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SPDC DEFILES ASEAN CHARTER

In the year following ASEAN’s member states signing its Charter on 20 November 2007, the SPDC has openly trampled on the values and rights enumerated in the document. Designed to establish ASEAN as a legal entity to command greater legitimacy and facilitate its integration in the global economy, the Charter also institutes core principles and obligations of member states. Under the Charter, each member state is to “respect fundamental freedoms, the promotion and protection of human rights, and the promotion of social justice”. These provisions will allow ASEAN to be recognized as a cohesive group that promotes democracy and respects the rule of law. Article 20 of the Charter provides for enforcement of the Charter by referral of non-compliance to the ASEAN summit.

Yet, ASEAN has turned a blind eye to the SPDC’s continued and blatant violations of fundamental human rights and democratic principles. This situation does not bode well for any meaningful enforcement of the Charter provisions. When the junta recently sentenced peaceful pro-democracy activists for jail terms of 65 years in kangaroo court proceedings, ASEAN members were conspicuous in their silence. ASEAN members proved themselves incapable of standing up to Burma’s military regime in a resolution before the UN’s General Assembly’s Third Committee. On 21 November, the Committee approved a draft resolution critical of the human rights situation inside Burma. The resolution also condemned the SPDC for its unwillingness to combat rights violations. Brunei, Laos, Malaysia, and Vietnam voted against the resolution while Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand abstained.

The SPDC has used the “grace” period for the formal enactment of the Charter as a politically expedient way of engaging in further rights violations and oppression. By remaining silent, ASEAN has denigrated the very principles and obligations it wants to showcase to the international community. By failing to advocate and enforce the principles and rights contained in the Charter, ASEAN has done a disservice to Burma’s people and itself.

ASEAN must be serious in safeguarding the Charter’s credibility through its defense of human rights and democratic principles. ASEAN can illustrate this to the international community by bloc voting against the junta in the UN General Assembly. Not only will such an action redeem ASEAN in the eyes of freedom loving nations, it will also put the regime on notice that ASEAN intends for the Charter to be a substantive declaration that will be monitored and enforced.

Overview

- On 20 November 2007, the ASEAN Charter was put in final form and adopted, subject to ratification. The Charter established specific rights that each ASEAN government must respect, promote, and protect.
- The Charter provides for the creation of a Human Rights Body but ASEAN leaders failed to include any operating procedures and policies for the Body.
- On 21 July 2008, a high-level ASEAN panel started work to create the human rights body. The panel is tasked with determining the body’s makeup, role, and powers, which was to be presented to the 14th ASEAN summit. Thailand was the last ASEAN country to ratify the Charter on 15 November. Therefore, the Charter will become effective on 15 December.

Key Charter provisions

- ASEAN, as an inter-governmental organization, is conferred legal status.
- Member states will adhere to the principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance, respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Member states will ensure that ASEAN peoples live in peace with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment;
- Member states will respect fundamental freedoms, the promotion and protection of human rights, and the promotion of social justice;
- Member states shall take all necessary measures, including the enactment of appropriate domestic legislation, to effectively implement the provisions of this Charter and to comply with all obligations of membership; and
- In conformity with the purposes and principles of the ASEAN Charter relating to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, ASEAN shall establish an ASEAN human rights body.

Issues

- Concerns remain over whether the Charter provisions that address human rights issues can be enforced through the creation of a human rights body.
- Non-interference in member states internal affairs remains a provision in the Charter from earlier stated principles of the organization.
- SPDC Foreign Minister Nyan Win told his counterparts that the human rights body should uphold ASEAN's bedrock principle of non-interference in each other's affairs.
ASEAN says, SPDC does

DURING THE LAST MONTHS OF 2007 ASEAN MEMBERS:

- Condemned the SPDC over the brutal crackdown on the Saffron Revolution.
- Asserted that the adoption of the ASEAN Charter hinged on the SPDC halting human rights abuses; holding a credible constitutional referendum; engaging in genuine dialogue for national reconciliation and democratic reform; and releasing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners.

BUT IN 2008, ASEAN:

- Turned condemnation to support after the SPDC announced its farcical constitutional referendum. Support became cooperation after cyclone Nargis.
- Defended the SPDC and suggested to the UN that it could accomplish more if Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was left off the agenda.
- Remained silent after the SPDC sentenced nearly 200 pro-democracy activists to jail terms as long as 68 years in the same month.
- Failed to support a UNGA Third Committee resolution over Burma’s human rights abuses.

MEANWHILE:

- About five million people, or around 10% of the population, were malnourished despite a rice production surplus in 2008.
- The regime’s response to cyclone Nargis turned a natural disaster into a man-made tragedy. In the days and months following the cyclone, the SPDC blocked humanitarian assistance from reaching the areas where it was most needed. In the aftermath of the cyclone, the SPDC detained 17 activists for delivering aid to affected communities in the Irrawaddy delta.
- Between 100,000 to 150,000 children under-five died in the year, mostly from preventable diseases. Burma has the second worst child mortality rate in Asia, after Afghanistan.
- The SPDC adopted a new constitution aimed at institutionalizing military rule in Burma through a sham referendum that featured widespread irregularities, electoral fraud, harassment, and criminal intimidation. The regime detained 127 activists and ordinary citizens for questioning the constitution, while in a miraculous coincidence, exactly 92.4% “Yes” votes were lodged in two separate rounds of polling.
- The SPDC continued to use its draconian “security laws” and sham legal proceedings to charge, prosecute, and imprison its opponents.
- The regime arrested 423 dissidents and sentenced at least 294 dissidents to prison terms over the past year. The SPDC also extended the house arrest of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her deputy Tin Oo by another year. There are now over 2,150 political prisoners in Burma, up from 1,150 in July 2007.
- The SPDC Army continued its pervasive use of forced labor and its harassment, intimidation, and imprisonment of people who complained to the ILO.
- The SPDC Army stepped up its military offensive against civilians and armed opposition groups in Eastern Burma. The attacks resulted in the forced relocation or destruction of 142 villages and the displacement of 66,000 people.
- The regime continued to purchase arms and other military supplies from China, Russia, and India. At the same time it signed new deals selling off Burma’s oil, gas, and hydro-electric resources while the majority of the people has no electricity.
- Tens of thousands more people, including army deserters, fled Burma.
- Illicit drug production and opium poppy cultivation in Burma increased. Burma remains the largest producer of amphetamine type stimulants in Southeast Asia and the world’s second largest producer of opium.
When the ASEAN Charter was in the process of being considered, some member states believed that the Charter’s provisions could be used to pressure the SPDC to implement democratic reforms and stop its pervasive human rights violations. The Philippines was the most vocal of the group. In late 2007 and at the beginning of 2008, Philippines’ President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said that the Philippines was not likely to ratify the Charter as long as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi remained under house arrest. Arroyo later changed her position to support the Charter even after the SPDC illegally extended Daw Suu’s house arrest.

While ASEAN members showcased the Charter’s human rights body as a mechanism that can address and resolve human rights issues in Burma, ASEAN could not summon the integrity or resolve to sanction the SPDC following the bloody crackdown during the Saffron Revolution or vote to censure the junta in a recent resolution before the UN General Assembly’s Third Committee.
The following 2007-2008 timeline demonstrates that ASEAN’s Jekyll-and-Hyde tendencies have not been cured or alleviated by the Charter process. It appears that ASEAN’s actions over the last year can be described as indecisive, at best, or cynically unresponsive, at worst.

