Na Sa Ka personnel from Area 6 in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, arrested the Aung Mangala Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) Chairman Khin Maung Gyi for providing information to BBC and VOA.⁵⁰
- **18 November:** Na Sa Ka personnel detained a monk from Aung Mangala Village in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, for providing anti-regime information to BBC and VOA.⁵¹
- **19 November:** A court in Maungdaw, Arakan State, sentenced VPDC Chairman Abdu Rashid to seven years in prison on charges of setting up a primary school without authorization.⁵²

Detention conditions

- **4 November:** Former SPDC FM Win Aung, 65, died from a stroke in Insein prison where he was serving a seven-year sentence for corruption.⁵³
- **5 November:** It was reported that NLD member Ni Mo Hlaing was hospitalized in Thayet Prison, Magwe Division.⁵⁴
- **7 November:** Win Maung, a 40-year-old resident of Letpadan Township, Pegu Division, died hours after police beat him during interrogation.⁵⁵
- **25 November:** It was reported that 88 Generation Student Min Ko Naing, who is detained in Kengtung prison, Shan State, needed immediate medical care and treatment for hypertension.⁵⁶

⁴⁶ UN Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (28 Oct 09) Conclusions on children and armed conflict in Myanmar [S/AC.51/2009/4]

⁴⁷ Irrawaddy (20 Nov 09) Children's Rights Celebrated in Naypyidaw

⁴⁸ Irrawaddy (18 Nov 09) Junta Conscripts More Child Soldiers

⁴⁹ DVB (19 Nov 09) Jail term extended for 2007 activist

⁵⁰ Kaladan News (20 Nov 09) Two VPDC Chairmen, Sayadaw arrested in Maungdaw

⁵¹ Kaladan News (20 Nov 09) Two VPDC Chairmen, Sayadaw arrested in Maungdaw

⁵² Kaladan News (20 Nov 09) Two VPDC Chairmen, Sayadaw arrested in Maungdaw

⁵³ DPA (05 Nov 09) Former Myanmar foreign minister dies in jail; AP (05 Nov 09) Myanmar ex-foreign minister dies in prison; Kyodo (05 Nov 09) Myanmar's ex-foreign minister Win Aung dies in prison at 65+; DVB (05 Nov 09) Former Burmese minister dies in prison; Mizzima News (04 Nov 09) Former Foreign Minister Win Aung dead

⁵⁴ Irrawaddy (05 Nov 09) Junta Continues Crackdown

⁵⁵ DVB (09 Nov 09) Man dies during police interrogation

⁵⁶ AP (26 Nov 09) Relatives fear for detained Myanmar activist; DVB (25 Nov 09) Iconic 1988 student leader 'very ill'

Forced labor complaints soar despite SPDC harassment

According to a 4 November report by the ILO Liaison Officer in Rangoon:⁵⁷

- There were 71 forced labor complaints filed from 16 May to 28 October 2009, a 129% increase from the same period in 2008. The latest filings included 52 cases of under-age recruitment into the SPDC Army and 17 cases of forced labor.
- The SPDC subjected complainants and other persons associated with complaints to judicial retaliation, including the filing of criminal charges. All the cases of retaliation stem from complaints filed over the use of forced labor by 328 farmers in Magwe Division. In some of the cases the SPDC:
 - Jailed 12 complainants for up to four years and nine months for “trespassing” on land that they owned.
 - Refused to implement a settlement to return land to complainants and jailed those who aided the complainants.
 - Forced complainants to sign confessions to renounce their original complaints.
- Su Su Nway, Min Aung, and labor activists Thurein Aung, Kyaw Kyaw, Wai Linn, Nyi Nyi Zaw, Kyaw Min, and Myo Min, remain in prison, despite repeated calls from the ILO Governing Body for their release.

On 19 November, in its conclusions concerning the forced labor situation in Burma, the ILO Governing Body expressed “deep concern” about the continued imprisonment of forced labor complainants and called for their immediate release as well as the unconditional release of all imprisoned labor activists. It also said that particular attention should be paid to monitoring infrastructure projects such as oil and gas pipelines.⁵⁸

Separate from the ILO findings, since 1 November SPDC border security forces, at Na Sa Ka headquarters in Kawarbill in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, have forced about 100 local residents to prepare tents, renovate roads, make and repair chairs, clean the headquarters and other miscellaneous chores.⁵⁹

DISPLACEMENT

Bangladesh pushes back more Rohingya

Rohingya continued their attempts to flee across the border to Bangladesh. However, Bangladesh authorities persistently pushed them back to Burma. In November, Bangladesh authorities pushed back at least 179 Rohingya into Burma, increasing the total number of Rohingya pushed back this year to over 1,350.⁶⁰

