

ARAKAN STATE

Rohingya still persecuted

Regime authorities in Arakan State continued to commit serious human rights violations against Muslim Rohingya, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, torture, the rape of women, and restrictions on religious freedom.¹

In mid-February, it was reported that 811 Rohingya were still detained for their alleged involvement in the unrest in Arakan State.² On 16 February, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana expressed concern over allegations of torture and custodial deaths of Rohingya in Buthidaung prison.³

The regime also targeted high-profile Rohingya activists. On 21 November, a court in Akyab, Arakan State, sentenced former National Democratic Party for Human Rights MP elected in the 1990 elections Tun Aung aka Nurul Haque to 12 years in prison for his alleged involvement in the unrest.⁴ On 12 February, regime authorities in Akyab briefly detained prominent Rohingya activist Aung Win in order to prevent him from meeting UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana.⁵

Rights denied, restrictions increased

In November, regime authorities began a registration process for the Rohingya population, apparently to identify those deemed to be illegally residing in Arakan State.⁶ In many cases, Rohingya refused to cooperate because authorities forced them to register as 'Bengali' and not as 'Rohingya'.⁷ Rohingya feared that after being registered as 'Bengali' authorities would automatically consider them illegal and deport them.⁸

In December, regime authorities also began resettling hundreds of Buddhist Rakhine living in Southern Bangladesh to new 'model villages' in Maungdaw Township, Northern

Arakan State.⁹ Regime authorities provided homes, land, and security for the settlers.¹⁰

On 11 February, regime authorities in Arakan State issued orders to stop all Muslims, including those with ID cards, from traveling outside of their townships.¹¹

On 27 February, President Thein Sein insisted that his administration had "no plan" to amend the 1982 Citizenship Law and introduced additional restrictions instead.¹²

Support for the rights of Rohingya failed to gain traction in Parliament. On 6 November, the National Assembly shelved a proposal to amend the 1982 Citizenship Law introduced by USDP MP Tin Mya, following objections from several MPs.¹³ On 20 February, Immigration and Population Deputy Minister Kyaw Kyaw Win used question time in the People's Assembly to reiterate the regime's position that Rohingya were not an ethnic group of Burma, saying 'Rohingya' was a "newly-coined word".¹⁴

Fact-finding commission: Two Muslim members removed, report delayed

The commission appointed by President Thein Sein on 13 August to investigate sectarian violence in Arakan State delayed the release of its report - initially due by 16 November - until 31 March.¹⁵ On 1 November, the regime made the commission - which does not include any Rohingya - even less representative of the Muslim community. The regime removed Muslim leaders Nyunt Maung Shein and Tin Maung Than from the commission due to public criticism of local authorities over the poor handling of the unrest in Arakan State.¹⁶

Anti-Muslim violence spreads

In February, widespread anti-Muslim sentiment led to violence in Rangoon. On 17 February, a mob of hundreds of Buddhists viciously attacked an Islamic religious school in Rangoon's Thaketa Township.¹⁷

ETHNIC AFFAIRS

Regime escalates military offensives against the Kachin Independence Army

March 2013 marked 22 months since conflict broke out between the Tatmadaw and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in Kachin and Northern Shan States. In December, the Tatmadaw dramatically escalated its offensive against the KIA and used fighter jets, helicopters, artillery, mortars, and cluster bombs during military operations.¹⁸ It was reported that between 24 December and 7 January, the Tatmadaw carried out 119 air strikes on KIA positions in and around Laiza in Momauk Township, Kachin State.¹⁹

In January, the Tatmadaw launched a final push for the KIA headquarters in Laiza. Fighting occurred almost daily and was reported in four townships - Momauk, Waingmaw, Chipwi, and Hpakant.²⁰ Despite President Thein Sein's 18 January ceasefire order to troops, Tatmadaw attacks have continued in the Lajayang area of Momauk Township.²¹ The latest round of talks between the regime and the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) on 4 February, also failed to stem ongoing Tatmadaw attacks.²² On 5 March, the regime resumed air strikes on KIA positions near Pangwa in Chipwi Township.²³

The Tatmadaw's ongoing offensive claimed further civilian lives. In January, Tatmadaw artillery fire killed five civilians, including an eight-year-old boy.²⁴ The regime has staunchly defended the military's actions by repeatedly making the disingenuous claim that the Tatmadaw's attacks were conducted in "self-defense."²⁵

DISPLACEMENT & AID

Rohingya boat people exodus intensifies

Following the latest wave of unrest in Arakan State and the start of the October 'sailing season',³⁴ the exodus of Rohingya boat people intensified. Boat people from Burma and Bangladesh attempted to reach

Attacks, abuses, and militarization continue in Eastern Burma

Despite ongoing ceasefire talks, fighting persisted in Shan and Karen States. From October to February, clashes between the Tatmadaw and the Shan State Army-South (SSA-S), the Shan State Army-North (SSA-N), and the Ta-ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) occurred in at least eight townships across Shan State.²⁶ Tatmadaw-controlled Border Guard Force (BGF) soldiers also attacked Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) forces in Karen State.²⁷

Militarization also continued in Karen and Shan States. In February, KNLA officers said that the Tatmadaw was taking up new strategic positions in Karen National Union (KNU)-controlled areas of Karen State.²⁸ In the same month, both the SSA-S and SSA-N criticized the regime for failing to withdraw Tatmadaw troops from key areas of Shan State and reinforcing existing positions.²⁹ The Tatmadaw's sustained militarization of ethnic nationality areas ensured that local communities remain vulnerable to human rights abuses. From October to February, Tatmadaw soldiers killed, arbitrarily detained, and attacked civilians in Shan, Kachin, and Karen States.³⁰