27 Sep  ASEAN Foreign Ministers express their revulsion to SPDC FM Maj Gen Nyan Win over reports that demonstrations in Burma are being suppressed by violence.
16 Oct  Malaysia’s FM Syed Hamid Albar says that ASEAN will not agree to sanctions or a suspension of Burma from ASEAN as a result of its violent crackdown on protesters.
20 Oct  Singapore’s FM George Yeo says that ASEAN plans to use its moral authority to get all political parties in Burma to engage in a genuine dialogue.
08 Nov  Indonesia Presidential spokesman confirms that ASEAN countries will not impose sanctions against Burma.
15 Nov  An Indonesian Presidential spokesman says that the SPDC will be expected to uphold commitments to democracy and human rights included in the ASEAN Charter. The spokesperson says that Indonesia’s president has corresponded with SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe, urging an “inclusive process” in Burma’s bid for democracy to ensure stability.
16 Nov  Philippines’ Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo expresses hope that the signing of the ASEAN Charter will compel the SPDC to finally implement democratic reforms. Romulo points out that the ASEAN charter may lose its significance if the grouping is unable to bring errant members into line. “I think that is what the leaders of ASEAN should impress upon Myanmar,” says Romulo. “It should no longer procrastinate or string along the organization with more promises, which in the last ten years they have been making. Strengthening democracy, deepening and enhancing governance and rule of law, adhering to human rights, there should be national reconciliation immediately [...] First step (is the) release of Aung Sung Suu Kyi without conditions.” Romulo warns that further non-compliance by the SPDC could well erode the credibility of the entire grouping. “It’s not only Myanmar’s credibility, but ASEAN and the countries composing ASEAN. [...] And in particular, when we sign the charter without implementation of the reforms - good governance, rule of law, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the strengthening of the democratic process, then it is a hollow manifestation of these principles by ASEAN.”
19 Nov  ASEAN nations call on Burma to move towards democracy.
19 Nov  Philippines’ President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo warns that the Philippines is unlikely to ratify the ASEAN Charter unless the SPDC restores democracy and frees Suu Kyi. “The expectation of the Philippines is that if Myanmar signs the charter, it is committed to returning to the path of democracy and releasing Aung San Suu Kyi,” Arroyo tells SPDC PM Thein Sein. “Until the Philippine Congress sees that happen, it would have extreme difficulty in ratifying the charter,” she says.
20 Nov  ASEAN abruptly withdraws an invitation to UN Special Advisor on Burma Ibrahim Gambari to address ASEAN leaders after the SPDC objected. ASEAN also rejects calls to suspend Burma over the junta’s crackdown on pro-democracy protesters. “ASEAN Leaders will strive to prevent the Myanmar issue from obstructing our efforts to deepen integration and build an ASEAN Community,” Singapore PM Lee Hsien Loong says. However, ASEAN leaders urge the SPDC to open a “meaningful dialogue” with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, release her from house arrest, free all political detainees, and work toward a “peaceful transition to democracy.”
21 Nov  According to confidential recommendations by ASEAN diplomats, the human rights body to be established in the ASEAN charter should not intervene in domestic human rights issues such as the current crisis in Burma, but instead protect ASEAN countries from foreign meddling.
22 Nov  ASEAN and EU issue a joint declaration calling for the SPDC to continue its engagement with the international community and pro-democracy forces.
19 Dec  Philippines’ Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo says that the ratification of the ASEAN Charter hinges on proof that Burma is following its promised “roadmap to democracy.”
21 Jan  Singapore’s Second Minister for Foreign Affairs Raymond Lim tells Singapore MPs that the Burma issue will not slow down the integration of ASEAN.
25 Jan  Philippines’ President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo calls for ASEAN leaders to unite for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
12 Feb  ASEAN Sec-Gen Surin Pitsuwan says that the SPDC should be given the benefit of the doubt if the junta is serious about moving Burma toward democracy.
19 Feb  Singapore FM George Yeo says that ASEAN ministers note the need to ensure that the SPDC’s outcomes in conducting a constitutional referendum remain credible.
19 Feb  Singapore FM George Yeo says that the SPDC’s decision to bar Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from participating in elections is odd and out of date.
25 Feb  Thailand’s FM Noppadon Pattama says that Thailand has no choice but to put national economic interests before human rights concerns in dealing with Burma.
16 Mar  Thai PM Samak Sundaravej describes killings and suppression of civilians in Burma as “normal.”
30 Apr  Thailand PM Samak Sundaravej says that Thailand has no problem with the prolonged house arrest of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
03 Jun  Malaysia PM Abdullah Badawi says that ASEAN can impose sanctions on member countries that flout its charter.
08 Jul  ASEAN Sec-Gen Surin Pitsuwan says that ASEAN has emerged stronger in the aftermath of cyclone Nargis.
20 Jul  ASEAN nations express their “deep disappointment” over the SPDC’s decision to extend the house arrest of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
21 Jul  SPDC ratifies ASEAN Charter.
21 Jul  Singapore PM Lee Hsien Loong says that ASEAN intends to foster greater trust and cooperation between the international community and the SPDC.
21 Jul  ASEAN urges the SPDC to take “bolder steps” to hold free and fair elections by 2010 and release all political detainees, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
23 Aug  Thai PM Samak Sundaravej tells UN Special Advisor on Burma Ibrahim Gambari that efforts to engage the SPDC would be more productive if Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was left off the agenda.
28 Aug  Philippines’ Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago says that the Philippines will ratify the ASEAN Charter.
11 Nov  ASEAN fails to condemn the SPDC’s imposition of lengthy jail terms on political activists.
21 Nov  UN General Assembly’s Third Committee approves a draft resolution critical of the human rights situation inside Burma. The resolution condemns the SPDC for its unwillingness to combat rights violations. Brunei, Laos, Malaysia, and Vietnam vote against the resolution while Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand abstain.
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ASEAN from revulsion to rescue

In the space of less than five months, ASEAN went from using a firm hand to kid gloves in its relations with the SPDC. In September 2007, ASEAN expressed “revulsion” over the junta’s shooting of peaceful demonstrators. But in February, ASEAN supported and promoted the regime’s announcement to hold a constitutional referendum in May which was to be followed by elections in 2010.

With respect to the referendum, ASEAN Sec-Gen Surin Pitsuwan said that the SPDC should be given the benefit of the doubt if the junta is serious about moving the country toward democracy. ASEAN FMs welcomed the news as well.\(^1\) Thailand was especially ingratiating. Former Thai PM Samak Sundaravej praised Burma as a peaceful and orderly country with a military leader who is a good Buddhist who prays every morning.\(^2\) Samak’s remarks went to unparalleled extremes when he said that Thailand had no problem with the prolonged house arrest of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.\(^3\) In August, Samak told UN Special Advisor on Burma Ibrahim Gambari that efforts to engage the SPDC would be more productive if Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was left off the agenda.\(^4\)

Cyclone Nargis proved to be the “perfect storm” for the SPDC. Despite the damage and destruction inflicted on Burma’s people, the cyclone provided the SPDC with a smokescreen for continued oppression and a new source of revenue. The international outrage expressed over the junta’s initial refusal of aid and assistance put ASEAN in the unique position of not only being the conduit for humanitarian aid and relief into Burma but also allowed for ASEAN to promote itself and the good efforts of the SPDC in responding to the cyclone. Since cyclone Nargis, ASEAN has blithely ignored the deteriorating human rights situation in Burma.

On 19 May, at an emergency meeting in Singapore, ASEAN agreed to set up a coordinating mechanism to help Burma with emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. ASEAN Sec-Gen Surin Pitsuwan was designated to head the relief effort. The mechanism began on 25 May when the SPDC hosted an international pledging conference in Rangoon.\(^5\) After the pledging conference, Surin said he and others purposely left the matter of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi out of conversations with the SPDC. “We did not want to crowd the agenda. We did not want to complicate the proceeding. At least we accomplished one thing, and that is: there is an engagement. There is a space for engagement on humanitarian issues, Surin said.”\(^6\)

In mid-June, Surin said that the cyclone Nargis disaster showed the world that a revitalized ASEAN could “rise to the occasion”.\(^7\) On 8 July, Surin said that ASEAN had emerged stronger in the aftermath of cyclone Nargis. Surin said that leading the international humanitarian effort to help millions of cyclone survivors gave ASEAN “a sense of community and confidence.” “The ASEAN was baptized by cyclone Nargis,” Surin said.\(^8\)

In contrast to ASEAN patting itself on the back, on 16 October the regional advocacy network Burma Partnership released a report that provided its own assessment of ASEAN’s humanitarian response to cyclone Nargis. Burma Partnership found that the UN/SPDC/ASEAN’s Post Nargis Joint Assessment (PONJA) report ignored issues such as the SPDC’s blocking and misappropriation of aid and the mistreatment of cyclone survivors in relief camps. In addition, Burma Partnership stated that the

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1. CNA (19 Feb 08) ASEAN ministers say Myanmar democracy roadmap must be credible
2. DPA (16 Mar 08) Thai premier praises Myanmar as peaceful and orderly - Summary
3. Reuters (30 Apr 08) Thai PM says Myanmar’s Suu Kyi detention is “OK”
4. AFP (25 Aug 08) Thai PM says West uses Myanmar’s Suu Kyi as political tool
5. Nation (20 May 08) Asean meeting agrees to coordinate relief aid to Burma
6. VOA (27 May 08) Burma Extends House Arrest for Aung San Suu Kyi, Arrests Opposition Supporters
7. DPA (18 Jun 08) ‘A new Asean’
8. Bangkok Post (08 July 08) Surin says Burma, food crises strengthen Asean
PONJA report failed to mention numerous cases of human rights violations including incidents where the SPDC recruited orphan children as soldiers, forced survivors to do reconstruction work, and confiscated farmland.\textsuperscript{9}

\begin{center}
SPDC puts ASEAN human rights body in a coma
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**Overview**

- Despite initial objections by the SPDC, on 30 July 2007, ASEAN Foreign Ministers agreed to form a regional human rights body as part of the ASEAN Charter.\textsuperscript{10}
- On 20 November 2007, the ASEAN Charter was finally put in final form and adopted, subject to ratification. The Charter does not specify the procedures and enforcement powers for the human rights body.\textsuperscript{11}
- On 21 July, a high-level ASEAN panel started work to draft procedures for the human rights body. The panel will finalize its recommendations on the body’s composition, role, and powers and present them to the 14\textsuperscript{th} ASEAN summit.\textsuperscript{12}

**Issues**

- Concerns remain over whether the Charter provisions that address human rights issues can be enforced through the creation of a human rights body.
- Non-interference in member states internal affairs remains a principle enshrined in the Charter.
- SPDC FM Maj Gen Nyan Win told his counterparts that the rights body should uphold ASEAN’s bedrock principle of non-interference in each other’s affairs. Nyan Win made it clear to his counterparts that the SPDC is opposed to the idea of empowering the ASEAN human rights body with monitoring authority on rights violation.\textsuperscript{13}
- The SPDC will undoubtedly attempt to undermine the adoption of rules and procedures for the human rights body at the ASEAN Summit.
- ASEAN may use consensus decision-making as an excuse to avoid controversy in addressing the adoption of a human rights enforcement mechanism.

**Solutions**

- ASEAN must reconcile the inherent contradictions in the Charter that enumerate fundamental rights and obligations \textit{vis-a-vis} the principle of non-interference.
- The Charter must be amended to provide for an enforcement mechanism against countries that fail to abide by its principles and specify the penalties for non-compliance.
- ASEAN must abandon its consensus decision-making procedure on issues that involve core principles and rights.

**What do people want?**

- ASEAN peoples want a Charter that ensures fundamental rights and democratic principles in every member state.
- ASEAN peoples want a Charter that provides a meaningful enforcement mechanism and appropriate penalties for violations.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{9} AFP (16 Oct 08) Aid groups blast ASEAN-led report on Myanmar relief effort
\textsuperscript{10} DPA (31 Jul 07) ASEAN sees tough times in setting up human rights body
\textsuperscript{11} AP (20 Nov 07) ASEAN adopts landmark charter, with watered-down human rights body to appease Myanmar
\textsuperscript{12} AP (22 Jul 07) Myanmar opposes investigative powers
\textsuperscript{13} Mizzima News (22 Jul 07) Burma pulls down ASEAN
\end{footnotesize}
UN frustration, more sanctions, and more condemnation

During the last year, three major events kept the SPDC under intense international scrutiny:

- The SPDC’s brutal crackdown on peaceful protesters in September 2007;
- The constitutional referendum held in May; and
- The junta’s blocking and obstruction of humanitarian aid and assistance following the devastation caused by cyclone Nargis.

