

Getting hungrier

- It 2007, it was reported that 90% were living on less than \$1 per day.⁹
- Shortly before the fuel price hikes of August 2007, average household incomes in Burma were around US\$1.10, but the average cost of feeding a household was \$1.15.¹⁰
- Before cyclone Nargis, the population in the Irrawaddy delta was already suffering from hunger with statistics that showed an estimated 30% chronic and 9% acute malnutrition.¹¹
- Villagers in Arakan and Chin States recently fled to Bangladesh and India because of food shortages.

Disastrous health

- The regime allocates 40% of its annual budget to military spending but less than 3% to health and education a situation that has caused the collapse of human services.
- Former UN Humanitarian Coordinator to Burma Charles Petrie described the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Burma as the result of the junta's ill-informed and outdated socio-economic policies, lack of public expenditure, and uncompromising attitude towards the NLD, pro-democracy, and ethnic groups.¹²
- In conflict areas of Eastern Burma, war, poverty and the collapse of infrastructure has led to a situation where basic health indicators mirror those of the worlds worst disaster zones of Afghanistan and Sudan.¹³

Killing the children

- Burma has an estimated 70,000 child soldiers, the highest number in the world.¹⁴
- Burma has the second worst child mortality rate in Asia, after Afghanistan. Between 100,000 to 150,000 children under-five years of age die every year and most of the deaths are from preventable diseases.¹⁵
- In Eastern Burma, 20% of children die before their fifth birthday. Nearly half of the deaths are from malaria.¹⁶

Political prisoners

- In June 2008, Burma had 1,900 political prisoners.¹⁷ This is a 65.2% increase from July 2007, when there were 1,150 political prisoners in Burma.¹⁸
- Since June 2007, 60 people have died in custody - including 16 political prisoners.¹⁹
- Since 1988, 137 political prisoners have died in custody.

Forced Labor

- Despite having ratified the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 29 on forced labor, the regime engages in systematic forced labor abuses. The forced labor situation in Burma has not improved since the ILO first addressed the issue in November 2000.²⁰

⁸ Inner City Press (23 Jul 08) In Myanmar, UN loses 25% of aid in currency exchange, up from 15% pre-cyclone; Irrawaddy (08 Jul 08) Junta profits from growing gap in value of cash and FECs

⁹ BP (20 Aug 07) Soaring petrol costs deepen woes by Larry Jagan

¹⁰ Save the Children (06 Jul 07) Running on Empty: poverty and child malnutrition

¹¹ DMHA (24 May 08) Cyclone Nargis Update

¹² Irrawaddy (29 Jun 07) UN coordinator's report lists causes of Burma's social problems

¹³ Back Pack Health Worker Team (Sep 06) Chronic Emergency – Health and Human Rights in Eastern Burma

¹⁴ HRW (Oct 02) My Gun Was As Tall As Me": Child Soldiers in Burma

¹⁵ UNICEF (Jan 08) The State of the World's Children

¹⁶ Global Health Access Program (2006) Burma – Malaria control

¹⁷ HRC, 8th session, Situation of human rights in Myanmar, 12 June 2008, UN Doc A/HRC/8/L.12, Para 27

¹⁸ HRC, 6th session, Situation of human rights in Myanmar, 7 December 2007, UN Doc A/HRC/6/14, Para 25

¹⁹ ALTSEAN-Burma's Burma Bulletins, July 2007 – June 2008

²⁰ International Labor Conference Provisional Record 97th Session (13 Jun 08) Special sitting to examine developments concerning the question of the observance by the Government of Myanmar of the Forced Labor Convention, 1930 (No. 29)

- The regime forces civilians, including women, children and the elderly, to serve as military porters, act as human mine detectors, and work on infrastructure projects involving the construction of roads, dams, railroads, and military barracks with little or no pay.
- Reporting forced labor practices has resulted in the persecution, arrest, and the detention of the complainant.

Drugs

- Burma continues to be the main opium producer in Southeast Asia and the second largest opium producer in the world.
- In 2007, opium poppy cultivation in Burma increased by 29%.²¹
- Burma is also the top producer of amphetamines in Southeast Asia. In 2004, Burma produced approximately 700 million amphetamine tablets - about 7.5% of total global manufacture.

The world's longest running war

- The ongoing military attacks in Eastern Burma are part of the world's longest-running war.
- Over the last year, the SPDC Army deployed 85 new battalions in Karen State.²² There are 273 SPDC Army battalions (more than 30% of the Army's battalions nationwide) in Eastern Burma.²³
- The current offensive displaced 76,000 people in 2007,²⁴ causing 25,000 people to face starvation.²⁵
- Burma has one of the world's 10 worst displacement situations.

Refugees

- Burma is the world's third largest source of refugees after Afghanistan and Iraq.
- Between 1995 and 2005, the flow of refugees has increased up to 800% in Burma's neighboring countries as a result of the military regime's widespread and systematic human rights abuses, military offensives, religious and ethnic persecution.
- In the last year, the number of Burmese refugees in Thailand alone increased a further 3% to 138,970.²⁶

²¹ Irrawaddy (27 Jun 08) Burma and Afghanistan increase opium production: UNODC

²² Narinjara News (19 Jun 07) Two Western Battalions March East to Battle Karen; Irrawaddy (11 Dec 07) Military offensive targeting villagers' food supplies

²³ TBBC (Oct 07) Internal Displacement in Eastern Burma – 2007 Survey

²⁴ TBBC (Oct 07) Internal Displacement in Eastern Burma: 2007 Survey

²⁵ Asian Tribune (26 Jun 07) 25,000 face starvation – appeal made for regional and international action of human rights abuses perpetrated in Burma

²⁶ TBBC (Jul 08) Burmese border refugee sites with population figures: June 2008