Ethnics excluded from executive

Representatives from ethnic nationalities remained excluded from the executive. In February, President Thein Sein reshuffled his cabinet, appointing three new ministers and six deputy ministers.³¹ However, no ethnic representatives were among those appointed.³² In addition, on 4 March, the National Assembly rejected a proposal introduced by USDP MP Kyaw Din aka Htay Yei to establish a Ministry of Ethnic Affairs.³³

safe havens in Southern Thailand and Malaysia. Women and children were increasingly among those setting out to sea.³⁵ Large numbers of Rohingya died at sea as boats sank or those aboard died of starvation and dehydration during the perilous journeys that could last up to

several weeks. Since October, an estimated 439 Rohingya have perished at sea.³⁶

Thailand either detained Rohingya arriving on its shores or turned them back out to sea. On 7 February, a Thai official said that 5,899 Rohingya boat people had entered Thailand since October.³⁷ On 28 January, Thailand's National Security Council (NSC) Sec Gen Lt Gen Paradorn Pattanabutr warned that Thailand would strictly enforce a policy to turn away boat people who attempted to land on its shores.³⁸ In the six days after the announcement, Thai authorities turned away an estimated 485 Rohingya boat people.³⁹ In January, Thai authorities also conducted several raids in its southern provinces which resulted in the detention of 900 Rohingya who were suspected of being trafficked.⁴⁰

Large numbers of Rohingya continued to seek refuge in **Malaysia**. On 21 February, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said that an estimated 1,800 boat people had arrived in Malaysia since the beginning of the year.⁴¹ On 4 January, Malaysian FM Anifah Aman said that Malaysia could not become a "destination of choice" for Rohingya refugees.⁴²

Bangladesh continued to push-back Rohingya fleeing persecution and sectarian violence in Arakan State. On 12 December, Border Guards of Bangladesh (BGB) said that Bangladesh had pushed back 4,751 Rohingya since June.⁴³ In January and February, BGB personnel pushed back at least 238 Rohingya.⁴⁴

Singapore denied Rohingya boat people entry, whereas **Indonesia** and **Sri Lanka** both sheltered Rohingya who ended up within their territories. On 9 December, Singapore denied entry to 40 surviving Rohingya refugees who had been rescued by a Vietnamese-registered cargo ship after they spent over 30 hours in the water.⁴⁵ In February, Indonesian fishermen and authorities rescued 238 Rohingya boat people they found adrift off of Aceh Province.⁴⁶ On 3 and 16 February, the Sri Lankan Navy rescued 170 boat people - mostly Rohingya - from two sinking boats off of Sri Lanka's Eastern coast.⁴⁷

Rohingya IDPs endure terrible conditions in Arakan State

As of 31 January, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that over 115,000 people remained displaced in Arakan State.⁴⁸ The vast majority of IDPs were Rohingya. The regime's policy of segregation has forced Rohingya IDPs to live in closed camps in conditions that various sources described as markedly worse than those for Rakhine.⁴⁹ The UN and other humanitarian agencies have consistently warned of terrible conditions in IDP camps. On 7 December, UN Under-Sec-Gen for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos said that conditions for Rohingya living in an IDP camp in Myebon, Arakan State, ranked "among the worst" she had seen, with overcrowding, "appalling" sanitation, and limited access to water.⁵⁰ In February, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana said that Rohingya IDPs lacked adequate healthcare and that the Myebon IDP camp "felt more like a prison than a camp."⁵¹ Many children in camps suffered from severe malnutrition and reports revealed that some starved to death.⁵²

Regime obstructs aid efforts in Arakan State

The regime continued to impede humanitarian efforts in Arakan State. In December, regime authorities prevented the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from providing an IDP camp in Pauktaw with new tents.⁵³ In the same month, it was reported that Tatmadaw soldiers failed to intervene as Rakhine Buddhists in Myebon blocked aid agencies from delivering supplies to Rohingya IDPs.⁵⁴ In addition, as of 11 March, four INGO staff remained detained in Buthidaung prison on charges described by UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana as "unfounded."⁵⁵

Aid agencies faced ongoing hostility from Rakhine communities in Arakan State. In February, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) urged regime authorities to "do more" to halt threats and intimidation directed at its staff

from some members of the Rakhine community.⁵⁶

Minimal aid for 100,000 Kachin IDPs

Since June 2011, the ongoing fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) has displaced over 100,000 civilians.⁵⁷ After obstructing the delivery of aid to IDPs in KIA-controlled areas throughout the ongoing conflict, on 5 February, the regime announced that it

would allow the UN and INGOs to provide humanitarian assistance to all IDP camps across the state.⁵⁸ However, the regime failed to provide a timeframe for the commencement of assistance and continued to hinder the delivery of local aid to IDPs.⁵⁹ In February, only the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was able to deliver humanitarian aid to KIA-controlled areas in the form of surgical and other medical supplies.⁶⁰

HUMAN RIGHTS

Freedom of assembly still restricted

More cases emerged of activists, workers, and human rights defenders charged under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law for their participation in peaceful demonstrations without having obtained prior authorization from authorities. They included: nine activists who participated in the 21 September International Day of Peace rally in Rangoon;⁶¹ seven workers who demonstrated in Rangoon Division's Hmawby Township to demand better working conditions;⁶² a lawyer who demonstrated against the price increase of the certification of documents in courts in Prome, Pegu Division;⁶³ and six activists who set off on a 1,300-km walk to campaign for peace in Kachin State.⁶⁴