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

UNGA Committee condemns SPDC

On 19 November, the UN General Assembly’s Third Committee condemned the SPDC’s “ongoing systematic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms” of the Burmese people. The resolution passed 92-26 with 65 abstentions.⁶¹ The resolution:⁶²

⁵⁷ Developments concerning the question of the observance by the Government of Myanmar of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) GB.306/6 November 2009

⁵⁸ ILO Governing Body (19 Nov 09) Decision on the fifth item on the agenda: Developments concerning the question of the observance by the Government of Myanmar of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) Conclusions concerning Myanmar

⁵⁹ Kaladan News (21 Nov 09) Forced labor in Maungdaw as army practices target shooting

⁶⁰ Kaladan News (04 Nov 09) 52 Rohingyas pushed back to Burma; Kaladan News (04 Nov 09) 52 Rohingyas pushed back to Burma; Kaladan News (05 Nov 09) More Rohingyas pushed back to Burma; Kaladan News (10 Nov 09) Rohingyas banned from employment in Bangladesh; Kaladan News (10 Nov 09) Rohingyas banned from employment in Bangladesh

⁶¹ Reuters (19 Nov 09) UN committee condemns N.Korea, Myanmar over rights; AP (21 Nov 09) U.N. urges Myanmar to free activist; VOA (19 Nov 09) UN General Assembly Condemns Human Rights Violations in Burma, North Korea; DVB (20 Nov 09) Special UN committee condemns Burma; Irrawaddy (20 Nov 09) UN Passes Resolutions on Burma Human Rights; Mizzima News (21 Nov 09) UN Committee condemns Burma’s rights violations

- Expressed “grave concern” over the trial, conviction, and sentencing of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and urged the SPDC to release her and all other political prisoners.
- Called on the SPDC to undertake a “transparent, inclusive, and comprehensive” review of the 2008 constitution.
- Urged the SPDC to take the necessary steps to ensure that the 2010 elections are “free, fair, transparent and inclusive.”
- Called on the SPDC to put an end to violations of international human rights and humanitarian law and to end impunity for such acts.
- Called on the SPDC to allow a full, transparent, effective, impartial, and independent investigation into all reports of human rights violations, and to bring to justice those responsible.

Japan ties aid to SPDC reforms

On 7 November, the newly elected Japanese government said that the SPDC could no longer count on unconditional Japanese aid and humanitarian assistance. At the Japan-Mekong Summit in Tokyo, Japanese PM Yukio Hatoyama told SPDC PM Gen Thein Sein that Japan would only consider providing more aid to Burma if the SPDC released Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners before the 2010 elections.⁶³

ECONOMY

Constitution perpetuates state interference in the economy

On 16 November, Sean Turnell, professor of economics at Australia’s Macquarie University, warned that the SPDC’s 2008 constitution would perpetuate the ongoing economic mismanagement plaguing Burma. In an op-ed published in *The Irrawaddy*, Turnell argued that the constitution and SPDC’s poor track record did not bode well for any hopes that Burma would transition to a market economy:

- Protection of property rights is not guaranteed – the state is the ultimate owner of all land and resources.
- State involvement in both industry and agriculture sectors casts doubt on how truly open the economy will be.
- The consolidation of fiscal powers, particularly taxation, into the hands of the central government is likely to create tension in ethnic nationality areas.⁶⁴

Burma ranks as the world’s third most corrupt country

On 17 November, Transparency International released its annual Corruption Perception Index. The report ranked the SPDC as the third most corrupt government in the world, after Somalia and Afghanistan.⁶⁵

Pipeline construction in Arakan State begins

In early November, China National Petroleum Company (CNPC) announced that it had started construction of a crude oil port and pipeline on Maday Island, off the coast of Arakan State. The construction marks the first phase of the planned 771km pipeline to Yunnan Province, China.⁶⁶

⁶² UNGA, 64th session, Third Committee, Situation of human rights in Myanmar, 19 November, UN Doc A/C.3/64/L.36

⁶³ VOA (08 Nov 09) Japan Pledges More Aid to Burma if Political Prisoners are Released; Mizzima News (09 Nov 09) Japan to enhance cooperation with Burma and Mekong countries; DVB (09 Nov 09) Japanese aid dependent on Suu Kyi’s release; Mizzima News (09 Nov 09) Japan exhorts Burma to free Aung San Suu Kyi before 2010 poll; Malaysia Sun (08 Nov 09) Japan says Myanmar can have money for release of Aung San Suu Kyi