In October 2007 and in May, the UN Security Council issued Presidential Statements on Burma. The October statement deplored the SPDC’s use of violence against peaceful protesters during the Saffron Revolution and called on the SPDC to release all political prisoners. The May statement urged the junta to conduct a free and fair referendum process that would allow for the full participation of all political actors and respect fundamental political freedoms.

The junta granted UN Special Advisor on Burma Ibrahim Gambari frequent access to the country but nothing was accomplished during the visits. Instead of showing any willingness to cooperate with Gambari’s mission, the junta was openly defiant in reacting to Gambari’s proposals and UN involvement in the country. Gambari was the target of the SPDC’s displeasure and derision on several occasions and was never granted an audience with SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe.

In November 2007, SPDC Information Minister Brig Gen Kyaw Hsan lectured Gambari about the UN’s ties with “big power bullies”. Kyaw Hsan also noted the SPDC’s dissatisfaction with the outcome of Gambari’s previous visit because it was followed by condemnation from the UN Security Council and sanctions imposed by US, Australia, and the EU. The tirade continued. In March, Kyaw Hsan accused Gambari of “bias” and “act[ing] outside [his] role as mediator” by releasing a statement from Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in November. Kyaw San also expressed unhappiness with Gambari’s trips to other countries in the region and warned that his role as an “impartial adviser” would be brought into question if he continued to listen to suggestions from Western nations.

Gambari’s last visit to Burma was in August. Once again, he was unable to engage the SPDC in any substantive discussions. In September, UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-Moon said that he was frustrated with the lack political progress in Burma. Ban said that he wanted the SPDC to take tangible steps towards establishing a credible and inclusive political process which must include progress on human rights. Ban also said that he would forgo plans to visit to Burma unless the SPDC showed tangible progress in implementing democratic reforms including the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and other political prisoners.

Over the past year, the US, the EU, Canada, and Australia all imposed additional sanctions on the SPDC. The new sanctions targeted financial transactions of junta cronies and also targeted Burma’s timber, gems and mining industries.

- **Canada**: On 14 November 2007, Canada announced sweeping sanctions against the SPDC that included a ban on Canadian investment, trade, and transfer of technical data to Burma. In addition, the assets of Burmese nationals in Canada connected to the SPDC leaders were frozen and Burma-registered ships or aircraft were prohibited from docking or landing in Canada.
• EU: On 19 November 2007, EU FMs imposed tougher sanctions on Burma’s military regime. The restrictions included a longer list of SPDC officials subject to a travel restrictions and frozen assets. An investment ban on SPDC-owned enterprises was also extended and broadened to include businesses owned or controlled by the regime or by persons and entities associated with the regime. The sanctions also prohibited exports of equipment to enterprises involving timber, metals, minerals, semi-precious and precious stones, as well as imports from these sectors.21

• US: On 5 February, the US Treasury Department tightened banking sanctions against family members of regime leaders as well as key individuals and businesses that are part of Tay Za’s financial network. The Department’s action froze any assets that they may have under US jurisdiction and barred Americans from conducting business with them.22 On 25 February, the US Treasury Department added Asia World Company along with its managing director Steven Law, his wife Cecilia Ng, and his father, reputed drug lord Lo Hsing Han, as additional individuals and companies covered by financial sanctions.23 On 29 July, President George W. Bush signed the JADE Act.24 The legislation blocked US companies from importing gemstones from Burma through “third party” countries and imposed financial sanctions on the SPDC, SPDC-controlled companies, and companies controlled by junta cronies.25

• Australia: On 22 October, Australia announced that it expanded its targeted financial sanctions against Burma and added 45 new names to an earlier list of 418 people.26

Cyclone Nargis

The SPDC’s delay and outright refusal of humanitarian aid in the days following cyclone Nargis caused immense frustration in the international community. The chorus of condemnation came from the US, the EU, Canada, China, and the UN.

UK PM Gordon Brown summed up the international dissatisfaction with the junta when he said: “This is inhuman. We have an intolerable situation created by a natural disaster. It is being made into a man-made catastrophe by the negligence, the neglect and the inhuman treatment of the Burmese people by a regime that is failing to act and to allow the international community to do what it wants to do.”27

UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-moon made numerous attempts to contact SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe by telephone to no avail.28 Ban resorted to having Thai PM Samak personally hand-deliver letters to Than Shwe on his behalf in an effort to open humanitarian aid channels.29 As aggravation in the international community grew, Ban finally decided to go to Burma himself in an attempt to break the aid impasse. When Ban arrived in Burma, he was able to secure a promise from Than Shwe to allow humanitarian aid and aid personnel unfettered access to Burma. However, Than Shwe’s promise was little more than window-dressing for the international aid community. Aid organizations still struggled with considerable obstacles in delivering humanitarian assistance that included bribes demanded by SPDC Army officials at roadblocks and new SPDC regulations on aid organizations.

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21 Reuters (19 Nov 07) EU implements sanctions on Myanmar junta, firms
22 AFP (05 Feb 08) US expands sanctions on Myanmar regime family, tycoon
23 Reuters (25 Feb 08) Treasury slaps more sanctions on Myanmar firms
24 AFP (30 Jul 08) Bush signs sanctions against Myanmar into law
25 Irrawaddy (23 Jul 08) US Senate Bans on Import of Burmese Gems
26 AAP (22 Oct 08) Australia extends Burma sanction
27 Telegraph (18 May 08) Myanmar cyclone: Burma junta is killing its own people, says West
28 Irrawaddy (13 May 08) Junta Leader Won’t Answer My Calls: Ban Ki-moon
29 Irrawaddy (13 May 08) Thai PM to travel to Burma at UN Chief’s request
DEMOCRACY

SPDC imposes constitution

Despite repeated calls from the UN, the international community, and pro-democracy forces for an inclusive and participatory constitution-drafting process, the SPDC refused to amend the constitution it unilaterally drafted during a process that lasted over 15 years. The constitution has been widely criticized because it aims at institutionalizing military rule in Burma.

On 9 February, the SPDC announced it would hold a referendum to adopt the constitution in May followed by “multi-party democratic elections” in 2010. Ten days later, the junta said that the drafting of the constitution had been completed. However, the text of the constitution was not made public until 9 April, a month before the referendum. The SPDC printed only 465,000 copies of the constitution for a voting public of over 27 million. The regime distributed copies of the constitution to bookshops to be sold for 1,000 kyat (US$1) a copy. In addition, the SPDC did not translate the constitution into any of the ethnic nationalities’ languages.

The SPDC’s Referendum Law criminalized campaigning against the referendum. Anyone who distributed leaflets or made speeches against the referendum faced a three-year prison term. Between 29 February and 16 May, the regime detained 127 activists and ordinary citizens for expressing their opposition to the referendum. The regime also barred monks and nuns from voting.

The regime tightly controlled the referendum process. The SPDC appointed a 45-member Referendum Convening Commission to oversee the referendum. Most of the commission members were junta-handpicked individuals who served as delegates at the National Convention and in the Constitution Drafting Committee. In Townships across Burma the regime set up sub-commissions staffed mainly with local SPDC officials and USDA members. The junta also rejected the offer of UN technical assistance and observers for the referendum.

The regime carried out a massive “Yes” vote propaganda campaign in its controlled media, while barring media from publishing the views of supporters of a “No” vote.

On 10 May, the regime pushed ahead with its constitutional referendum, despite calls from pro-democracy forces and the international community - including UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-moon - to focus on relief operations in the areas hit by cyclone Nargis. The junta delayed the vote by two weeks in the 47 Townships (40 in Rangoon Division and seven in Irrawaddy Division) that were worst affected by the cyclone.
Ignoring a 2 May UN Security Council presidential statement that called on the regime to make the referendum “free and fair” and “inclusive and credible,” the SPDC resorted to widespread fraud and a campaign of intimidation to ensure approval of the constitution. Voting irregularities and fraud were reported in most of Burma’s States and Divisions. The regime also evicted cyclone survivors out of schools, monasteries, and community centers so that they could be used as polling stations.

The referendum results provided conclusive evidence that the referendum process was a sham. On 26 May, the SPDC made the outrageous claim that 92.4% of voters had approved the constitution, with a turnout of 98.1%.

On 18 June, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution that stated that the constitutional referendum was held in an atmosphere of intimidation and in disregard for international standards of free and fair elections.

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43 UN Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, 2 May 2008, UN Doc S/PRST/2008/13
44 See March and April 2008 Burma Bulletin
45 See April and May Burma Bulletins
46 See May 2008 Burma Bulletin
47 AP (26 May 08) Referendum approved in cyclone-hit areas
48 UN News Center (18 Jun 08) Myanmar: UN Human Rights Council condemns ‘ongoing systematic violations’
HUMAN RIGHTS

Crackdown on dissidents

During the September-October 2007 crackdown on peaceful protesters, the SPDC detained 3,000 to 4,000 people and killed at least 31 peaceful protesters. At least 14 individuals died in custody due to poor detention conditions. The SPDC also arrested 15 local journalists for covering the Saffron Revolution.

On 14 November 2007, SPDC Defense Minister Maj Gen Aye Myint said that “normalcy” had returned to Burma. Despite assurances from the SPDC that no more arrests would be carried out, the relentless campaign of arrest, harassment, and intimidation of dissidents continued. Over the past year, the regime has arrested 423 dissidents, bringing to over 2,100 the total number of political prisoners.

The ongoing repression targeted particularly NLD members. SPDC authorities arrested 139 NLD members including four elected Members of Parliament.

The focus of the latest crackdown was on opponents to the SPDC’s constitutional referendum and individual efforts by Burmese citizens to deliver aid during cyclone Nargis relief operations.

Between 29 February and 16 May, the regime detained 127 activists and ordinary citizens for expressing their opposition to the SPDC’s constitutional referendum.