In several cases, action taken under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law resulted in prison terms. On 3 January, a court in Pegu, Pegu Division, sentenced four workers from the Moehti Moemi gold mine in Yamethin Township, Mandalay Division, to six months in prison and a 10,000 kyat (US\$11) fine for their peaceful protest against the company operating the mine on 23 November.⁶⁵ On 18 January, the regime sentenced four activists to one month in prison for participating in a 13 December rally against the regime's 29 November crackdown on the Monywa copper mine protest. The four were released as they had already spent over 33 days in jail after their arrest.⁶⁶

Peaceful protesters targeted

In numerous cases, regime authorities responded to peaceful demonstrations with arrests and excessive use of force. On 23 November, police in Myohla Village, Yedashe Township, Pegu Division, attacked, beat, and arrested four workers from the Moehti Moemi gold mine as they were marching to Naypyidaw to protest against the company operating the mine.⁶⁷ On 29 November, police in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division, used tear gas and incendiary devices to disperse a peaceful protest against the Monywa copper mine [See below *Monywa copper mine protests*]. Over 70 villagers and Buddhist monks were injured in the attack.⁶⁸ On 24 February, police in Hnityarkhwe Village, Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay Division, beat residents with batons and detained a local Buddhist monk who led a protest against the disruption of the power supply.⁶⁹ On 26 February, Police in Maubin Township, Irrawaddy Division, shot and wounded at least 17 farmers who were among hundreds of villagers protesting to get back about 10,000 acres of land that the authorities had confiscated without compensation.⁷⁰

Censorship Board reconstituted

Severe restrictions continued to characterize Burma's media environment. On 30 January, Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) ranked Burma 151 out of the 179 countries surveyed in its "Press Freedom Index 2013."⁷¹

In January, the regime dissolved its Censorship Board - the Press Scrutiny and Registration Division.⁷² However, the regime replaced it with a very similar body called the Central Supervisory Committee for Registration and Distribution of Printers and Publishers.⁷³ The newly-created committee is responsible for monitoring publications and issuing, suspending, and revoking publishing licenses.⁷⁴ The 12-member committee is headed by Information Minister Aung Kyi, and includes officials from the Information, Defense, and Home Affairs ministries as well as members of police and military intelligence.⁷⁵

On 28 December, the regime's Information Ministry announced that it would allow the publication of private daily newspapers starting on 1 April.⁷⁶ However, on 2 March, the state-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar said that the regime had approved only eight out of 17 applications for daily licenses.⁷⁷

New media law slammed

On 7 March, the regime introduced the much-anticipated new media law in Parliament.⁷⁸ The regime drafted the law, which would replace the 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration Act, without consulting any media organizations, including the Myanmar Press Council and the Myanmar Journalists Association.⁷⁹ Burmese media organizations vigorously rejected the legislation because they said it severely limited press freedom.⁸⁰ The legislation contained numerous prohibitions, including restrictions on the publication of reports that "jeopardize community tranquility and prevalence of law and order" and "break the provisions" of the Constitution.⁸¹ It also laid out strict penalties of up to six months in jail for those operating without valid accreditation.⁸²

Land confiscation protests intensify

Protests against the confiscation of land without compensation by regime authorities intensified across Burma. Between November and February, farmers and villagers held numerous protests against land grabbing and evictions to make way for the development of infrastructure projects,

including hotel zones, dams, and industrial zones in Rangoon, Irrawaddy, and Pegu Divisions, in Naypyidaw, and in Arakan and Shan States.⁸³ In addition, villagers continued to protest against the expansion of the Monywa copper mine in the Letpadaung mountain range in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division [See box *Monywa copper mine protests*].

Monywa copper mine protest

Since early September, activists, Buddhist monks, and residents of 26 villagers in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division, have protested and campaigned against the expansion of the Monywa copper mine in the Letpadaung mountain range. They demanded that the mine operators - China-owned Wan Bao company and the Tatmadaw-backed conglomerate Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings (UMEH) - stop the project, return the over 7,800 acres of confiscated land, and address the mine's negative environmental impact.

The regime reacted to the protests with arrests and use of excessive force. On 10 September, regime authorities detained 12 female activists. Police assaulted and beat some of them while they were in custody. On 29 November, police in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division, used tear gas and incendiary devices to disperse peaceful protesters near the Monywa copper mine site, injuring dozens of villagers and Buddhist monks.

The 29 November crackdown triggered another wave of demonstrations. Activists and Buddhist monks in Sagaing, Rangoon, Mandalay, Magwe, and Irrawaddy Divisions and in Shan State led peaceful demonstrations to demand the regime take action against those responsible for the crackdown. The regime responded by detaining six activists and filing criminal charges under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law against 13 protesters.

On 1 December, President Thein Sein appointed a 30-member commission headed by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to investigate the 29 November crackdown and evaluate whether the Monywa copper mine's operations should continue. The deadline for the commission to submit its findings to President Thein Sein, initially set for 31 December was later postponed to 31 January.

On 14 February, the Upper Burma Lawyers Network and the US-based Justice Trust released a report on their independent investigation of the Monywa copper mine and the regime's 29 November crackdown. The report found that regime officials used fraud and coerced villagers to sign contracts to hand over their land for the mine's expansion. With regard to the crackdown, the report found that regime authorities had used "excessive force" on protesters, including the use of white phosphorus grenades that injured over 100 monks and villagers.