⁶⁴ Irrawaddy (16 Nov 09) A State-run ‘Market Economy’

⁶⁵ AP (17 Nov 09) Afghanistan, Iraq among the world’s most corrupt; VOA (18 Nov 09) Afghanistan, Iraq Rated Among Most Corrupt Nations

⁶⁶ AP (03 Nov 09) China Oil Company Starts Work on Burmese Pipeline; Reuters (03 Nov 09) China starts building Myanmar oil pipeline project; AFP (04 Nov 09) China’s CNPC starts building Myanmar oil pipeline; VOA (03 Nov 09) China Starts Work on Burma’s Pipeline; DVB (03 Nov 09) China begins construction of Burma oil port;

As pipeline construction commenced, new reports of land confiscation in the area emerged. On 14 November, SPDC authorities in Kyaukpriu Township on Rambree Island, Arakan State, seized about 50 traditional hand-dug oil wells along with a refinery and confiscated 10 acres of land from local villagers.⁶⁷ The regime denied local villagers any compensation and informed the villagers that the land would be leased to the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) for oil exploration.⁶⁸

SPDC's gas sales and revenues grow

Natural gas sales continued to be the SPDC's main source of revenue. On 15 November, it was reported that August SPDC revenue for natural gas exports to Thailand totaled US\$588.7 million.⁶⁹ On 18 November, the state-owned enterprise Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise said that Burma would double its natural gas output in the next decade as a result of its offshore fields in the Bay of Bengal.⁷⁰

OTHER BURMA NEWS IN NOVEMBER

1	Na Sa Ka personnel from Area 6 in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, arrest a 20-year-old local Rohingya for possession of a mobile phone.
1	SPDC Army troops from Infantry Battalion 62 begin militia training to villagers in Thanbyuzayat, Mon State.
2	Thai fishing boat with 24 Thai and Burmese crew members capsizes off the coast of Mahachai, Thailand and only five survive.
2	Korea's Hyundai Heavy Industries says it won a US\$1.4 billion construction contract for building an offshore gas platform as part of the dual oil and gas pipeline project connecting the Bay of Bengal to China's Yunnan Province.
2	SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe visits Nargis-affected Pyapone and Bogale in Irrawaddy Division.
3	A boat carrying 12 undocumented migrant workers from Burma to Thailand capsizes in heavy winds in the Andaman Sea. Local Thai authorities rescue seven and five remain missing.
3	SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe visits Labutta and Mawlamyinegyun in the Irrawaddy delta.
5	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi receives a medical check-up at her Rangoon lakeside home.
5	SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe says that Burma must industrialize in order to develop during a visit to cyclone Nargis-affected areas in Irrawaddy Division.
5	Shan State Army-South says if ceasefire groups accept the SPDC's BGF ultimatum, it would be worse than surrender.
5	SPDC agrees to temporarily stop building the fence along the Bangladesh border during a flag meeting between Bangladesh Rifles and Na Sa Ka near border pillar No. 51.
5	SPDC Army troops surround a base of the anti-India Khaplang faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, in Sagaing Division and begin shelling it.
6	A court in Insein prison levels new charges under the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act against detained Burma-born American citizen Nyi Nyi Aung.
6	State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar reports that the US delegation visiting Burma failed to meet with representatives of the pro-junta National Unity Party.
7	SPDC Health Department says that a total of 64 new swine flu cases have been confirmed in Burma since the outbreak of the disease.
8	State-owned media report that Burma exported 670,000 tons of rice in the fiscal year that ended on March 31 and expects to export up to one million tons this fiscal year,
8	SPDC Army troops from Infantry Battalions 69, 143, 240, 241 and 242 withdraw from Northeast Shan State's Kokang region.
9	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi tells NLD spokesman Nyan Win that she is "satisfied" with her 4 November meeting with the US delegation.
9	SPDC Army detains the leader of the Karen Peace Front Lt Col Lay Wah in Three Pagodas Pass on the Thai-Burmese border.
9	Australia Broadcasting Corporation launches its first Burmese service program.

