

## SAFFRON REVOLUTION: RECAP

- The SPDC increases fuel prices by up to 500% overnight, affecting the cost of essential commodities and transport. The price of rice doubles and many small and medium enterprises are crippled.
- The sharp increase sparks nationwide protests that see extraordinary participation by Burmese people from all walks of life. The display of courage by the Burmese people during the Saffron Revolution is in large part due to the intolerable burden of the SPDC's long-term economic mismanagement.
- Between 18 and 24 September, tens of thousands of Buddhist monks led massive anti-junta demonstrations. In the largest show of peaceful protests against the military regime since 1988, hundreds of thousands of Burmese civilians join the rallies. Protests are recorded in nearly all Burma's States and Divisions.
- On 22 September, hundreds of monks in Rangoon walk past a roadblock and greet Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The rally serves as a strong assertion of unity between the monks and the pro-democracy movement.
- The SPDC reacts to the protests by attacking and arresting 3,000 to 4,000 peaceful demonstrators in September and October. SPDC authorities detain several thousand monks during raids on monasteries. The regime kills at least 31 people during the crackdown. At least 16 individuals die in custody. Seven hundred protesters remain detained as of 25 January.
- Disagreement among the SPDC Army commanders over the violent handling of the demonstrations triggers a wave of reshuffles. Discontent also simmers among the SPDC Army's rank and file and civil servants. Over 100 policemen desert following the crackdown.
- Despite the ongoing SPDC repression, monks continue to boycott the junta. Monks refuse alms, refuse to grant blessings, and deny SPDC officials entry to monasteries. Pro-democracy activists continue to defy the regime and carry out peaceful demonstrations and political activities.

### Economic mismanagement fuels protests

On 15 August, the SPDC unexpectedly increased the price of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) by 500%, doubled diesel prices, and increased the price of petrol by two-thirds.<sup>1</sup> In response, buses and taxis in Rangoon and Mandalay immediately doubled their fares. About 60% of city buses did not operate on 15 August. Most were back in service on 16 and 17, with fares doubled from 50 kyat to 100 kyat.<sup>2</sup> Caught by surprise, some commuters didn't have the money to get on the bus. Many car owners left gas stations with half-empty tanks.<sup>3</sup> High transport and fuel costs quickly impacted the rest of the economy. Within days, the price of essential commodities such as rice had been affected. Some businesses faced with rising costs were forced to close.<sup>4</sup>

The display of courage by the Burmese people during the Saffron Revolution was in large part due to the intolerable burden of the SPDC's long-term economic mismanagement.

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<sup>1</sup> AP (15 Aug 07) Myanmar's Junta Imposes a 100 Percent Fuel Hike

<sup>2</sup> Irrawaddy (16 Aug 07) Business, transport in Burma hit hard by gas hike, Mizzima News (18 Aug 07) Essential commodity price skyrocket in Burma

<sup>3</sup> Bangkok Post (10 Aug 07) Soaring petrol costs deepen woes

<sup>4</sup> Irrawaddy (15 Aug 07) Natural Gas Price Triples in Burma

- Most civilians have already been reduced to a hand-to-mouth existence. In 2005 the UN suggested that the percentage of Burmese living below the poverty line could be more than 30%, and higher in Chin State (around 70%) and Eastern Shan State (approximately 52%). The UN estimated that if food prices increased by 15 to 20%, more than half the population would live under the poverty line.<sup>5</sup> This is assumed to have happened following the August 2007 fuel price hikes.
- Rampant inflation is a part of everyday life in the country as a result of the SPDC's economic policies. Inflation was in double digits in 2005 and 2006. It first soared in October 2005 after a SPDC decision to increase fuel prices by more than 900%. In April 2006, basic commodity prices rocketed even higher when the SPDC gave civil servants a 10-fold salary increase to counter rampant dissatisfaction with the capital move to Naypyidaw. The situation worsened with the fuel price hike in August 2007.
- Burma is a country rich in natural resources, which the military leadership has exploited for their own profit. Ordinary people suffer chronic energy shortages, while oil, gas and hydropower are sold off to China and Thailand. The national electricity grid, where it exists, is inefficient, unreliable, and expensive. Residents in Rangoon receive one to three hours supply of electricity per day. Most shops, businesses, and factories in Rangoon and other urban centers rely on their own generators using diesel or CNG to guarantee consistent electricity supply. Gas is sold under a rationing system.
- Massive spending on the military, 40% of the national budget, is diverting much needed funds away from deteriorating infrastructure and essential services. Public outrage over worsening conditions while SPDC leaders live in luxury was heightened when people found out about the US\$50 million gifts for junta leader Senior General Than Shwe's daughter's July 2006 wedding.
- The UNDP ranks Burma 129 of 177 nations for human development, just above Sub-Saharan Africa. 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 world's worst disaster zones of Niger, Sierra Leone, Angola, and Congo.<sup>6</sup>

The August-September protests are not a new expression of dissent. Rising food prices, the arbitrary imposition of taxes, and high costs of utilities that are never reliably delivered, have triggered small but persistent protests throughout 2007:

**22 February:** About 25 people took part in a 30-minute demonstration in downtown Rangoon, calling for improved health care and education, better pension benefits, and lower prices for food staples.<sup>7</sup>

**8 March:** SPDC Special Branch police arrested 71-year-old veteran politician U Win Naing and demonstrator Htin Kyaw soon after a press conference held to brief journalists about the deteriorating situation in Burma.<sup>8</sup>

**4 April:** Four hundred residents of Chauk Township, Magwe Division, demonstrated in front of the Township Development Committee office to protest the SPDC authorities' decision to double the municipal sales tax.