On 11 March, the regime-appointed commission finally released its report, which confirmed that authorities used white phosphorus grenades in the crackdown. The report also recommended that the mine's operations continue.

On 2 March, the National Parliament's commission tasked with investigating land

confiscation complaints in Burma said that from late July to late January it had received 565 complaints that alleged that the military had forcibly confiscated 247,077 acres of land.⁸⁴ The commission said most complaints originated from Irrawaddy Division.⁸⁵

Political prisoners: Hundreds still detained

The regime's strategically-timed release of political prisoners continued. The latest release coincided with US President Barack Obama's 19 November visit to Burma. On that day, the regime released 55 political prisoners in a presidential amnesty.⁸⁶ However, as of 8 January, 222 dissidents remained behind bars.⁸⁷ The figure did not include the dozens of Kachin civilians arbitrarily detained under the Unlawful Association Act for their suspected ties to the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) as well as the hundreds of Rohingya detained in connection with sectarian violence in Arakan State.⁸⁸

On 7 February, the regime announced the formation of a committee tasked with

reviewing the cases of the remaining political prisoners.⁸⁹ The committee is chaired by President's Office Minister Soe Thein and includes regime officials, members of political parties, and representatives from civil society groups, such as the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) and the 88 Generation Students.⁹⁰

Forcible recruitment of child soldiers continues

Despite the release of 24 child soldiers on 15 February,⁹¹ the Tatmadaw continued to forcibly recruit children into its ranks. As of 21 November, the International Labor Organization (ILO) had received 237 complaints of underage recruitment of soldiers in 2012, including 21 who were recruited in that year.⁹² On 23 January, Child Soldiers International confirmed the ongoing recruitment and use of child soldiers by the Tatmadaw and its subordinate Border Guard Forces.⁹³ The report said that corruption, weak oversight, impunity, and a failure to institute safeguards continued to contribute to high rates of forced recruitment of child soldiers.⁹⁴

DEMOCRACY

Parliament approves massive military spending

On 1 March, the USDP-dominated Parliament approved the regime's proposed defense budget for the 2013-14 fiscal year, which allocated 1,067 trillion kyat (US\$1.2 billion), or 20.8% of the total budget, to military expenditure.⁹⁵ By contrast, the regime proposed to allocate only 4.4% and 3.9% to education and healthcare respectively.⁹⁶

Little progress on legislative reform

The Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP)-dominated Parliament made little progress towards repealing and amending Burma's repressive laws. On 15 January, President Thein Sein signed into law a bill approved by the National Parliament which repealed Law 5/96.⁹⁷ This was the only law abrogated by Parliament among the 11 that

UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana identified as not in line with international standards. However, Law 5/96, which outlawed criticism of the National Convention and the 2008 constitution, had already become void as a result of the conclusion of the convention and the adoption of the Charter. On 28 January, Thein Sein issued an executive order that abolished Order 2/88, which banned public gatherings of more than four people.⁹⁸

Constitutional Tribunal: new law adopted, new judges appointed

After forcing the resignation of all nine judges of the Constitutional Tribunal in September, Parliament approved legislation aimed at giving MPs greater influence over the Constitutional Tribunal. On 22 January, despite asserting that it violated the constitution, President Thein Sein signed

into law the Constitutional Tribunal Law Amendment Bill, which had been approved by the National Parliament on 14 January.⁹⁹ According to the amended legislation, Parliament would now have the power to challenge the Constitutional Tribunal's decisions and the Tribunal's Chairman would have to report to the President and the Speakers of both houses of Parliament on its activities.¹⁰⁰ On 25 February, President Thein Sein appointed the Constitutional Tribunal's new judges.¹⁰¹

On 8 February, the National Parliament formed a 17-member committee chaired by National Parliament Deputy Speaker Mya Nyein to investigate the online activities of a blogger known under the pseudonym Dr Seik Phwar.¹⁰² The blogger had criticized the Parliament for amending the Constitutional Tribunal Law, claiming that the new legislation violated the constitution.¹⁰³

ECONOMY

Drugs: Opium poppy cultivation increases - again

On 31 October, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said that in 2012 opium production in Burma increased for the sixth consecutive year.¹⁰⁸ Opium poppy cultivation increased by 17% (from 43,600 to 51,000 hectares) from the previous year.¹⁰⁹ The country remained the world's second largest opium poppy grower, accounting for 25% of global opium poppy cultivation.¹¹⁰ On 5 October, the regime announced that its 15-year drug eradication plan, initiated in 1999, would not be completed by 2014 as scheduled and would be extended for another five years until 2019.¹¹¹

Burma still a high-risk investment

Burma continued to rank poorly on international surveys which measured perceived corruption, risks posed to investors, and transparency in the financial sector. On 5 December, Transparency International (TI) ranked Burma 172nd out of the 176 countries examined on its Corruption Perceptions Index, which meant that the public sector was perceived to be "extremely corrupt."¹¹² TI said that reforms

Irregularities mar local elections

Numerous reports of election irregularities characterized the first nationwide elections of local administrators, which were held in December and January in accordance with the Ward or Village-tract Administration Law enacted in February 2012.¹⁰⁴ In Naypyidaw, Rangoon, Mandalay, and in some rural townships residents complained about irregularities in the election process, including interference by incumbent local regime officials and a lack of transparency.¹⁰⁵ In Arakan State, residents complained about election fraud by incumbent local officials in Kyauktaw, Mrauk U, Pauktaw, Rathidaung, Buthidaung and Maungdaw Townships.¹⁰⁶ In a ward in Maungdaw, regime authorities barred local Rohingya from voting.¹⁰⁷

had not improved Burma's ranking because the regime's anti-corruption measures remained tentative.¹¹³ On 9 January, UK risk-assessment firm Maplecroft ranked Burma at "extreme risk" in its Political Risk Atlas 2013 - fifth-worst out of 197 countries - in terms of dangers posed to investors.¹¹⁴ In February, the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) kept Burma on its blacklist of 13 countries that failed to make sufficient progress in combating money laundering and terrorism financing.¹¹⁵