In the aftermath of cyclone Nargis, the SPDC detained 17 activists for delivering aid to affected communities in the Irrawaddy delta. On 10 June, SPDC authorities also arrested at least 16 cyclone survivors for protesting outside the UNDP headquarters in Rangoon about not receiving any help from the regime.

In the wake of the Saffron Revolution, the military regime continued to harass, intimidate, and detain Buddhist monks. Over the past year, the SPDC stepped up its presence in and around monasteries across Burma. Surveillance of monks’ activities intensified and SPDC authorities carried out raids on various monasteries. The regime arrested 28 monks and sentenced 31 to prison terms.

The SPDC continued to use its draconian “security laws” and sham legal proceedings to charge, prosecute, and imprison its opponents. Over the past year, the regime sentenced at least 294 dissidents to prison terms.

The SPDC also extended the house arrest of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her deputy Tin Oo by another year on 27 May and 13 February respectively.

In 2008, the UN Human Rights Council passed two resolutions that strongly condemned the SPDC’s systematic human rights violations. The Geneva-based body has passed 18 resolutions against the military regime since 1992.
Detention conditions

Detention conditions in prisons across Burma continue to be horrific. The situation is particularly serious in Rangoon’s Insein Prison. The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana described its conditions as “appalling.”

Inadequate medical treatment in places of detention has resulted in deteriorating health conditions for many political prisoners, including 88 Generation Students Min Ko Naing, Myo Yan Naung Thein, and Mie Mie; Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD) leader Hkun Htun Oo; SNLD member Hla Aung; NLD elected MPs Dr Zaw Myint Maung and Than Lwin; and NLD members Nay Win and Thant Zin Myo.

Prison authorities punished political prisoners with solitary confinement for protesting prison conditions or demanding their basic rights. Political prisoners subjected to such measures include monk leader U Gambira; labor activist Su Su Nway, 88 Generation student Markee; Human Rights Defenders and Promoters members Myo Thant and Kyi Phyoe; activists Hnin Kyaw and Sithu Maung; protester Ohn Than; and NLD members Thet Wei, Aung Tun, Yan Naing Tun, and Pho Toke.

Torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners by prison authorities have again been reported. Reports have also surfaced of harassment of political prisoners by common criminals. The regime also continued to transfer political prisoners to jails located in the most remote areas of the country.

Over the past year, two political prisoners died in Burma’s prisons. Forty-six deaths in custody not involving political prisoners were also reported. Thirty-six of the 46 were killed by SPDC Army soldiers and riot police in Insein prison on 3 May. Soldiers and police were brought in to restore order after some inmates started a fire to warm up after cyclone Nargis destroyed the roof in one section of the prison.

Forced labor practices – no end in sight

Burma’s people continue to suffer under the SPDC’s pervasive practices of forced labor. During the past year, there were numerous reports of the SPDC ordering villagers and cyclone Nargis survivors to perform forced labor on road construction and repair; construction of military bases; planting and/or cultivation of various agricultural crops; portering military supplies; and performing sentry duty. Cyclone Nargis survivors were particularly vulnerable and many were required to perform forced labor as a condition to receiving aid and relief.

In February 2007, the SPDC and the International Labor Organization (ILO) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that formalized a procedure for the reporting, investigation, and resolution of forced labor complaints by Burma’s citizens. Despite the continued existence of the MoU between the ILO and the SPDC, the ILO has had no success in addressing and resolving forced labor issues. On 14 November 2007, the ILO Secretariat said that the mechanism remained out of reach for most.

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61 See January 2008 and May 2008 Burma Bulletins
62 Narinjara News (16 Oct 08) Six Democracy Activists Placed with Criminals in Sittwe Prison; Mizzima News (27 Oct 08) Four NLD prisoners moved to Insein ‘dog cell’
63 Narinjara News (14 Sep 08) Five Political Prisoners on Hunger Strike Moved; See November 2008 Burma Bulletin
64 See March 2008 and July 2008 Burma Bulletins
66 Mizzima News (05 May 08) 36 dead, 70 injured in fire at notorious prison
68 See March 2007 Burma Bulletin
69 AFP (14 Nov 07) Myanmar under fire over forced labour at ILO
Even when citizens were able to file complaints with the ILO representative in Rangoon, complainants were threatened, intimidated, harassed, and jailed as a result.

- **9 January**: SPDC authorities arrested Sanchaung Township’s NLD Chairman Thet Wei for possessing documents on SPDC-ordered forced labor incidents.\(^\text{70}\) On 16 September, the SPDC sentenced Thet Wei to two years in prison with hard labor on charges of trying to lodge a complaint with the ILO on the use of child soldiers by the SPDC Army.\(^\text{71}\)

- **31 January**: The ILO representative in Rangoon went to Taungdwingyi, Rangoon Division, to investigate a forced labor complaint. Before his arrival, local SPDC authorities threatened local residents not to disclose the truth about the forced labor incident. Despite assurances by the SPDC that the ILO representative could perform his investigation without any interference, USDA members and Swan Arr Shin thugs surrounded the house where the ILO official and the complainant met. The SPDC’s intimidation effectively silenced the complainants.\(^\text{72}\)

- **5 March**: SPDC Military Affairs Security personnel and Labor Ministry officials questioned more than 70 residents in Arakan State after they reported incidents of forced labor to the ILO. More than 70 citizens of Taunggoat Township signed a petition that claimed local authorities had committed acts of forced labor and extortion. SPDC Military Affairs Security personnel reportedly forced the residents who had signed the petition to sign a counter document claiming that they had been coerced into petitioning the ILO.\(^\text{73}\)

On 13 June, the SPDC’s pervasive practice of using forced labor was, once again, discussed by the ILO. The ILO Committee on the Application of Standards convened a Special Sitting on Burma. The Committee expressed its concern that forced labor in Burma, including the recruitment of children into the armed forces, remained as widespread as before.\(^\text{74}\)

**Freedom of information**

The pervasive atmosphere of censorship, threats, and arrests against media persons make Burma one of the world’s most repressive media environments. Burma ranks 170th out of the 173 countries in Reporters Sans Frontiers’ latest report on press freedom worldwide.\(^\text{75}\) Over the past year the regime arrested 15 journalists.\(^\text{76}\)

The SPDC relentlessly censored news and suspended publications that reported on sensitive political and economic issues. The regime also suppressed all expressions of dissenting views.\(^\text{77}\) On 22 January, SPDC security forces arrested poet Saw Wai for writing a Valentine’s Day poem. The initial letters of each line of the poem published in the weekly Love journal, read: “General Than Shwe is crazy with power.”\(^\text{78}\) On 10 November, he was sentenced to two years in prison on charges of “inducing crimes against public tranquility.”\(^\text{79}\)

The regime intensified restrictions on internet access. The junta targeted blogs, which had played a vital role in reporting events during the Saffron Revolution. On 29 January, police in Rangoon arrested blogger Nay Phone Latt.\(^\text{80}\) On 10 November, he was sentenced to 20 years and six months in

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\(^{70}\) Irrawaddy (11 Jan 08) NLD Member Released in Human Rights Case; DVB (11 Jan 08) NLD chairperson in San Chaung arrested

\(^{71}\) Mizzima News (17 Sep 08) NLD leader sentenced for trying to complain to ILO on use of child soldiers; DVB (18 Sep 08) NLD chairman sentenced to two years’ hard labour

\(^{72}\) Mizzima News (06 Feb 08) Complainant threatened not to disclose truth to ILO

\(^{73}\) Irrawaddy (06 Mar 08) Arakan residents petition ILO on forced labor issues

\(^{74}\) 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)

\(^{75}\) RSF (22 Oct 08) Only peace protects freedoms in post-9/11 world - Close-up on... Asia


\(^{78}\) BBC (23 Jan 08) Burma poet held for secret insult

\(^{79}\) Irrawaddy (10 Nov 08) Young Burmese Blogger Sentenced to more than 20 Years in Jail

\(^{80}\) Mizzima News (29 Jan 08) Burmese bloggers hide from police
prison.\textsuperscript{81} SPDC authorities also stepped up monitoring and surveillance of internet cafes.\textsuperscript{82} In September and October, pro-regime hackers carried out repeated attacks on the websites of several Burmese media in exile.\textsuperscript{83}

The regime also banned the sale and distribution of “Rambo 4” DVDs. On 8 March, SPDC authorities in Rangoon arrested two NLD members for possession of “Rambo 4” DVDs.\textsuperscript{84} SPDC authorities also banned the VCDs by U Nyanithara and U Kovida, two senior monks who criticized the junta’s crackdown. The two VCDs criticized the military regime using allegorical classic Buddhist stories.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{81} Irrawaddy (10 Nov 08) Young Burmese Blogger Sentenced to more than 20 Years in Jail
\textsuperscript{82} See January 2008, March 2008, and September 2008 Burma Bulletins
\textsuperscript{83} See September 2008 and October 2008 Burma Bulletins
\textsuperscript{84} DVB (10 Mar 08) NLD members arrested over Rambo DVDs
\textsuperscript{85} Irrawaddy (16 Nov 07) Dhamma VCDs by Two Well-known Monks Banned in Burma
MILITARY

SPDC offensive intensifies in Eastern Burma

Since November 2007, the SPDC Army has stepped up its military offensive against civilians and armed opposition groups in Eastern Burma. The SPDC Army mobilized 249 Infantry and Light Infantry Battalions – 30% of the regime’s frontline troops nationwide – to carry out military operations. The attacks resulted in the forced relocation or destruction of 142 villages and the displacement of 66,000 people. The SPDC destroyed villagers’ farms and paddy fields in a bid to cut off the villagers’ food supplies. The regime also forced villagers to clear roads, work as porters, and act as minesweepers.

Landmines laid by both the SPDC Army and armed opposition groups continued to kill and injure civilians in Eastern Burma.