**5 April:** Shop owners in Chauk Township, Magwe Division, submitted a petition of 500 signatures against the tax increase to the municipal office.<sup>9</sup>

**4 April:** SPDC authorities arrested Tin Ko, a 33-year-old HIV patient from Kanma Township, Magwe Division, for staging a brief protest in Rangoon calling for easier access to antiretroviral treatment for people living outside the former capital.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> International Crisis Group (08 Dec 06) Myanmar: New Threats to Humanitarian Aid

<sup>6</sup> Back Pack Health Worker Team (Sep 06) Chronic Emergency – Health and Human Rights in Eastern Burma

<sup>7</sup> AP (23 Feb 07) Myanmar Cracks down on protestors

<sup>8</sup> Mizzima News (08 Mar 07) Special Branch picks up U Win Naing and Htin Kyaw

<sup>9</sup> Irrawaddy (05 Apr 07) Burma Township Residents Protest New Tax Rate

<sup>10</sup> Irrawaddy (04 Apr 07) Solo Protest Staged by HIV Patient in Rangoon; DVB (05 Apr 07) Rangoon man protests lack of HIV treatment in Burma; DVB (11 Apr 07) Supporters call for the release of HIV protestor

**22 April:** SPDC police and USDA members assaulted and arrested seven protesters demonstrating at Rangoon's Thingangyun Sanpyat market. They were calling for lower commodity prices, better healthcare, and improved utility services.<sup>11</sup>

**19 June:** SPDC authorities in Taunggoat Township, Arakan State, arrested 25-year-old Maung Kyaw Naing for staging a protest on high inflation.<sup>12</sup>

**24 June:** SPDC authorities and fire brigade members in Rangoon arrested Ko Maung Oo for protesting against the junta's economic policies and calling for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release.<sup>13</sup>

## Saffron Revolution

The nationwide protests sparked by the sharp fuel price hike saw extraordinary participation by the Burmese people from all walks of life. Political activists, students, monks, and ordinary citizens appeared willing to take great risks to demand change from the military regime.

On 5 September, SPDC security forces fired warning shots to break up a demonstration of several hundred monks in Pakokku, Magwe Division. They severely beat some monks and arrested three.<sup>14</sup> On 9 September, the All Burma Monks Alliance<sup>15</sup> threatened to excommunicate members of the military and their families if the regime failed to roll back the fuel price hikes and apologize for the violent repression of the Pakokku protest.<sup>16</sup> The All Burma Monks Alliance also demanded that the SPDC released all detained demonstrators and political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and immediately entered into dialogue with democratic forces.<sup>17</sup>

The junta's failure to meet the demands of the All Burma Monks Alliance by the deadline of 17 September triggered a new wave of nationwide protests.<sup>18</sup> On 18 September, which also marked the 19<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the junta's military coup, monks began marching through the streets of Burma's main cities to protest against the military regime.<sup>19</sup> The demonstrations quickly spread to other towns across Burma.

The monks' involvement added momentum and brought greater legitimacy and support to the demonstrations. Initially wary of taking part in the demonstrations, bystanders cheered and showed solidarity with the monks. However, as the protests grew in size and spread throughout nearly all Burma's States and Divisions, tens of thousands of ordinary Burmese joined the monks in the anti-junta protests.

Between 18 and 28 September, thousands of monks led massive anti-junta nationwide demonstrations. In the largest show of peaceful protests against the military regime since 1988, Burmese civilians from all walks of life joined the rallies. In a dramatic event, on 22 September a crowd of 2,000 monks and civilians walked past a roadblock and rallied outside

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<sup>11</sup> Irrawaddy (23 Apr 07) Burma's junta vows to crack down on human rights activists; DVB (23 Apr 07) Rangoon protestors bashed, detained by police; ABC (22 Apr 07) Burma arrests seven over rare protest; Mizzima News (23 Apr 07) Junta detains seven protesters in Rangoon

<sup>12</sup> Mizzima News (20 Jun 07) Mother and sister of solo protester also arrested

<sup>13</sup> DVB (27 Jun 07) Solo demonstrators take to Rangoon streets

<sup>14</sup> AP (06 Sep 07) Myanmar monks briefly hold hostages; AP (06 Sep 07) Protesting Myanmar monks free hostages; AFP (06 Sep 07) Myanmar monks end standoff, release local officials; Reuters (06 Sep 07) Myanmar monks seize govt officials, burn cars; DVB (06 Sep 07) Pakokku monks release detained officials

<sup>15</sup> The All Burma Monks Alliance comprises various Buddhist monastic associations from across the country, including the All Burma Young Monks Union, the Federation of All Burma Monks Union, the Young Monks Union (Rangoon), the Monk Duta, and all monks unions in different States and Divisions.

<sup>16</sup> Burma Update 168 (09 Sep 07) Announcement of All Burma Monks Alliance

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<sup>19</sup> Irrawaddy (16 Sep 07) Monks Ready to Demonstrate Tuesday; Regime Ready to Crackdown

the lakeside house where Daw Aung San Suu Kyi remains detained.<sup>20</sup> The rally served as a strong assertion of unity between the monks and the pro-democracy movement.