Extractive industries dominate foreign investment

The regime accelerated its push to attract foreign investment. On 2 November, President Thein Sein signed the Foreign Investment Law [See box *Foreign Investment Law in brief*], which repealed the 1988 Foreign Investment Law.¹¹⁶ On 31 January, the regime issued bylaws that further regulated certain aspects of the new law.¹¹⁷

Burma's extractive industry sector continued to attract the lion's share of foreign investment. On 17 January, the regime's Ministry of Energy invited bids for

exploration licenses for 18 onshore oil and gas blocks.¹¹⁸ In March, it was reported that the regime planned to open bids for exploration licenses for around 20 offshore oil and gas blocks by April.¹¹⁹ In February, the regime's Mining Ministry opened applications for gem mining permits.¹²⁰

In addition, the regime opened up the telecommunications sector to foreign investors. On 15 January, the regime invited foreign companies to submit expressions of interest for two telecommunications licenses.¹²¹ Ninety-one domestic and foreign companies bid for the licenses.¹²²

Foreign Investment Law in brief

- The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) designates the minimum amount of investment capital for foreign businesses.
- Foreign investors can own 100% of businesses or form joint ventures with Burmese partners on mutually-agreed shareholding ratios.
- Foreign investment is conditioned in 11 areas, including investment in agriculture, livestock breeding, and fishing sectors. However, foreign investors can do business in the restricted sectors if they form a joint venture with a Burmese counterpart, with foreign-ownership caps set by the MIC. In addition, the MIC can allow foreign investors into the restricted sectors with the approval of the authorities in cases of national interest.
- Foreign firms are entitled to a tax holiday for the first five years of operation.
- Foreign investors can lease land from the state or from authorized private owners for up to 50 years with the possibility to extend up to a maximum of 70 years.
- Burmese shall be employed in undertakings where no skill is demanded. In areas where special skills are required, at least 25% of the employees shall be Burmese for the initial two years. The percentage increases to 50% for the second two year period and 75% thereafter.
- An enterprise formed under the Foreign Investment Law shall not be nationalized.

Special Economic Zones impact local communities

The regime's push for the development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) continued to have a negative impact on local communities, particularly in the Tavoy SEZ in Tenasserim Division and the Thilawa SEZ in Rangoon Division. At the end of January, Italian-Thai Development (ITD) began

bulldozing the homes of residents in Cha Khan Villages, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division, to make way for the Tavoy deep-sea port project.¹²³ On 21 February, regime authorities ordered residents of Mu Do Village, Yebyu Township, to vacate their homes.¹²⁴ In both cases, villagers said that they did not receive adequate compensation from ITD for the loss of their land or homes.¹²⁵ On 31 January, regime authorities ordered hundreds of households in Thanlyin and Kyauktan Townships, Rangoon Division, to vacate their homes by 14 February to make way for the development of the Thilawa SEZ.¹²⁶

However, attempts by the regime and the Thai government to make headway on the Tavoy SEZ appeared frustrated by a lack of enthusiasm among investors and concerns over the project's viability. On 11 December, it was reported that ITD President Premchai Karnasuta said that the Tavoy development project was seven or eight months behind schedule.¹²⁷ ITD said Thai investors were hesitant to invest because of Burma's political environment and the uncertainty surrounding the project's funding.¹²⁸ On 11 February, Thai Transport Minister Chadchart Sittipunt said that the Tavoy project had stalled due to several factors, including disagreement between Thailand and Japan over several aspects of the project and Japan's lack of commitment to investing in Tavoy.¹²⁹ On 26 February, it was reported that Thailand's Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning (OTP) said that plans to expand the road linking Thailand's Kanchanaburi Province to the Tavoy deep-sea port had been postponed because the predicted transport volume did not justify investment in the expansion.¹³⁰

Japan showed more interest in advancing the Thilawa SEZ than in investing into the struggling Tavoy project. On 21 December, Japan signed a MoU with the regime on the joint development of the Thilawa SEZ.¹³¹

International financial institutions return

In January, a US\$900 million bridge loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) to Burma allowed the regime to clear arrears with the World Bank

and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).¹³² As a result, the two international financial institutions (IFIs) began to reengage with Burma.

On 22 January, the World Bank approved a US\$440 million credit to Burma to support macroeconomic stability, improve public financial management, improve the investment climate, and help Burma meet its foreign exchange needs.¹³³ On 28 January, the ADB announced a US\$512 million loan for social and economic projects in Burma - the first in 30 years.¹³⁴ On 8 February, ADB

President Haruhiko Karuda announced that the bank would provide US\$50 million for education, urban development, infrastructure, and community development programs in Burma.¹³⁵

In addition, international donors granted Burma generous debt relief packages.¹³⁶ On 25 January, the Paris Club (a group of 19 creditor countries) agreed to cancel US\$6 billion of Burma's debt.¹³⁷ The remaining US\$2.2 billion owed to the Club would be restructured and expected to be repaid over a period of 15 years.¹³⁸