Cyclone survivors also arrived in Mae Sot, Thailand, from the Irrawaddy delta. The SPDC attempted to stem the flow by arresting individuals attempting to flee, and warning Buddhist monasteries in border areas to refuse shelter to any cyclone survivors. Military checkpoints were also strengthened.

Arms flow into Burma

The bloody repression of the Saffron Revolution and the ongoing military offensive against ethnic nationalities in Eastern Burma provided compelling evidence of how the military regime used its armed forces to oppress the Burmese people. Over the past year, the regime continued to purchase arms and other military supplies from China, Russia, and India.

Between December 2007 and August, the Chinese government delivered over 750 Chinese “First Automobile Works” (FAW) military trucks to the SPDC. The vehicles were part of a 3,500 truck consignment purchased by the junta. The FAW trucks are designed to tow artillery and transport military supplies. In early March, about 40 FAW trucks were sent to the Kyaikkasan police grounds in Rangoon’s Bahan Township.

On 2 April, Japan’s public broadcaster NHK reported that North Korea had been selling the SPDC rocket launchers with a range of about 65 kilometers. The report said that exports of the weapons had been handled by an unnamed Singapore trading company.

In mid-April, trucks transporting military equipment including artillery ammunitions and guns entered Burma from Moreh in India’s Northeastern State of Manipur. Citing military sources, the India-based newspaper Sangai Express said that the equipment was delivered as part of the trade deals reached between Delhi and the SPDC.

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86 See December 2007 Burma Bulletin
87 TBBC (Oct 08) Internal Displacement and International Law in Eastern Burma
88 TBBC (Oct 08) Internal Displacement and International Law in Eastern Burma
89 Irrawaddy (11 Dec 07) Military offensive targeting villagers’ food supplies
90 See December 2007 and January 2008 Burma Bulletins
92 See June 2008 Burma Bulletin
93 See January 2008, April 2008, and August 2008 Burma Bulletins
94 DVB (26 Aug 08) 200 more military trucks delivered from China
95 Mizzima News (11 Apr 08) Chinese trucks to tow howitzer arrive on border
96 DPA (04 Mar 08) China-made police trucks arrive in Rangoon
97 AFP (02 Apr 08) N Korea exporting multiple-launch rockets to Myanmar; Reuters (03 Apr 08) N Korea sells Rocket Launchers to Burma
98 Irrawaddy (19 Apr 08) Burma’s Trading Neighbors Offering Military Gifts
DISPLACEMENT

Migrant workers from Burma in the region

Economic hardship and human rights continued to push people out of Burma to seek work in neighboring countries where they are vulnerable to various forms of exploitation. In 2008, there were more than 2.8 million Burmese migrant workers in Asia. Most of them were undocumented. Without even the limited rights of documented migrant workers, they were without access to healthcare and other services, and lived in constant fear of deportation.

The regime’s restrictions on freedom of movement force those wanting to seek work abroad to rely on human smugglers. They frequently go into debt to pay for safe passage only to be sold by traffickers and forcibly assigned to unsafe work, including prostitution. On 9 April, 54 undocumented migrants including children from Mon State died in Thailand while being transported from Ranong to Phuket in a sealed freezer truck. The incident focused attention on the problems associated with smuggling and trafficking of people from Burma. The adult survivors received two-month suspended sentences and a 1,000 baht fine for violating Thailand’s immigration laws.

In Western Burma, the regime continued to deny Rohingya the basic right of citizenship. The SPDC also subjected them to travel restrictions, forced relocation, extortion, and arbitrary arrest and imprisonment. Rohingya fled to Bangladesh where they lived in appalling conditions in makeshift camps. In the “sailing season” (October to April), 5,570 Rohingya boarded unseaworthy vessels in Bangladesh and Burma that left for Thailand and Malaysia. Many boat departures were not documented, and many others never arrived. At least two boats sank and 250 to 500 people drowned. At least three boats were detained in Burma and at least 21 (carrying about 1,400 people) in Thailand. Another boat was rescued off the coast of Sri Lanka, but 20 of the 91 passengers were already dead of starvation.

In Thailand, local authorities continued to raid factories and extort money from undocumented migrant workers. In the first half of 2008, 298,847 Burmese nationals crossed from Myawaddy into Mae Sot, Thailand, and 86,517 did not return. In the same period, Thai authorities deported 72,124 Burmese who entered Thailand without proper documents.

In Malaysia, migrant workers were also exploited and deported. In the lead up to the March elections in Malaysia, politicians made strong statements on immigration issues, keen to appear “tough on illegals.” Malaysia’s vigilante thugs RELA increased the frequency of their attacks on migrant communities including registered refugees. Hundreds of people were rounded up and detained, including pregnant women and children. Many were deported. Many others went into hiding.

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99 Reuters (10 Apr 08) Myanmar migrant recalls container horror
100 AFP (11 Apr 08) Thai court jails Myanmar container survivors for three days
101 Arakan Project. See April 2008 Burma Bulletin
102 See November 2007 Burma Bulletin
103 Bangkok Post (07 Jul 08) Third of Burmese fail to return home
104 AP (28 Apr 08) Malaysia Tightens Borders against Illegal Immigrants
105 Project Maje (Jul 08) We Built This City: Workers from Burma at Risk in Malaysia
106 Irrawaddy (24 Mar 08) Hundreds of Burmese Migrants Rounded Up in Malaysia
AID

Restrictions on humanitarian aid

In January the regime added new restrictions on humanitarian aid and increased limitations on international aid workers’ access within the country.\textsuperscript{107} The SPDC has a long history of obstructing the delivery of humanitarian aid through restrictive policies, taxes, and visa restrictions.

The SPDC has frustrated humanitarian aid and assistance by preventing staff from traveling and operating freely within the country - especially in conflict areas.\textsuperscript{108} Communities displaced by militarization rely on local initiatives and cross-border aid. In late September, schools and clinics in villages of Kawkareik Township, Karen State, were forced to close following joint operations launched by the SPDC Army and the DKBA.\textsuperscript{109}

The restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid have particularly targeted HIV/AIDS programs. Without adequate healthcare services, individuals have established private clinics and developed partnerships with monasteries and international aid agencies. However, the regime has closed these programs down and arrested people involved, including patients. In March, the SPDC ordered organizations working on HIV/AIDS in Mandalay, including Population Services International and Save the Children, to cease health, education, and counseling activities to local communities.\textsuperscript{110} Maggin Monastery in Rangoon Division, known for providing assistance to people with HIV, was raided four times during in the aftermath of the Saffron Revolution and closed down.\textsuperscript{111} Monks were arrested and the abbot was sentenced to 16 years imprisonment.\textsuperscript{112} Patients were transferred to public hospitals. Two later died.\textsuperscript{113}

Cyclone Nargis

The regime’s response to cyclone Nargis turned a natural disaster into a man-made tragedy. In the days and months following the cyclone, the SPDC prevented humanitarian assistance from reaching the areas where it was needed most. While appealing for cash assistance, the SPDC refused repeated requests from UN agencies and others to deliver aid directly to affected areas.\textsuperscript{114} Despite the urgent need for aid workers to quickly reach the disaster-affected areas, the SPDC obstructed the work of international humanitarian agencies, confiscated aid shipments, and profited from aid funds. The results were devastating. By 28 May, the World Food Program (WFP) estimated that only 485,000 people (or 20\%) of the estimated 2.4 million affected by the cyclone had received their first ration of food.\textsuperscript{115} In areas where the SPDC had granted access, aid deliveries were limited and inconsistent.\textsuperscript{116} SPDC authorities at all levels attempted to profit, personally and politically, from donor generosity.\textsuperscript{117}

- The SPDC set up roadblocks on the main roads to the Irrawaddy delta regions to block foreign aid workers from accessing the worst affected areas. Local NGOs and individuals had to negotiate and in some cases bribe their way into the area.
- The SPDC prevented the WFP from importing essential supplies and was forced to rely on local markets to purchase scarce supplies for distribution.

\textsuperscript{107} January 2008 Burma Bulletin
\textsuperscript{108} US Government Accountability Office (Apr 07) Assistance Programs Constrained in Burma
\textsuperscript{109} Mizzima News (23 Oct 08) Army operations force closure of schools, clinics
\textsuperscript{110} March 2008 Burma Bulletin
\textsuperscript{111} Irrawaddy (09 Oct 07) Monastery raided for fourth time in Rangoon
\textsuperscript{112} DVB (07 Nov 08) Saffron revolution monks given lengthy jail terms
\textsuperscript{113} Australian (31 Mar 08) Burma stops aid for HIV victims
\textsuperscript{114} AP (24 May 08) Aid Agencies Cautiously Welcome Burma Pledge
\textsuperscript{115} DMHA (29 May 08) Cyclone Nargis Update
\textsuperscript{116} OCHA (30 Jun 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 36
• On 28 July, the UN admitted that the SPDC had pocketed an estimated US$10 million from UN aid funds intended for cyclone Nargis recovery because of the regime’s manipulation of currency exchange rates.

• From mid-May, the US, France, and the UK had aid vessels anchored in international waters off the coast of Burma. The SPDC refused permission for the aid vessels to deliver humanitarian assistance that included enough food to feed at least 100,000 people for 15 days, shelter and water purification supplies.

• SPDC officials and soldiers confiscated supplies from survivors, substituted spoiled or poor-quality food in place of nutrition-rich biscuits sent by international donors, charged survivors for aid supplies, held raffles for relief items, and told survivors that they had to vote “Yes” in the constitutional referendum in order to receive aid.

• SPDC authorities extorted money from businesses and individuals under the pretence of collecting relief funds and agricultural supplies for cyclone survivors. Reports of extortion surfaced in Arakan, Kachin, and Mon States and in Pegu and Sagaing Divisions.

Disaster mismanagement

The SPDC’s usual restrictions on the free flow of information had a devastating impact on millions of Burmese living in the areas hit by cyclone Nargis. Despite advanced knowledge that cyclone Nargis would hit Burma, the regime failed to adequately inform its own people about the impending catastrophe.