Between 19 August and 31 October, hundreds of thousands of monks, nuns, and citizens participated in over 150 protests spread across nearly every State and Division in Burma.

### **The role of the monks**

Monks have been at the forefront of past protests against British colonialism and the military dictatorship. The Buddhist clergy is the largest organized civilian institution in Burma. Numbering over 300,000, it matches the army in terms of size.<sup>21</sup> Almost all Buddhist male adults have served as monks or novices at least once in their lives. Buddhist monks enjoy high status in Burmese society. In addition to being responsible for the spiritual wellbeing of the people, monks are also responsible for their education and welfare; therefore, they have a moral duty to protect them. In a similar way, the monks' material survival and work depend on the wellbeing of people, as they rely on the general population for alms and donations. "We can't sit back and watch the people who sponsor us sink into poverty. Their poverty is our poverty as well," a monk was quoted as saying during the protests.<sup>22</sup>

The SPDC's failure to meet the All Burma Monks Alliance's demands by 18 September also resulted in the excommunication of military men and their families. The monks refused to accept alms or provide spiritual services to members of the regime and their families. The boycott of the alms – called *patam nikkujjana kamma*, the act of overturning the bowl - is taken seriously in Burma, where giving alms to monks is a religious practice associated with paying respect to ancestors, atoning for bad deeds, and storing up merit for rebirth.

A monks' boycott destroys any sense of legitimacy enjoyed by the SPDC leaders, who portray themselves as defenders of Buddhism by building pagodas and public "good works." Traditionally, monks are not allowed to deny help to anyone, including murderers or wrongdoers, but only to those who attack the Buddhist institution. Such a religious and social isolation of SPDC personnel and their families is considered the most severe form of public humiliation in Burma, which is largely a Buddhist country. It increased internal pressure among the regime, already destabilized by the widening economic gap between military leaders and those in the rank-and-file.

### **The crackdown**

The SPDC reacted to the peaceful protests by violently cracking down on demonstrators. The regime initially relied on plainclothes security officials and thugs from the pro-junta USDA and Swan Arr Shin to intimidate and attack protesters. The USDA reportedly paid between 2,000 and 2,500 kyat per day to those who participated in the crackdowns on protesters. Others reportedly received food in addition to cash.<sup>23</sup>

As the demonstrations grew larger, the regime stepped up security in Burma's main cities and prepared to quash the protests.

- The SPDC ordered a state of emergency authorizing regional and local authorities to control demonstrations, including an order to open fire on protesters if necessary.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> AP (24 Sep 07) Myanmar celebrities support monks in wave of anti-government protests; New York Times (23 Sep 07) Challenge to Myanmar's junta gains momentum

<sup>21</sup> Reuters (05 Sep 07) Reuters: Myanmar troops fire warning shots at monk protest

<sup>22</sup> AP (05 Sep 07) Myanmar soldiers fire shots in air to break up Buddhist monks' protest, exile media report

<sup>23</sup> Irrawaddy (24 Aug 07) USDA Stirs Trouble for Peaceful Protesters

<sup>24</sup> Irrawaddy (19 Sep 07) Burmese Junta Orders State Emergency, Authorizes Use of Weapons, Says Source

- On 25 September, the SPDC imposed a curfew from 9 pm to 5 am in Rangoon and banned any gathering of more than five people.<sup>25</sup> It also declared the city and its environs a “restricted area.” Similar restrictions, to be in effect for 60 days, were imposed in Mandalay.<sup>26</sup>

On 26 September the SPDC began a massive crackdown that involved “excessive force against civilians, including unnecessary and disproportionate lethal force.”<sup>27</sup>

- SPDC Army troops and riot police clubbed and tear-gassed protesters, fired shots on protesting monks and demonstrators, and arrested hundreds of the monks who were at the heart of the demonstrations.<sup>28</sup> Soldiers and police chased and beat protesters and carted others away in trucks.<sup>29</sup>
- SPDC authorities raided at least 53 monasteries throughout Burma multiple times.<sup>30</sup> Officials beat, disrobed, and arrested monks and residents.<sup>31</sup> Officials cut phone lines, seized mobile telephones, computers, and other donations during raids.<sup>32</sup> SPDC authorities declared no-go zones around five key Buddhist monasteries in Rangoon.<sup>33</sup>

### Arrests and killings

- The SPDC arrested 3,000 to 4,000 people in September and October.<sup>34</sup>
- Authorities detained several thousand monks during raids on monasteries.<sup>35</sup>
- In October, SPDC security forces continued their house by house search for people who participated in anti-junta demonstrations. Relatives of suspects who could not be found were taken hostage as a form of pressure.<sup>36</sup> SPDC authorities hunted down those who provided water or food to the monks and arrested bystanders who applauded protesters.<sup>37</sup>
- SPDC authorities arrested at least 274 NLD members.<sup>38</sup>
- Between 18 September and 3 October, SPDC authorities arrested 18 elected MPs, including 16 from the NLD.<sup>39</sup>
- Authorities detained at least 25 members of the 88 Generation Students group between mid-August and November, including leaders Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, Pyone Cho, Jimmy, and Htay Kywe.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Irrawaddy (26 Sep 07) Burmese troops fire on Rangoon protestors; unconfirmed reports say five monks, one woman dead