¹ For details of cases of human rights violations against Rohingya from October to February, please see Altsean-Burma Human Rights Chronology available at <http://bit.ly/QMuKxS> (2012) and <http://bit.ly/13K8n6z> (2013)

² EMG (17 Feb 13) UN envoy calls for amendment of Myanmar citizenship law

³ UNIC Yangon (16 Feb 13) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar

⁴ Irrawaddy (23 Nov 12) Religious Leader Jailed for Stirring Arakan Strife

⁵ DVB (12 Feb 13) Prominent Rohingya human rights activist arrested in Sittwe

⁶ AFP (09 Nov 12) UN calls on Myanmar to offer citizenship to Rohingya; AP (30 Nov 12) Myanmar launches operation to verify citizenship of Muslims in strife-torn west; RFA (06 Nov 12) Checks on Rohingyas Launched; RFA (20 Nov 12) Resources Stretched in Rakhine; EMG (22 Nov 12) Illegal Bengali migrants probed

⁷ RFA (08 Nov 12) Call To Beef Up Rakhine Security; Irrawaddy (13 Nov 12) Rohingya Refuse to Register as 'Bengali'; RFA (20 Nov 12) Resources Stretched in Rakhine; EMG (22 Nov 12) Illegal Bengali migrants probed

⁸ Irrawaddy (13 Nov 12) Rohingya Refuse to Register as 'Bengali'

⁹ Irrawaddy (01 Feb 13) Buddhists Leaving Bangladesh Welcomed in West Burma; Kaladan News (02 Feb 13) Resettles over 130-Buddhist from Bangladesh

¹⁰ Irrawaddy (01 Feb 13) Buddhists Leaving Bangladesh Welcomed in West Burma; Kaladan News (02 Feb 13) Resettles over 130-Buddhist from Bangladesh

¹¹ DVB (12 Feb 13) Arakan officials instructed to restrict Muslims' travel

¹² DVB (01 Mar 13) Thein Sein: 'With freedom comes responsibility'

¹³ NLM (07 Nov 12) Proposal to revoke Myanmar Citizenship Law -1882 put on record; EMG (07 Nov 12) MPs block amendments to 1982 Citizenship Law

¹⁴ NLM (21 Feb 13) No 'Rohingya' race in Myanmar, says Deputy Minister; EMG (24 Feb 13) No 'Rohingya' in Myanmar ethnic groups, deputy minister says

¹⁵ Mizzima News (06 Nov 12) Rakhine report delayed; two Muslims sacked from commission; EMG (08 Nov 12) Rakhine violence probe team to seek 4 more months

¹⁶ DVB (08 Nov 12) Muslims removed from Arakan probe for criticising gov't

¹⁷ DVB (21 Feb 13) Religious attack in Rangoon wreaks havoc on local community; Myanmar Times (25 Feb 13) Building sealed after violent religious clashes in Yangon

¹⁸ Reuters (20 Jan 13) Myanmar rebels say army ignoring president's ceasefire; Free Burma Rangers (21 Jan 13) FBR Report: Burma Army Attacks Against the Kachin Since Ceasefire Declared; Kachin News Group (26 Jan 13) Burma army uses cluster bombs to take key KIO position near Laiza

¹⁹ SHAN (09 Jan 13) Newsflash

²⁰ Mizzima News (02 Jan 13) Kachins says air strikes are continuing; Karen News (06 Jan 13) FBR confirm Burma military attack Kachin with chemicals; EMG (15 Jan 13) Vital road remains shut in Kachin, food prices surge

²¹ Reuters (18 Jan 13) Myanmar government announces ceasefire with Kachin rebels

²² RFA (04 Feb 13) Kachin Peace Talks Held

²³ Kachin News Group (06 Mar 13) Burma govt and KIO to meet in China next week, as fighting and airstrikes continue

²⁴ Irrawaddy (30 Jan 13) Govt, KIO Agree to Meet, as Conflict Claims More Civilian Victims; AFP (14 Jan 13) Kachin rebels say three dead in Myanmar strike

²⁵ NYT (19 Jan 13) A Cease-Fire With Rebels in Myanmar Doesn't Hold; Irrawaddy (21 Jan 13) Despite Donor Love-in and Ceasefire Pledge, Kachin War Continues; NYT (20 Jan 13) New Clashes Reported Between Army and Rebels in Myanmar; AFP (10 Jan 13) Myanmar denies using chemical weapons on rebels; RFA (24 Jan 13) Kachin Towns Reel From Blackout

²⁶ SHAN (27 Nov 12) Newsflash; SHAN (02 Nov 12) Newsflash; SHAN (21 Dec 12) Newsflash; DVB (08 Jan 13) Shan rebels warn govt over recent clashes; DVB (25 Feb 13) Armed group claims military attacking sites slated for resettlement; SHAN (20 Feb 13) Newsflash; SHAN (04 Oct 12) Newsflash; Irrawaddy (30 Oct 12) Govt Troops Kill Two, Arrest 48 Accused of Belonging to Ceasefire Group; SHAN (01 Mar 13) Burma Army reinforcing troops in recent battle scene with RCSS/SSA

²⁷ KIC (29 Jan 13) Ceasefire, but BGF ambush KNLA – wounding one soldier and one civilian

²⁸ Karen News (01 Mar 13) Ceasefire: Burma Army increases its militarization in KNU controlled areas