Beginning on 26 April, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) issued 41 general warnings to SPDC authorities about cyclone Nargis. On 30 April, the IMD updated the SPDC every three hours about the cyclone, indicating its path, speed, severity, and the locations where the cyclone would hit land. The Asian Disaster Preparedness Center in Bangkok also issued a cyclone warning to SPDC authorities. State-run media finally issued a weather advisory on 2 May. The state-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar described the impending cyclone as “widespread rain or thundershowers” with winds reaching 110 kilometers per hour. State television warnings failed to tell people how to prepare when the cyclone hit land. The SPDC also failed to issue an order to evacuate villagers in the disaster-prone zones. “Looking at the number of deaths, it leads us to think that an early warning system had not been put in place,” said a spokesperson for the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

After the cyclone hit Burma, the SPDC’s propaganda machine went into overdrive in order to keep people in the dark about the true magnitude of the tragedy unleashed by Nargis. The regime tightened its grip on the flow of information to hide the suffering of cyclone-affected communities and its mishandling of relief assistance. The junta portrayed itself as being fully in control of the relief effort in its own publications. Its censorship board prevented local media from traveling to the delta, covering the suffering of cyclone survivors or carrying unofficial death tolls.

On 19 May, SPDC Army soldiers from Light Infantry Division 66 arrested eight local journalists who had allegedly failed to inform authorities of their presence in Labutta Township. On 10 June, SPDC authorities in Rangoon’s Tamwe Township arrested Ein Khine Oo, a 24-year-old journalist of the weekly journal Ecovision. She had been covering stories related to aid delivery to cyclone survivors in the Irrawaddy delta. The police accused her of taking photographs with the intention of selling

118 Times (06 May 08) India says it warned Burma about cyclone
119 Times (06 May 08) India says it warned Burma about cyclone
120 Mizzima News (06 May 08) Burma knew of cyclone nearly a week before it hit
121 NLM (02 May 08) “Storm News”
122 AP (03 May 08) Myanmar warns of strong winds, high tides as Cyclone Nargis heads toward coast
123 Mizzima News (06 May 08) Burma knew of cyclone nearly a week before it hit
124 AFP (06 May 08) Myanmar says cyclone death toll tops 15,000
125 See May 2008 Burma Bulletin
126 Irrawaddy (21 May 08) 8 Burmese journalists arrested in Laputta
them to foreign media organizations. Police also detained a resident of Labutta who had filmed the devastation caused by cyclone Nargis. On 14 November, Ein Khine Oo was sentenced to two years in prison on charges of “disturbing tranquility.”

The SPDC refused to issue entry visas to foreign journalist and deported two British correspondents. SPDC military intelligence officials kept hotels popular with journalists in Rangoon under constant surveillance. The regime tapped journalists’ telephones and threatened others. SPDC authorities also banned the sale and distribution of privately-made VCDs of cyclone Nargis.

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127 Mizzima News (24 Jun 08) Reporter arrested for covering cyclone news
128 Mizzima News (09 Jun 08) Junta blacks out media
129 AP (17 Nov 08) Myanmar sentences journalist to 2 years in prison
130 IPS (13 May 08) Foreigners, Cameras Banned in Cyclone-Hit Areas; CPJ (14 May 08) Burma: Authorities restrict Cyclone Nargis news coverage; RSF (06 May 08) Burma - Military government urged to issue press visas to foreign media; Mizzima News (06 May 08) BBC reporter deported from airport by junta; AP (26 May 08) Burma bans top Western journalist, deports another
131 Irrawaddy (13 May 08) Danger: Getting the Truth Out of Burma
132 Narinjara News (23 Jun 08) Authorities in Arakan prohibit watching Cyclone Nargis video
WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Women – violence continues with impunity

The SPDC further entrenched discrimination against women by enshrining employment discrimination and disproportionate political representation in the new constitution. Under the constitution, special provisions exclude women from certain professions and working in particular areas of the country. Currently there are no women holding high political positions. The regime’s allocation of 25% parliamentary seats for the military will further institutionalize this lack of representation.\(^{133}\)

In November, the CEDAW Committee condemned the high prevalence of violence against women and girls in Burma. The Committee also expressed concern that rape was accompanied by a culture of silence and impunity.\(^{134}\) Incidents are under-reported, and those that do report face threats from authorities and are settled out of court.\(^{135}\) Rights groups welcomed the Committee’s report, and called for concrete action from other UN bodies.\(^{136}\) The Women’s League of Burma (WLB) called on the international community to help Burma in the democratization process as the only way to safe-guard the rights of women.\(^{137}\) They also called on the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women to carry out an investigation into the state-sanctioned sexual violence against the women of Burma.\(^{138}\)

Women continue to rely on human traffickers to escape human rights abuses and desperate poverty and to find new lives in neighboring countries. Despite being a signatory to numerous agreements to combat trafficking, the SPDC has created the conditions for its proliferation. The Kachin Women's Association of Thailand (KWAT) August report “Eastward Bound” found that women were trafficked to China and sold as wives for around 13,000 yuan (US$2,000). Most were under 18. Some sought assistance from the embassy in Beijing, only to be turned away or accused of trafficking themselves.\(^{139}\)

Children – the most vulnerable

In 2008, the only Asian country with a child mortality rate worse than Burma was Afghanistan. Between 270 and 400 children died every day, mostly from preventable conditions.\(^{140}\) In March, UN Special Rapporteur on Burma Paulo Sergio Pinheiro drew attention to the deteriorating education system, including the lack of a primary level education for over half of Burma's children.\(^{141}\)

Burma has 70,000 child soldiers, the largest number in the world. In December 2007, UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-Moon called on the SPDC to discharge all child soldiers and allow UN officials to access conflict areas.\(^{142}\) The regime denied that there were child soldiers in its army.\(^{143}\) Since then, the SPDC

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*per 1,000 live births

\(^{133}\) Mizzima News (06 Nov 08) Burma and the farce of women's rights
\(^{134}\) USCB (18 Nov 08) Human rights activists laud United Nations’ recognition of Burmese junta’s systematic use of sexual violence against ethnic women, impunity
\(^{135}\) See August 2008 Burma Bulletin
\(^{136}\) USCB (18 Nov 08) Human rights activists laud United Nations’ recognition of Burmese junta’s systematic use of sexual violence against ethnic women, impunity
\(^{137}\) Mizzima News (03 Nov 08) Burmese women's rights "intact": Junta's ambassador tells UN
\(^{138}\) WLB (24 Nov 08) Statement on International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
\(^{139}\) Mizzima News (05 Aug 08) KWAT: Women enslaved due to economic hardships
\(^{140}\) AP (24 Jan 08) Burma has second highest child mortality rate in Asia
\(^{141}\) HRC, 7th Session, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, 5 March 2008, UN Doc A/HRC/7/18
Army has not only retained child soldiers but continued to abduct children for new recruits. After cyclone Nargis, an SPDC Army official reportedly recruited 300 cyclone orphans in and around Labutta, Irrawaddy Division, with promises of food and shelter.

In cyclone Nargis’ wake, children were extremely vulnerable. More than 40% of people killed in the storm were children. In the Irrawaddy delta, an estimated 30,000 children were acutely malnourished even before the cyclone. Of the children that survived, many were orphand or separated from family. Three thousand schools were destroyed or damaged affecting the education for 500,000 children. The situation left them open to trafficking, sexual abuse, and recruitment as child soldiers.

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143 BBC (30 Jan 08) Burma ‘acting on child soldiers’
145 Mizzima News (22 May 08) Cyclone orphans could be trafficked: Human Right group
146 AP (19 May 08) Save the Children warns of starvation in Burma
147 OCHA (12 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 8
148 See May 2008 Burma Bulletin
HEALTH

Curable diseases turn deadly

The SPDC has demanded large amounts of foreign aid for health programs. However it has refused to maintain the basic infrastructures that are essential prerequisites for delivering such programs. In 2007, the regime spent 850 kyat (US$0.70) per person on healthcare.149 Deadly outbreaks of treatable or preventable illnesses underscored the SPDC’s impoverishment and obstruction of humanitarian assistance. Without preventative measures, previously eradicated diseases such as elephantiasis/filarisis, polio, and cholera are posing new threats. TB and malaria are mutating into new and deadlier strains.150 In November and December 2007, there were further outbreaks of bird flu in Shan State and, for the first time, it was diagnosed in a human. 2,058 birds died and 1,500 were culled.151

Where public health clinics do exist, patients are charged exorbitant fees and drugs often run out or are expired.152 The growing trade in counterfeit medicines is leading to drug resistance in some conditions, notably multi-drug resistant tuberculosis.153 Without adequate healthcare services, individuals have established private clinics and developed partnerships with monasteries and international aid agencies. However, the regime has closed programs down and arrested people involved, particular targeting HIV/AIDS programs.154

The health hazards in the Irrawaddy delta following cyclone Nargis demonstrated the dire state of peoples’ health and health services before the disaster. Already, the population was 30% chronically malnourished, and mosquito and water-borne viruses endemic in the area included dengue fever, cholera, and malaria. Of the existing health facilities, the cyclone destroyed at least 75%.155 The remaining services were overcrowded, receiving up to 6,000 patients a day.156 Cyclone survivors suffered acute respiratory infections, dysentery, dengue fever, malaria, cholera, diarrhea, and shock.157 Despite clean-up efforts and massive donations of equipment, six months after cyclone Nargis, clean water remained in short supply.158

Food security: hungrier than ever

While still producing a rice surplus in 2008, approximately five million people, or around 10% of the population, were malnourished.159 The cost of feeding a family was beyond most wage earners. By the end of 2007, inflation reached a crippling 50%.160 After cyclone Nargis in May, the price of rice more than doubled.161