<sup>26</sup> AP (25 Sep 07) Myanmar bans gatherings, imposes curfew; AFP (26 Sep 07) Myanmar imposes curfew, declares Yangon 'restricted' area; Bangkok Post (26 Sep 07) Burma showdown: Rifles vs robes; Irrawaddy (26 Sep 07) Burmese troops fire on Rangoon protestors; unconfirmed reports say five monks, one woman dead

<sup>27</sup> Human Rights Council, 6<sup>th</sup> session, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, 7 December 2007, UN Doc A/HRC/6/14

<sup>28</sup> New York Times (26 Sep 07) Police clash with monks in Myanmar; DPA (26 Sep 07) Burma army starts killing; Irrawaddy (26 Sep 07) Burmese troops fire on Rangoon protestors; unconfirmed reports say five monks, one woman dead; Reuters (26 Sep 07) Myanmar troops pen monks in monasteries

<sup>29</sup> New York Times (28 Sep 07) With monks contained, Myanmar authorities attack civilians

<sup>30</sup> AAPPB (06 Oct 07) Monasteries Raided Since September 26; DVB (03 Oct 07) Monks fear government raids on monasteries

<sup>31</sup> AAPPB (06 Oct 07) Monasteries Raided Since September 26; IMNA (05 Oct 07) Monasteries in Rangoon ordered not to accommodate guests

<sup>32</sup> DVB (05 Oct 07) Monasteries again targeted in raids; MNA (10 Oct 07) Hundreds of monks flee Rangoon, arrive in Mon state

<sup>33</sup> AP (28 Sep 07) Myanmar junta declares no-go zones at Buddhist monasteries seen as flashpoints of protests

<sup>34</sup> Human Rights Council, 6<sup>th</sup> session, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, 7 December 2007, UN Doc A/HRC/6/14

<sup>35</sup> Human Rights Watch (07 Dec 07) Crackdown: Repression of the 2007 popular protests in Burma

<sup>36</sup> AP (04 Oct 07) Myanmar media lashes out at foreigners; Human Rights Council, 6<sup>th</sup> session, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, 7 December 2007, UN Doc A/HRC/6/14; DVB (21 Oct 07) Family of exiled 88 generation student arrested

<sup>37</sup> Reuters (04 Oct 07) Myanmar junta sets Suu Kyi talks conditions; Reuters (05 Oct 07) Myanmar junta talks offer unreal – opposition; BBC (08 Oct 07) Burmese junta appoints go-between; DVB (09 Oct 07) Detainees categorised according to protest involvement

<sup>38</sup> AAPP (14 Oct 07) Detailed list of detainees

<sup>39</sup> AAPP (10 Oct 07) Detained list of Members of Parliament

<sup>40</sup> NLM (25 Aug 07) Some NLD members involved in acts of harming peace and stability of State; AAPP (31 Aug 07) More than 100 activists have been detained since peaceful protests in Burma began on August 19; Irrawaddy (10 Oct 07) Authorities Root Out Fugitive Student Leaders; DVB (10 Oct 07) 88 generation student leader arrested;

- SPDC charged 88 Generation Students group members Min Ko Naing Htay Kywe, and Mie Mie for violating the Printing and Publishing Act. If convicted, they would face up to seven years in prison.<sup>41</sup>
- SPDC authorities sentenced to prison at least 33 protesters and their supporters between 1 October and 25 January.<sup>42</sup>
- In November and December authorities continued to arrest monks and activists, contradicting SPDC assurances to UN Special Advisor on Burma Ibrahim Gambari that arrests had ceased.<sup>43</sup>
- On 4 November, SPDC authorities arrested the leader of the All Burma Monks Alliance U Gambira.<sup>44</sup>
- Seven hundred protesters were still detained as of 25 January.<sup>45</sup>
- The regime killed at least 31 people during the crackdown.<sup>46</sup>
- At least 16 individuals died in custody, including nine monks and NLD member Win Shwe.<sup>47</sup>
- During the nights of 27-30 September, a large number of bodies were burned at the Ye Way crematorium in Rangoon.<sup>48</sup> Residents nearby reported seeing military personnel burning 71 bodies of demonstrators on the night of 26 September.<sup>49</sup>
- More than 80 persons remained unaccounted for as of 25 January, and were likely the victims of enforced disappearance.<sup>50</sup>

### Detention conditions

- In Rangoon people were held in five places of detention, including large capacity informal detention centers regarded as ‘secret’ facilities. SPDC authorities used Government Technology Institute (GTI) in Insein Township, Police Center No 7 in Thanyin Township, Aung Tha Paye in Mayangone Township, Riot Police No 5 in Hmawbe Township, and Kyaikkasan Interrogation Center in Tamwe Township.<sup>51</sup>