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- ²⁹ Irrawaddy (19 Feb 13) After Meeting, Govt, SSA Schedule More Talks in Naypyidaw; SHAN (26 Feb 13) Despite President's new ceasefire directive Burma Army continues offensive on SSA
- ³⁰ Irrawaddy (23 Nov 12) PDP Leaders Detained for Defamation, Incitement; SHAN (19 Nov 12) Newsflash; Myanmar Times (28 Jan 13) Villagers file charges against soldiers; Karen News (23 Jan 13) Burma Army Colonel beats up KNU member
- ³¹ NLM (06 Feb 13) Appointment of Union Minister; NLM (06 Feb 13) Appointment of deputy ministers; NLM (14 Feb 13) Appointment of Union Ministers; NLM (20 Feb 13) Deputy Minister appointed
- ³² Myanmar Times (18 Feb 13) Debate sparked over Myanmar's new telecoms minister
- ³³ KIC (08 Mar 13) Burma parliament votes against forming Ministry of Ethnic Affairs
- ³⁴ The 'sailing season' denotes a period from October/November until March/April in which meteorological conditions are more favorable for journeys by sea.
- ³⁵ UN News Center (22 Feb 13) UN concerned about refugees crossing 'deadliest stretches of water' to flee homes
- ³⁶ AFP (31 Oct 12) 130 missing in Rohingya boat sinking: Bangladesh; Xinhua (07 Nov 12) 50 rescued, about 60 still missing as illegal immigrants' boat sinks off Bangladesh; AFP (08 Nov 12) Search on for 50 missing after Bangladesh sinking; Canberra Times (12 Dec 12) Singapore turns away rescued boat people; Reuters (18 Feb 13) Myanmar migrant survivors tell of throwing dead overboard; AFP (03 Feb 13) Sri Lanka rescues 138 Bangladeshis and Myanmar nationals from a sinking boat
- ³⁷ AFP (07 Feb 13) Nearly 6,000 Rohingya refugees enter Thai waters: army
- ³⁸ AFP (28 Jan 13) Thailand to turn away Myanmar boat people: official
- ³⁹ Bangkok Post (30 Jan 13) 350 Rohingya found in Ranong, Phuket; Bangkok Post (04 Feb 13) Police turn back 145 sea-faring Rohingya
- ⁴⁰ Nation (10 Jan 13) 400 trafficked Rohingya rescued in Songkhla; AP (11 Jan 13) Thai authorities rescue nearly 700 Rohingya boat people from traffickers in south; FT (14 Jan 13) Myanmar violence fuels human trafficking; Star (16 Jan 13) 354 Myanmar illegals netted; Bangkok Post (18 Jan 13) Islamic group proposes shelter
- ⁴¹ UNHCR (21 Feb 13) UNHCR urges action to prevent boatpeople tragedy in Bay of Bengal
- ⁴² AFP (04 Jan 13) 13,000 boat people have fled Myanmar, Bangladesh: UN
- ⁴³ Narinjara News (15 Dec 12) 4,751 Burmese nationals repatriated to Burma during communal violence
- ⁴⁴ Kaladan News (14 Jan 13) More Rohingyas arrested in Bangladesh-Burma border; Kaladan News (17 Jan 13) 85 Rohingyas pushed back to Burma within two days; Kaladan News (17 Feb 13) 57 Rohingya pushed back to Burma
- ⁴⁵ Phuketwan (12 Dec 12) Boatpeople Rescue Ship Still Stranded Off Singapore
- ⁴⁶ Jakarta Post (28 Feb 13) Islands in focus: 121 Rohingya refugees stranded in Aceh; AFP (27 Feb 13) Over 100 Rohingya asylum seekers rescued off Indonesia; Bangkok Post (27 Feb 13) Rohingya claim Thais shot at them; AFP (01 Mar 13) 63 Rohingya rescued off Indonesia
- ⁴⁷ AFP (03 Feb 13) Sri Lanka rescues 138 Bangladeshis and Myanmar nationals from a sinking boat; Reuters (18 Feb 13) Myanmar migrant survivors tell of throwing dead overboard
- ⁴⁸ OCHA (31 Jan 13) Humanitarian Bulletin, Myanmar, Issue: January 2013
- ⁴⁹ BBC (13 Dec 12) Burma's displaced Rohingya suffer as aid blocked; UNICEF (21 Dec 12) Urgent action needed to improve water and sanitation for displaced in Myanmar's Rakhine State despite some progress; CNN (07 Dec 12) Myanmar can keep Rohingya from starving. But will it?; IPS (09 Oct 12) Myanmar's Rohingya Face "Permanent Segregation", Activists Warn
- ⁵⁰ UN OCHA (07 Dec 12) UN humanitarian chief asks donor community in Myanmar for immediate support
- ⁵¹ UNIC Yangon (16 Feb 13) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar
- ⁵² CNN (26 Nov 12) Terrorized, starving and homeless: Myanmar's Rohingya still forgotten; NYT (05 Nov 12) Charity Says Threats Foil Medical Aid In Myanmar; UNICEF (23 Nov 12) UNICEF scales-up response, calls for stronger combat against child malnutrition in Rakhine State
- ⁵³ Guardian (20 Dec 12) Trapped inside Burma's refugee camps, the Rohingya people call for recognition
- ⁵⁴ BBC (13 Dec 12) Burma's displaced Rohingya suffer as aid blocked
- ⁵⁵ UNIC Yangon (16 Feb 13) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar
- ⁵⁶ MSF (07 Feb 13) Myanmar: Humanitarian emergency in Rakhine state
- ⁵⁷ IPS (12 Jan 13) U.S. Urged to Stem Broader Ethnic Violence in Myanmar
- ⁵⁸ Irrawaddy (05 Feb 13) UN Allowed to Help Kachin Civilians in Rebel Areas
- ⁵⁹ Kachin News Group (04 Feb 13) Burma army blocks aid group from entering Hpakant
- ⁶⁰ ICRC (28 Feb 13) Myanmar: Aid reaches victims of violence in Kachin
- ⁶¹ Myanmar Times (10 Oct 12) March organisers to fight charges
- ⁶² DVB (12 Oct 12) More demonstrators charged for protesting without permits
- ⁶³ DVB (25 Oct 12) Solitary protestor hit with charges
- ⁶⁴ Myanmar Times (28 Jan 13) Peace walk continues despite police charges
- ⁶⁵ DVB (03 Jan 13) Four gold mine protestors sentenced to jail; Irrawaddy (04 Jan 13) Gold Mine Protesters Jailed for Offending 'Public Tranquility'
- ⁶⁶ DVB (18 Jan 13) Latpadaung activists sentenced, released in Mandalay
- ⁶⁷ DVB (23 Nov 12) Police arrest four miners during march to Naypyidaw; Myanmar Times (24 Nov 12) Miners arrested on march from Yangon to Nay Pyi Taw
- ⁶⁸ RFA (28 Nov 12) Police Disperse Mine Protesters; AP (29 Nov 12) Crackdown on copper mine protest in Myanmar injures dozens hours before Suu Kyi visit; Irrawaddy (29 Nov 12) Copper Mine Protesters Burned Out in Police Raid; Myanmar Times (10 Dec 12) Commission will find fair solution, says NLD leader; DVB (06 Dec 12) Commission sidelines gov't in crackdown investigation
- ⁶⁹ RFA (25 Feb 13) Burmese Police Clash with Villagers in Electricity Dispute