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150 Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkely (Jul 07) The Gathering Storm
151 AP (24 Nov 07) Myanmar reports bird flu outbreak at chicken farm in northeast
152 IMNA (12 Jul 07) ARV drugs need to be priced lower in Burma IMNA
153 Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkely (Jul 07) The Gathering Storm
154 See October 2007 and March 2008 Burma Bulletins
155 TCG (Jul 08) Post-Nargis Joint Assessment
156 Globe and Mail (12 May 08) Myanmar toll likely to hit 216,000
157 WHO (16 Jun 08) WHO releases first disease surveillance reports in Myanmar
158 Mizzima News (26 Jun 08) MSF draws attention to need for clean drinking water for cyclone survivors
159 VOA (09 Jan 08) Burma’s control of the transportation system causes millions to go hungry; Irrawaddy (05 Aug 05) UN warns of humanitarian crisis in Burma
160 EIU (Dec 07) Country Report: Myanmar (Burma)
161 May 2008 Burma Bulletin
In 2008, Burma ranked as the third most economically repressed country in the world and the second most corrupt.\textsuperscript{162} Farming communities in Burma bear the heaviest burden of arbitrary taxation and confiscation of harvest and land.\textsuperscript{163} The regime increased forced cultivation of cash crops and jatropha for biofuel.\textsuperscript{164} Forced labor for infrastructure projects continued to take farmers away from their fields at harvest time. In Eastern Burma, the SPDC Army’s occupation, burning, and land-mining of paddy fields put local communities under imminent threat of starvation.\textsuperscript{165}

The SPDC restricted domestic trade in essential commodities and the transport of food to areas affected by food shortages.\textsuperscript{166} Even after cyclone Nargis destroyed much of the arable land in the most productive rice-producing of the country, the regime made fresh export commitments to Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and India.\textsuperscript{167} Farmers still faced basic problems including a lack of shelter for themselves, rice seeds, fertilizers, and plowing animals.\textsuperscript{168}

SPDC obstruction of the delivery of relief supplies and hindering humanitarian aid efforts has also threatened food security. A month after the cyclone, 34% of households reported having no food, and a further 45% reported having less a week’s supply of food.\textsuperscript{169} The WFP continued its programs in Northern Arakan State and elsewhere. They said that 44% of households in the area had insufficient food and 27% of children under five suffered from “moderate to acute” malnutrition.\textsuperscript{170} SPDC obstruction of food delivery was not limited to cyclone-affected areas. In January, the WFP said that their main challenges in distributing food assistance were SPDC restrictions on travel.\textsuperscript{171}

In 2008, food shortages caused by a rat plague in Chin State reportedly led to 100 deaths, mostly children and the elderly.\textsuperscript{172} SPDC authorities banned food supplies from foreign countries from being transported to affected areas, and confiscated donated items.\textsuperscript{173} WFP sought funding to address the crisis, but acknowledged the difficulties they faced in negotiations with the regime. “They are almost as bad as the government in North Korea, with a bunch of old generals sitting high in their newly built capital,” said a WFP spokesperson.\textsuperscript{174}

**SPDC – Still Asia’s chief supplier of amphetamines, world’s #2 source of heroin**

Burma is still ASEAN’s main source of illicit drugs – especially heroin and amphetamine type stimulations. Thailand has borne the major burden of Burma’s illegal drug production and trafficking. Thailand’s major drug problem is the trafficking of large quantities of methamphetamine produced in Burma.\textsuperscript{175}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prices (in kyat, US$1=1,100 kyat)</th>
<th>Before Nargis</th>
<th>After Nargis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice/kg</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork/kg</td>
<td>2,761</td>
<td>3,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrimp/kg</td>
<td>3,750</td>
<td>8,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking oil/liter</td>
<td>1,840</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking charcoal</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking gas 25 liter</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pack of candles</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas/gallon</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diesel/gallon</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus fare</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water/liter</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinc roofing</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron nails/kg</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>3,125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\textsuperscript{162} Heritage Foundation (Jan 06) Index of Economic Freedom; AP (20 Oct 04) 10 Best and Worst in Global Corruption Survey; Transparency International (Sep 08) Corruption Perceptions Index


\textsuperscript{164} See July 2007 Burma Bulletin

\textsuperscript{165} KHRG (01 Aug 08) Attacks, killings and the food crisis in Toungoo District

\textsuperscript{166} See May 2008 Burma Bulletin

\textsuperscript{167} See February 2008, April 2008, and July 2008 Burma Bulletins

\textsuperscript{168} See May 2008 and October 2008 Burma Bulletins

\textsuperscript{169} Reuters (04 Jun 08) Burmese stock up on rice

\textsuperscript{170} Tripartite Core Group (Jul 08) Post-Nargis Joint Assessment

\textsuperscript{171} DPA (16 Sep 08) WFP faces 11.2-million-dollar shortfall in Myanmar

\textsuperscript{172} AP (10 Jan 08) UN Agency Says Myanmar Food Aid Hampered

\textsuperscript{173} ABC (16 Oct 08) Super Rats Invade; Blamed for Myanmar Famine


\textsuperscript{175} ABC (16 Oct 08) Super Rats Invade; Blamed for Myanmar Famine

\textsuperscript{176} International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (March 08) Volume Vol. II Money Laundering and Financial Crimes
According to China’s National Narcotics Control Commission, Burma remains the major source of opium entering China. Chinese authorities reported that the majority of heroin produced in Burma is trafficked through China to the international market. Heroin and methamphetamine continued to move from Burma across Thailand’s Northern border for domestic consumption as well as being trafficked to regional and international markets.\textsuperscript{177}

Reports on drug cultivation and production reports issued during 2008 indicated that amphetamine production continued to increase and that opium poppy cultivation and opium production increased as well.

In June, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said that the alarming increase in opium production in Afghanistan and Burma in 2007 was posing a serious threat to the progress made in drug control over the past several years. The UNODC’s 2008 World Drug Report noted that after six years of decline, opium poppy cultivation in Southeast Asia increased by 22% in 2007, mainly driven by a 29% increase in opium cultivation in Burma.\textsuperscript{178} On 16 November, Deputy Sec-Gen of Thailand’s Narcotics Control Board (NCB) Pitaya Jinawat echoed the findings and said that opium cultivation in Thailand, Laos, and Burma had increased over the past three years. UNODC also noted that the increase in opium poppy cultivation resulted in a 46% increase in opium production.\textsuperscript{179}

The US State Department said that Burma continued to be the country of origin for the majority of methamphetamine pills in Asia.\textsuperscript{180} The US State Department also found that:

- The SPDC had not made consistent efforts against drug-related corruption;
- SPDC Army and police personnel are believed to be involved in facilitating the drug trade;
- Collusion between drug traffickers and the junta allowed organized crime groups to function with virtual impunity; and
- The SPDC has never prosecuted a SPDC Army officer over the rank of colonel for drug-related offenses or drug-related corruption.\textsuperscript{181}
- On 16 September, and for the seventh straight year, the US said that Burma had “failed demonstrably” in its efforts to combat illicit narcotics.\textsuperscript{182}

\textsuperscript{177} International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (March 08) Volume I Drug and Chemical Control
\textsuperscript{178} Irrawaddy (27 Jun 08) Burma and Afghanistan increase opium production: UNODC
\textsuperscript{179} UNODC (Jun 08) 2008 World Drug Report
\textsuperscript{180} Mizzima News (17 Sep 08) Burma again singled out for anti-narcotics negligence
\textsuperscript{181} International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (March 08) Volume I Drug and Chemical Control
\textsuperscript{182} Mizzima News (17 Sep 08) Burma again singled out for anti-narcotics negligence
ECONOMY

Trade and investment goes forward

Burma is ranked as the third most economically repressed country in the world and the second most corrupt. The lack of monetary and fiscal stability has created conditions of rising inflation, fiscal deficits, multiple exchange rates, distorted interest rates, and fraudulent reporting. UNESCAP warned that Burma is so far behind its neighbors that it threatens to destabilize regional development.

Since ASEAN and the EU opened talks on a free trade agreement in May 2007, no progress has been made due to the SPDC’s failure to make any progress in democratic reforms.

Burma’s oil, gas and hydro-electric resources are being exported while the majority of people has no electricity. Growing anger against projects that have deepened poverty and increased abuses against the people has led to demonstrations. In 2008, the SPDC continued to sell off its oil and natural gas resources to maintain good relations with and obtain political protection from its neighbors – especially India, China, and Thailand.

**Thailand:** Thailand signed an agreement to develop a deep seaport in Tavoy, Tenasserim Division. Private companies signed new contracts, and Thai state-owned energy company PTT Exploration and Production (PTTEP) and the SPDC signed new agreements on drilling in the Gulf of Martaban.

**China:** China’s National Petroleum Corp (CNPC) signed new agreements for joint oil and gas exploration. The Non-Ferrous Metal Group Company signed a production-sharing contract to produce nickel in Mandalay Division.

**South Korea:** Daewoo signed agreements for joint oil and gas exploration.

**India:** The SPDC signed economic aid and cooperation agreements with India. India agreed to spend US$135 million developing transport links. The Exim Bank extended loans worth over US$100 million for financing infrastructure development.

**Russia:** Russia’s Victorious Glory International signed a gold exploration agreement along the Uru River between Phakant, Kachin State and Homalin, Sagaing Division, an area also known for uranium.

**Vietnam:** Vietnamese companies signed investment agreements in Burma for exploration, drilling, and production of oil and gas in the Gulf of Martaban.

Sanctions

Over the past year, the US, the EU, Canada, and Australia all strengthened sanctions on the regime. New measures focused on individual members of the junta and their cronies, imposing visa bans and freezing assets. Canada also banned all investment and trade, except for the export of humanitarian goods. The US strengthened their gem trade ban.

There were some signs that sanctions and boycotts were having their intended effect.