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Irrawaddy (13 Oct 07) Prominent student leaders arrested; Mizzima News (13 Oct 07) Student leader Htay Kywe arrested; DVB (10 Oct 07) 88 generation student leader arrested; Mizzima News (10 Oct 07) More arrests in Burma, detainee dies during interrogation; BBC (13 Oct 07) Key activists arrested in Burma; Irrawaddy (13 Oct 07) Prominent student leaders arrested; Mizzima News (13 Oct 07) Student leader Htay Kywe arrested; FT (14 Oct 07) Burma seizes top democracy activist; Hindu (14 Oct 07) Myanmar junta arrests more activists; Taipei Times (15 Oct 07) Seventy Myanmar forces raid house, seize activists; Sydney Morning Herald (14 Oct 07) Burma's military maintains hard line; Mizzima News (25 Oct 07) Junta arrest more activists

<sup>41</sup> Reuters (29 Jan 08) Myanmar junta charges leading protesters; Irrawaddy (30 Jan 08) Junta Charges More Political Prisoners, Others Seriously ill

<sup>42</sup> DVB (23 Oct 07) NLD members face two years' imprisonment; Narinjara News (15 Oct 07) Former Arakanese student leader jailed; AFP (17 Oct 07) Four activists sentenced in secret trials: Myanmar opposition; Reuters (17 Oct 07) Myanmar protest monk jailed for seven years; DVB (17 Oct 07) Arakan NLD members jailed; Narinjara News (17 Oct 07) Nearly One Dozen NLD Leaders Arrested in Arakan; Irrawaddy (18 Oct 07) Five NLD members, one monk sentenced to prison; Narinjara News (25 Oct 07) NLD Members Released by Burmese Authority in Arakan; Mizzima News (25 Oct 07) Junta arrest more activists; Mizzima News (24 Oct 07) Junta showcases release of protesters, activists; Narinjara News (25 Oct 07) NLD Members Released by Burmese Authority in Arakan; Mizzima News (13 Oct 07) Student leader Htay Kywe arrested; DVB (11 Oct 07) Man given two-year sentence for shouting religious slogan; Narinjara News (25 Oct 07) NLD Members Released by Burmese Authority in Arakan; Amnesty International (25 Jan 08) Myanmar: arrests increasing four months on

<sup>43</sup> Amnesty International (06 Dec 07) Release Myanmar's peaceful protesters

<sup>44</sup> Mizzima News (13 Nov 07) Junta arrests prominent Abbot U Gambira; DVB (13 Nov 07) Monk leader U Gambira arrested

<sup>45</sup> Amnesty International (25 Jan 08) Myanmar: arrests increasing four months on

<sup>46</sup> Human Rights Council, 6<sup>th</sup> session, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, 7 December 2007, UN Doc A/HRC/6/14

<sup>47</sup> Human Rights Council, 6<sup>th</sup> session, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, 7 December 2007, UN Doc A/HRC/6/14

<sup>48</sup> Human Rights Council, 6<sup>th</sup> session, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, 7 December 2007, UN Doc A/HRC/6/14

<sup>49</sup> DPA (06 Oct 07) Burma releases detained monks but diplomats not hopeful; Sunday Times (07 Oct 07) Secret cremations hide Burma killings; BBC (08 Oct 07) Burmese junta appoints go-between

<sup>50</sup> Amnesty International (25 Jan 08) Myanmar: arrests increasing four months on

<sup>51</sup> Human Rights Council, 6<sup>th</sup> session, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, 7 December 2007, UN Doc A/HRC/6/14

- Released detainees reported being kept in cramped conditions in small rooms, with some standing shoulder to shoulder, unable to lie down.<sup>52</sup> Cells lacked ventilation or toilets. Prisoners also reported a lack of food and drinking water and being denied adequate medical attention by prisons' staff.<sup>53</sup>
- Released prisoners reported being severely and repeatedly beaten, kicked, and verbally abused by prison authorities during interrogation sessions.<sup>54</sup> Monks were disrobed and fed in the afternoon when religious tenets forbid them to eat.<sup>55</sup>

## Saffron Revolution destabilizes the regime

The SPDC's crackdown on monks and protesters had serious repercussions on the regime's internal stability. The disagreements among the SPDC Army commanders over the violent handling of the demonstrations triggered a wave of reshuffles.<sup>56</sup>

- On 1 October, SPDC Army's Rangoon Commander Maj Gen Hla Htay Win was "permitted to retire". He had reportedly refused to give orders to fire on protesters in Rangoon.<sup>57</sup>
- According to a high-ranking junta official, the SPDC detained five generals and more than 400 soldiers for refusing to fire on monks and protesters in Rangoon.<sup>58</sup>
- Ye Min Tun, an SPDC Foreign Ministry official for 10 years, sent a letter of resignation to the Burmese embassy in London over the "horrible" treatment of Buddhist monks during the protests.<sup>59</sup>
- The death of SPDC Prime Minister, General Soe Win, on 12 October triggered a reshuffle in the SPDC cabinet on 24 October:
  - The SPDC appointed 62-year-old Lieutenant General Thein Sein as the junta's new Prime Minister.<sup>60</sup> Thein Sein had been serving as acting Prime Minister since May.
  - Lieutenant-General Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo, 57, current SPDC member and Quartermaster-General, replaced Thein Sein as the junta's Secretary-1.<sup>61</sup>
  - Deputy Labor Minister, Major General Aung Kyi, believed to be close to Snr Gen Maung Aye, was promoted to Minister of Labor.<sup>62</sup> He replaced Than Shwe's loyalist, U Thaug.<sup>63</sup>
- On 2 November, SPDC reassigned Southwest Commander Maj Gen Myint Aung as Adjutant-General to replace Lt Gen Thein Sein. Brig Gen Tin Ngwe was appointed as new Central Commander.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>52</sup> CNN (13 Oct 07) Myanmar captives 'kept in squalor'; DVB (11 Oct 07) Detainees transferred due to prison overcrowding; Irrawaddy (11 Oct 07) Monks in hell