⁶⁷ Irrawaddy (18 Nov 09) Junta Confiscates Land in Arakan State; Narinjara News (18 Nov 09) Burmese Junta Confiscates Public Oil Wells and Refinery for Chinese Company; Kaladan News (19 Nov 09) Land and traditional hand-dug oil wells seized in Kyaukpriu Township

⁶⁸ Narinjara News (18 Nov 09) Burmese Junta Confiscates Public Oil Wells and Refinery for Chinese Company; Kaladan News (19 Nov 09) Land and traditional hand-dug oil wells seized in Kyaukpriu Township

⁶⁹ DPA (15 Nov 09) Myanmar's August gas exports to Thailand earn 588 million dollars

⁷⁰ DVB (19 Nov 09) Burma to 'double output' of gas by 2020

10	Local SPDC authorities in North Dagon Township, Rangoon Division, withdraw a civil case filed against the Free Funeral Service Association for occupying its office without permission.
10	SPDC Customs Department in Three Pagoda Pass announces a new township tax on betel nut furniture, and tea shops, restaurants, rental homes, and other businesses.
11	Over 100 people attend a National Day ceremony at the NLD headquarters in Rangoon. The NLD issues a statement to demand the reopening of the party's offices across Burma.
11	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets NLD spokesman Nyan Win to discuss party matters and make arrangements for repairs to her lakeside house.
11	US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton says that ASEAN countries have an important role to play in urging the SPDC to hold free and fair elections next year.
11	US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urges China and India to push Burma toward democracy.
11	Police in Rangoon's Hlaing Tharyar Township refuse to investigate the rape of three sisters on 7-9 November because the mother could only pay 200 kyat of the 20,000 kyat the police demanded from her.
12	Bangladeshi officials say they will restart negotiations for a pipeline across its territory that would take natural gas from Burma to India.
12	SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe arrives in Sri Lanka on a four-day visit.
13	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's legal team files an appeal to the Supreme Court over her conviction that resulted in her 18-month house arrest sentence.
13	Chairman of the Democratic Party Thu Wei sends a letter to SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe to demand the promulgation of the election law.
13	Na Sa Ka personnel in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, demolish 11 shops owned by local Rohingya in Sarfaddin Village.
15	About 50 people hold a silent vigil at Colombo International Airport to protest SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe's visit to Sri Lanka.
15	Thai authorities arrest two Thai nationals and two Burmese and seize about 300,000 amphetamine tablets at Mae Sai, Thailand, across the border from Tachilek, Shan State.
16	WFP distributes rice to villagers in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State.
16	French Foreign Ministry backs US stance that the upcoming 2010 elections in Burma will not be credible unless the junta releases all political prisoners including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
18	A court in Insein prison charges NLD members Ma Cho aka Myint Myint San, Sein Hlaing, and Shwe Gyo under the Unlawful Associations Act.
19	State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar reports that during October SPDC authorities arrested more than 270 people on drugs charges and seized more than 27 kilos of heroin, 62 kilos of opium, and 640,000 amphetamine tablets.
20	USDA begins 2010 elections campaign in Kaw Palaing, Kaw Soi, Kaw Sak, Tarana, and Dhamasa villages in Kyaikmaraw Township, Mon State, and in Kawkareik Township in Karen State.
23	Weekly Eleven journal reports that Burma attracted US\$62 million in foreign investment in the first eight months of 2009.
23	Taiwan's Fisheries Agency Deputy Director-General Tsai Jih-yao says that SPDC authorities detained four Taiwanese fishing vessels and their crew members for possibly entering Burma's waters without permission.
23	Singapore FM George Yeo says that the new US approach towards Burma has made ASEAN "feel justified" about its policy of engagement with the SPDC.
24	Thai authorities arrest about 62 Burmese migrants who work at the Chiang Mai Night Bazaar as part of a security sweep prior to PM Abhisit Vejjajiva's planned visit to Chiang Mai.
25	NLD spokesman Nyan Win says that the SPDC has authorized repair of the balcony of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's lakeside house.
26	Singapore's Swiber Holdings announces that it has been awarded a US\$77 million contract to lay 150 km of offshore pipeline linked to the Yadana field to carry gas to Rangoon.
26	China's Foreign Ministry urges SPDC authorities to protect the safety and legal rights of the detained Chinese and Taiwanese fishermen who were crew members on fishing boats seized by the SPDC Navy.
27	MPs from India, Nepal, Singapore, UK, Burma, and Tibet, call on the SPDC to conduct free and fair elections monitored by international observers, unconditionally release all political prisoners, and cease hostilities against ethnic nationalities.
27	EU special envoy on Burma Piero Fassino says opportunities are emerging for a breakthrough in Burma's political stalemate.
27	Thai Navy personnel and SPDC Army soldiers in waters near Kawthoung Township, Tenasserim Division, exchange gunfire which results in five SPDC Army casualties.
27	SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe says the junta will hold a "free and fair election" in 2010.
27	No reshuffles reported during the SPDC five-day quarterly meeting in Naypyidaw.

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