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- ⁷⁰ RFA (26 Feb 13) Burmese Farmers Shot in Land Clash; RFA (27 Feb 13) Burma Moves to Contain Village Land Turmoil
- ⁷¹ RSF (30 Jan 13) Press Freedom Index 2013
- ⁷² NLM (25 Jan 13) Censorship division dissolved
- ⁷³ EMG (03 Mar 13) Press watch body formed with officials from military intelligence
- ⁷⁴ EMG (03 Mar 13) Press watch body formed with officials from military intelligence
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- ⁷⁶ AP (28 Dec 12) Myanmar to allow daily private newspapers
- ⁷⁷ NLM (02 Mar 13) Eight private daily newspapers get green Light; AFP (02 Mar 13) Proposed Myanmar media law draws criticism
- ⁷⁸ NLM (08 Mar 13) Printing and Publishing Bill not disrupt freedom of expression, publishing
- ⁷⁹ Irrawaddy (04 Mar 13) Govt Sends Controversial Press Law to Parliament
- ⁸⁰ EMG (04 Mar 13) Myanmar media groups say draft legislation marks a return to censorship
- ⁸¹ NLM (08 Mar 13) Draft Printing and Publishing Law and voices of media
- ⁸² AFP (02 Mar 13) Proposed Myanmar media law draws criticism
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- ⁸⁴ Irrawaddy (05 Mar 13) Military Involved in Massive Land Grabs: Parliamentary Report
- ⁸⁵ Irrawaddy (05 Mar 13) Military Involved in Massive Land Grabs: Parliamentary Report
- ⁸⁶ AAPP (19 Nov 12) Released Political Prisoners List on 19 November, 2012
- ⁸⁷ AAPP (08 Jan 13) List of Political Prisoners whose whereabouts are verified
- ⁸⁸ Irrawaddy (07 Feb 13) Govt Body to be Formed to 'Grant Liberty' to Political Prisoners
- ⁸⁹ AFP (07 Feb 13) Myanmar committee to 'grant liberty' to dissidents; Xinhua (07 Feb 13) Myanmar to grant amnesty to remaining political prisoners; NLM (07 Feb 13) Committee to be formed to grant liberty to remaining political prisoners
- ⁹⁰ AFP (07 Feb 13) Myanmar committee to 'grant liberty' to dissidents; Xinhua (07 Feb 13) Myanmar to grant amnesty to remaining political prisoners; NLM (07 Feb 13) Committee to be formed to grant liberty to remaining political prisoners; EMG (24 Feb 13) Number of remaining political prisoners to be reviewed
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- ⁹² Child Soldiers International (23 Jan 13) Chance for change: Ending the recruitment of child soldiers in Myanmar
- ⁹³ Child Soldiers International (23 Jan 13) Chance for change: Ending the recruitment of child soldiers in Myanmar; RFA (23 Jan 13) Burma Still Using Child Soldiers
- ⁹⁴ RFA (23 Jan 13) Burma Still Using Child Soldiers; AP (23 Jan 13) Despite reforms, Myanmar still recruits child soldiers, says rights group
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- ¹⁰⁷ Kaladan News (20 Dec 12) Election without Rohingya for village admin post in Maungdaw
- ¹⁰⁸ UNODC (31 Oct 12) South-East Asia Opium survey 2012 - Lao PDR, Myanmar
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- ¹¹⁷ Myanmar Times (04 Feb 13) Ministry releases new investment rules
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- ¹²³ KIC (19 Feb 13) Cha Khan villagers, homes bulldozed to make way for deep sea port
- ¹²⁴ KIC (25 Feb 13) Forced relocation, company compensation falls short of replacing village lands
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- ¹²⁷ Bangkok Post (11 Dec 12) Dawei deal signing delayed
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- ¹³⁵ Mizzima News (08 Feb 13) ADB president announces \$50m assistance for Myanmar
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