<sup>53</sup> CNN (13 Oct 07) Myanmar captives 'kept in squalor'; Irrawaddy (11 Oct 07) Monks in hell; AP (12 Oct 07) Burma's junta of beating, killing detainees, Norway-based radio says; AP (12 Oct 07) Dissident group: Myanmar guards brutalized pro-democracy detainees; Irrawaddy (11 Oct 07) Monks in hell

<sup>54</sup> AP (12 Oct 07) Burma's junta of beating, killing detainees, Norway-based radio says; AP (12 Oct 07) Dissident group: Myanmar guards brutalized pro-democracy detainees; Irrawaddy (11 Oct 07) Monks in hell; Irrawaddy (11 Oct 07) 88 Generation Students, Other Detainees Tortured in Interrogation Centers

<sup>55</sup> Human Rights Council, 6<sup>th</sup> session, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, 7 December 2007, UN Doc A/HRC/6/14

<sup>56</sup> Mizzima News (08 Nov 07) Top military leader shelves two disobedient commanders

<sup>57</sup> Mizzima News (01 Oct 07) Ailing Prime Minister to go back to Burma, Rangoon commander ousted

<sup>58</sup> AP (10 Oct 07) Generals, soldiers detained for refusing to shoot monks in Myanmar; AGI (10 Oct 07) Burma: 5 generals arrested for not shooting at monks

<sup>59</sup> BBC (09 Oct 07) Diplomat resigns over Burma monks

<sup>60</sup> AP (24 Oct 07) Thein Sein appointed Myanmar's prime minister; DVB (24 Oct 07) Junta announces new appointments; Mizzima News (25 Oct 07) Reshuffles in Burmese top posts; Mizzima News (25 Oct 07) Reshuffles in Burmese top posts

<sup>61</sup> Reuters (24 Oct 07) Myanmar junta names new senior official; AP (24 Oct 07) Thein Sein appointed Myanmar's prime minister; DVB (24 Oct 07) Junta announces new appointments; Mizzima News (25 Oct 07) Reshuffles in Burmese top posts

<sup>62</sup> AP (24 Oct 07) Thein Sein appointed Myanmar's prime minister; DVB (24 Oct 07) Junta announces new appointments; Mizzima News (25 Oct 07) Reshuffles in Burmese top posts; Irrawaddy (09 Oct 07) Aung Kyi: The Junta's New Liaison Officer

<sup>63</sup> Irrawaddy (09 Oct 07) Aung Kyi: The Junta's New Liaison Officer

- On 7 November, SPDC appointed two of its army commanders as deputy ministers. Brig Gen Win Myint was appointed as Deputy Minister of Electric Power No.2 and Brig Gen Tin Tun Aung as Deputy Minister of Labor.<sup>65</sup>
- Effective 28 November, the SPDC promoted Brig Gen Myint Soe as Commander of the Northwest Military Command. Brig Gen Kyaw Swe was promoted as Commander of the Southwest Command.<sup>66</sup>

Discontent is simmering also among the SPDC Army's rank and file and civil servants.

- Cpt Win Htun Aung, an SPDC Army officer from the Mandalay-based Light Infantry Battalion 3, fled his battalion after an arrest warrant was issued against him for giving water to monks during the September protests in Mandalay.<sup>67</sup>
- Cpt Hla Win from Battalion 99 fled to the Thai-Burma border, protesting the violence used against the monks.<sup>68</sup>
- Two soldiers aged 18 and 19 who deserted the SPDC Army's Light Infantry Battalion 564 stationed in Buthidaung Township, Arakan State, fled to Bangladesh.<sup>69</sup>
- Several police officers who were ordered by SPDC Army troops from the Southeast Regional Command to open fire on protesting monks in Moulmein in September expressed a desire to retire.<sup>70</sup>
- Civil servants also wanted to retire from their posts, as military officers have begun to occupy higher posts in their departments. In Mon State, about 400 military officers were transferred to education, forest, and customs the departments.<sup>71</sup>
- According to some estimates, over 100 policemen from 16 police brigades have deserted since the crackdown.<sup>72</sup> On 9 December, SPDC police chief Brig Gen Khin Yi ordered police forces around the country to put an end to the flow of officers deserting their positions.<sup>73</sup>
- Police officers assigned to Rangoon's Shwedagon pagoda were given a 60% salary increase. They had complained about having gained a bad reputation for their role in the crackdown.<sup>74</sup>

## Peaceful resistance continues

Burma's people continue to defy the regime with creative acts of dissent, despite the SPDC's brutal crackdown on peaceful demonstrations and heavy military presence in the streets of Burma's main cities. New groups of activists sprang up in Rangoon following the September-October crackdown.<sup>75</sup> In addition, the monks continued to voice their opposition to the military regime and to call for dialogue with the pro-democracy forces. Some monasteries continued the religious boycott of the junta by refusing alms, refusing to grant blessings, and refusing entry to SPDC officials.

- **Poster, leaflet, graffiti campaigns:**
  - **Early October:** Anti-junta posters criticizing the National Convention appeared in many key public places in Akyab, Arakan State.<sup>76</sup> Activists distributed anti-junta leaflets denouncing the SPDC's brutal crackdown and calling for renewed struggle.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Bernama (02 Nov 07) Myanmar Reshuffles Some Senior Military Posts

<sup>65</sup> Mizzima News (08 Nov 07) Top military leader shelves two disobedient commanders

<sup>66</sup> Mizzima News (30 Nov 07) Junta reshuffles commanders, showcases changes

<sup>67</sup> DVB (08 Nov 07) Army officer flees under threat of arrest; Mizzima News (08 Nov 07) Top military leader shelves two disobedient commanders

<sup>68</sup> Mizzima News (08 Nov 07) Top military leader shelves two disobedient commanders

<sup>69</sup> Narinjara News (28 Nov 07) Two young soldiers desert Burmese Army

<sup>70</sup> IMNA (05 Nov 07) Police officer ordered to shoot monks, wants to retire; IMNA (13 Nov 07) Upset government officers want to retire

<sup>71</sup> IMNA (13 Nov 07) Upset government officers want to retire

<sup>72</sup> DVB (12 Dec 07) Police chief orders clampdown on desertions

<sup>73</sup> DVB (12 Dec 07) Police chief orders clampdown on desertions

<sup>74</sup> DVB (07 Dec 07) Pay rise for Shwedagon police

<sup>75</sup> Mizzima News (27 Nov 07) Activists group urge people to revive 'Saffron Revolution'

<sup>76</sup> Kaladan News (10 Oct 07) Anti-junta posters all over key areas in Akyab

- **7 November:** Activists from the “Generation Wave” group distributed anti-junta leaflets and posters in Rangoon’s Mayangone Township. Anti-junta slogans appeared on walls in other neighborhoods.<sup>78</sup>
- **10 November:** University students with the All Kachin Students Union spray-painted the words “No Dam, Than Shwe Killer” on walls in various places in Myitkyina, Kachin State.<sup>79</sup>
- **9 January:** Members of the All Kachin Students Union distributed over 500 anti-junta posters and leaflets in the streets of Myitkyina, Kachin State. The posters and leaflets called for the release of all political prisoners, urged the SPDC to engage in tripartite dialogue, expressed opposition towards the junta-sponsored constitutional referendum, and demanded a halt to the Myitsone Dam project on the Irrawaddy River.<sup>80</sup>
- **19 January:** Activists distributed anti-junta flyers in the streets of Taunggoat and Kyaukpru in Arakan State, despite heavy security in the area.<sup>81</sup>
- **27 January:** Activists in Tounggoat, Kyaukpru, and Rambree Townships, Arakan State, affixed posters in hospitals, markets, and other public places. The posters called for the release of all political prisoners and urged the SPDC to start dialogue with pro-democracy groups.<sup>82</sup>
- **28 January:** Activists in Akyab, Arakan State, launched a poster campaign demanding the release of all political prisoners.<sup>83</sup>

#### Other protests:

- **Early October:** In several townships in Rangoon, dogs were seen roaming with pictures of Than Shwe and other regime leaders strung around their necks. Associating anybody with a dog is a very serious insult in Burma. Trains were painted with anti-junta slogans.<sup>84</sup>
- **Mid-October:** In Myitkyina, Kachin State, during a pro-regime mass rally, some of the participants shouted anti-SPDC slogans.<sup>85</sup>
- **6 November:** Activists from the “Rangoon Division Peoples' Movement Coordinating Committee” burned copies of state-run newspapers in several Townships in Rangoon. Activists from the “Freedom Fighters” group tied pieces of monk's robes and pasted anti-junta posters on trees in Rangoon. Posters reading “Than Shwe is lying” appeared on the fences of some houses.<sup>86</sup>
- **More demonstrations:**
  - **1 October:** Over 300 people held a two-hour demonstration in Man Aung, Arakan State, demanding the release of all political prisoners, a reduction in essential commodity prices, and national reconciliation.<sup>87</sup> Another anti-junta demonstration was held the next day.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Narinjara News (09 Oct 07) Secret distribution of anti-regime leaflets in Sittwe

<sup>78</sup> Mizzima News (07 Nov 07) Sporadic movements defying junta; Irrawaddy (08 Nov 07) Small 'panty' demonstration held in Rangoon; anti-junta pamphlets, posters distributed;

<sup>79</sup> Mizzima News (12 Nov 07) “No Dam, Than Shwe Killer”, wall writing in Myitkyina

<sup>80</sup> Irrawaddy (10 Jan 08) Young Activists Wage Pro-democracy Poster Campaign in Myitkyina; Kachin News Group (10 Jan 08) Over 350 anti-junta posters distributed on State Day eve

<sup>81</sup> Narinjara News (21 Jan 08) Anti-Government Flyers Distributed in Arakan

<sup>82</sup> Irrawaddy (28 Jan 08) Anti-regime poster campaign in Arakan State; Kaladan News (30 Jan 08) Anti-state poster campaign in four towns in Arakan State

<sup>83</sup> Kaladan News (30 Jan 08) Anti-state poster campaign in four towns in Arakan State

<sup>84</sup> Irrawaddy (12 Oct 07) Protesting dogs are now on the regime's wanted list

<sup>85</sup> Irrawaddy (17 Oct 07) People oppose junta in staged rallies to support National Convention

<sup>86</sup> Mizzima News (07 Nov 07) Sporadic movements defying junta; Irrawaddy (07 Nov 07) State-run Press Targeted in New Rangoon Protest; Irrawaddy (08 Nov 07) Small 'panty' demonstration held in Rangoon; anti-junta pamphlets, posters distributed

<sup>87</sup> Narinjara News (01 Oct 07) Fresh protests in Arakan

<sup>88</sup> Narinjara News (05 Oct 07) Troops dispatched to Man Aung to quell demonstrations; DVB (03 Oct 07) Arakan protests continue despite threats from authorities

- **26 October:** Exactly a month after the SPDC's violent crackdown on monks and protesters, several groups of people dressed in yellow clothes and carrying yellow candles and flowers held prayers at Rangoon's Shwedagon pagoda.<sup>89</sup>
- **31 October:** About 200 monks from several monasteries in Pakokku, Magwe Division, demonstrated for about an hour marching in the streets and chanting *metta*.<sup>90</sup>
- **3 November:** About 50 monks staged a demonstration in Mogok Township, Mandalay Division.<sup>91</sup>
- **8 November:** About 40 people shouting anti-junta slogans and holding pictures of Than Shwe's head covered by panties held a brief demonstration in Rangoon's Botahtaung Township. Bystanders clapped their hands in support of the protests.<sup>92</sup>
- **25 November:** A group of about 25 women activists marched from Rangoon's Sule pagoda to the Botataung pagoda. The women prayed for the monks and protesters who disappeared during the September demonstrations and for the release of detainees.<sup>93</sup>
- **26 November:** About 800 people, including NLD members, veteran politicians, and political activists, attended full moon day celebrations at Maggin monastery in Rangoon's Thingangyun Township, despite the presence of SPDC Army soldiers, police, fire brigade, and USDA members.
- **30 November:** 300 monks in Mogok, Mandalay Division, were stopped by SPDC authorities when they attempted to march from their monastery to a pagoda.<sup>94</sup>
- **17 January:** Armed SPDC security forces, USDA, and Swan Arr Shin members prevented about 200 people, including ten monks, from holding a demonstration in Taunggoat Township, Arakan State.<sup>95</sup>
- **Monks' boycott:**
  - **26 November:** The All Burma Monks Alliance released a statement urging monks to boycott the annual monastic examinations to show solidarity with the monks targeted by the SPDC's crackdown.<sup>96</sup> Following the call for a boycott, about 90% of monks did not enroll in the exam.<sup>97</sup>
  - **Late November:** Monks refused to perform a funeral blessing for a senior Swan Arr Shin member from Rangoon's Insein Township who had been actively involved in the September crackdown.<sup>98</sup>
  - **Early December:** Head monks of four monasteries in Pakokku, Magwe Division, refused to give blessings to a group of visiting SPDC officials.<sup>99</sup>
  - **4 December:** Monks at Seittabala monastery in Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay Division, refused a food donation from SPDC Minister of Industry-1 Aung Thuang.<sup>100</sup>
  - **9 December:** Posters appeared on the walls of monasteries in Pakokku, urging monks to renew the boycott of the military.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Mizzima News (26 Oct 07) 'Yellow colour' worshippers in Shwedagon

<sup>90</sup> AP (31 Oct 07) More than 100 Buddhist monks march for first time since last month's crackdown; DVB (31 Oct 07) 200 monks protest in Pakokku

<sup>91</sup> Irrawaddy (05 Nov 07) Arrests continue as Gambari holds talks

<sup>92</sup> Irrawaddy (08 Nov 07) Small 'panty' demonstration held in Rangoon; anti-junta pamphlets, posters distributed; DVB (09 Nov 07) Small-scale protest in Rangoon

<sup>93</sup> Irrawaddy (26 Nov 07) Women activists stage demonstration in Rangoon

<sup>94</sup> Irrawaddy (30 Nov 07) Monastery closure makes mockery of Junta's Buddhist claims

<sup>95</sup> Irrawaddy (17 Jan 08) Security forces break up attempted demonstration in Western Burma; Mizzima News (17 Jan 08) Taungkok demonstrations abandoned for fear of violent backlash

<sup>96</sup> DVB (27 Nov 07) Monks demand inquiry into deaths and disappearances; Irrawaddy (27 Nov 07) Burmese monks urged to boycott state-run exams

<sup>97</sup> Narinjara News (07 Dec 07) Monks boycott examinations; Irrawaddy (11 Dec 07) Junta tells USDA to prepare for more demonstrations

<sup>98</sup> DVB (28 Nov 07) Monks refuse funeral blessing for militia leader

<sup>99</sup> DVB (07 Dec 07) Monasteries pass junta offerings to poor

<sup>100</sup> DVB (19 Dec 07) Mandalay monks decline junta offering

<sup>101</sup> Mizzima News (21 Dec 07) Posters exhorting monks' to protest on Independence Day in Pakokku

- **18 December:** Nine hundred out of 1,000 monks at Maha Gandhayon monastery in Mandalay refused to accept a food offering from SPDC Minister of Industry-1 Aung Thaung.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> DVB (19 Dec 07) Mandalay monks decline junta offering