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183 Transparency International (2007) 2007 Corruption Perceptions Index; Heritage Foundation (Jan 06) Index of Economic Freedom
184 UNESCAP (Nov 07) Ten as One: Challenges and Opportunities for ASEAN Integration
185 Irrawaddy (01 Sep 08) Brussels Baulks at Asean FTA Deal Because of Burma
186 TNA (19 May 08) Thailand, Myanmar to develop Tavoy deepsea port
187 See June 2008 Burma Bulletin
188 See May 2008 and June 2008 Burma Bulletins
189 Xinhua (28 Jul 08) China, Myanmar sign nickel production sharing contract
190 See May 2008 and June 2008 Burma Bulletins
191 Reuters (03 Apr 08) India, Myanmar sign nickel production sharing contract
192 See June 2008 and October 2008 Burma Bulletins
193 Reuters (16 Feb 08) Russian firm seeks gold in army-ruled Myanmar
194 Reuters (04 Oct 08) Vietnam signs oil, gas hunt deal with Myanmar
195 AP (04 Oct 08) Vietnam signs oil, gas hunt deal with Myanmar
196 See November 2007, July 2008, and October 2008 Burma Bulletins
197 See November 2007 Burma Bulletin
198 Globe and Mail (14 Nov 07) Ottawa imposes new sanctions on Myanmar
199 See July 2008 Burma Bulletin
• In November 2007, Rangoon-based diplomats reported that the junta was rattled by financial sanctions imposed by the US, the EU, and Australia.\textsuperscript{200}

• In November 2007, junta crony Tay Za was forced to ground planes and suspended Air Bagan flights to Singapore.\textsuperscript{201}

• In an effort to appease people and businesses named on the US sanctions lists, the SPDC secured agreements with Indian and Singapore banks to ensure that cross-border trade payments could circumvent US sanctions.\textsuperscript{202}

• Foreign investment in Burma fell 77\% in 2007-2008.\textsuperscript{203}

**Reconstruction**

On 10 July, the UN/ASEAN/SPDC Post-Nargis Joint Assessment (PONJA) put a price tag on many cyclone related losses – US$1.7 billion in damage and $2.3 billion in lost income. The report estimated Burma will need at least US$1 billion over the next three years for recovery and rehabilitation.\textsuperscript{204} The SPDC was very enthusiastic about discussions over “reconstruction”, and put the damage bill at $11.7 billion.\textsuperscript{205} Reconstruction efforts in the immediate aftermath of cyclone Nargis illustrated the SPDC’s and its cronies’ likeminded pursuit of personal profit over the well-being of Burma’s people.\textsuperscript{206} The SPDC gave them control of “reconstruction and relief” in critical townships.\textsuperscript{207}

**Dams**

Burma ranks 104th out of 149 countries in Yale’s Environmental Performance Index.\textsuperscript{208} Existing environment laws in Burma are scarce and the ones that do exist are poorly enforced by the military regime. The situation is even more dismal where projects occur in areas inhabited by ethnic nationalities. The SPDC pushed forward with plans for the construction of a series of large dams along the course Burma’s rivers. Preparations for the dam construction have already caused pervasive human rights violations and massive population displacement. Increased militarization has led to an increase in reported incidents of torture, extrajudicial killings, and other human rights abuses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Cost (US$)</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Completion</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Paunglaung</td>
<td>Pyinnama, Mandalay Division.</td>
<td>140 MW</td>
<td>60 million</td>
<td>Ministry of Electric Power I Yunnan Machinery Export (China) FORCE Consulting Engineers (Germany)</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myitsone Dam</td>
<td>Irrawaddy River, Kachin State</td>
<td>3,600 MW</td>
<td>Ministry of Electric Power I China Power Investment Corporation</td>
<td>Plans to build six more</td>
<td>47 villages (10,505 people) inundated, livelihoods of 3 million others who rely on the delta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasang Dam</td>
<td>Central Shan State</td>
<td>7,110 MW</td>
<td>6 billion</td>
<td>Ministry of Electric Power MDX Group (Thailand) China Gezhouba Group (CGGC)</td>
<td>Over 300,000 people have been forcibly relocated. Increased militarization. On completion, thousands more driven from their homes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{200} FT (12 Nov 07) Singapore feels the heat of drive against Burma
\textsuperscript{201} IHT (06 Nov 07) Myanmar tycoon blacklisted by US attacks sanctions
\textsuperscript{202} Irawaddy (27 Jun 08) Indian financial services thwart junta sanctions; Irawaddy (08 Mar 08) Burma Authorizes Singapore Dollar Accounts at Banks
\textsuperscript{203} AFP (25 Jul 08) Foreign Investment In Myanmar Falls 77\% On Year – Government
\textsuperscript{204} In May, the SPDC requested $11.7 billion in reconstruction assistance
\textsuperscript{205} Burma Information Network (22 May 08) Chronology of the recent statements of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) with respect to Burma
\textsuperscript{206} Washington Post (13 Jun 08) Burmese investors get ‘cronies’ slice of storm relief
\textsuperscript{207} Washington Post (13 Jun 08) Burmese investors get ‘cronies’ slice of storm relief
\textsuperscript{208} Yale (2008) Environmental Protection Index: Country Scores
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Details</th>
<th>Upstream (Wei Gyi) Salween Dam</th>
<th>Lower (Dagwi) Salween Dams</th>
<th>Hat Gyi, Karen State (Salween River)</th>
<th>Upper Salween Dam</th>
<th>Shweli Dams (3)</th>
<th>Mone River (3)</th>
<th>Kun Chaung</th>
<th>Thapan Seik</th>
<th>Yenwe</th>
<th>Yeywa Dokhtawady River</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close to the Thai-Burma border</td>
<td>Close to Thai-Burma border</td>
<td>Near Myaing-yingu, Karen State</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shan State</td>
<td>1: 600 MW 2: 460 MW 3: 360 MW</td>
<td>60 MW+</td>
<td>54 MW</td>
<td>30 MW</td>
<td>25 MW</td>
<td>790 MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,540 MW</td>
<td>between 500 to 900 MW</td>
<td>600 MW</td>
<td>2,400 MW</td>
<td></td>
<td>185 million+</td>
<td>20 million</td>
<td>20 million</td>
<td>20 million</td>
<td>20 million</td>
<td>700 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 billion</td>
<td>900 million</td>
<td>1 billion</td>
<td>185 million+</td>
<td>20 million</td>
<td>185 million+</td>
<td>20 million</td>
<td>20 million</td>
<td>20 million</td>
<td>20 million</td>
<td>700 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Authority of Thailand (EGAT)</td>
<td>EGAT</td>
<td>EGAT (Thailand) Sinohydro (China)</td>
<td>Farsighted Investment Group and Gold Water Resources (both China)</td>
<td>Yunnan Joint Development</td>
<td>Guangdong New Technology Import and Export</td>
<td>China National Electric Equipment (CNEEC) Zhejiang Orient Holdings YMEC</td>
<td>CITIC, Sinohydro Yunnan Machinery Import and Export</td>
<td>CITIC, Sinohydro Yunnan Machinery Import and Export</td>
<td>CITIC, Sinohydro Yunnan Machinery Import and Export</td>
<td>China Exim Bank, CITIC, CNEEC, Sinohydro, Gezhouba, China National Heavy Machinery (CHMC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flooding between 700-1,000 square kilometers of forest, river and farmland, mostly in Karenni State</td>
<td>Mainly serve to regulate large amounts of water released by the Wei Gyi dam.</td>
<td>Destruction of more than 20 villages (5,000 people) and farmlands 3.82 billion kilowatt hours/yr partly exported to Thailand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Palaung Youth Network Group (Dec 07) Under the Boot
International Rivers, table of Chinese dam projects worldwide, accessible on www.internationalrivers.org
Kayan Women’s Union (2008) Drowning the Green Ghosts of Kayanland
Kachin Development Networking Group (Oct 07) Damming the Irrawaddy
The year of shame in review

20 Nov  UN General Assembly’s Third Committee adopts a resolution that strongly condemns the SPDC’s crackdown on peaceful demonstrators.

25 Nov  A villager from Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, dies as a result of torture inflicted by Na Sa Ka officers.

26 Nov  SPDC authorities arrest Arakan State NLD Chairman San Shwe Tun.

27 Nov  SPDC authorities in Rangoon arrest popular musician Win Maw.

29 Nov  SPDC orders the closure of Maggin monastery in Rangoon.

2 Dec  SPDC police arrest a 52-year-old man from Tha Yet Pyin village in Buthidaung Township, Arakan State, for writing a letter to the BBC detailing SPDC human rights abuses against Rohingya.

3 Dec  SPDC Information Minister Kyaw Hsan says there is no role for the NLD in the drafting of Burma’s new constitution.

4 Dec  UN Resident Coordinator in Burma Charles Petrie leaves Rangoon after the SPDC refused to renew his visa.

5 Dec  Win Maung, an SPDC village secretary from Manaung, Arakan State, is sentenced to two and a half years in prison for his involvement in the monk-led anti-junta protests.

30 Dec  SPDC soldier rapes and kills a woman in Nawn gmi village, Kachin State.

3 Jan  Two SPDC police rape a 14-year-old Rohingya girl from Phone Nyo Hlake village, Buthidaung Township, Arakan State.

4 Jan  SPDC authorities arrest three NLD youth members in Rangoon.

4 Jan  World Food Program says that SPDC restrictions continue to hamper their efforts to provide assistance.

18 Jan  UN Security Council issues statement that says it regrets the slow rate of progress by the SPDC to meet the objectives set forth by the Council in October 2007.

9 Feb  SPDC announces it will hold a referendum on the proposed constitution in May followed by “multi-party democratic elections” in 2010.

13 Feb  SPDC extends the house arrest of NLD Vice Chairman Tin Oo for another year.

14 Feb  Two unidentified assailants shoot and kill KNU General Secretary Mahn Sha Lah Phan at his home in Mae Sot, Thailand. Sources close to the pro-junta Democratic Karen Buddhist Army say that the killing is carried out by members of DKBA Battalion 999.

15 Feb  SPDC military intelligence officers raid the office of the Myanmar Nation weekly in Rangoon, arresting chief editor Thet Zin and office manager Sein Win Maung.

18 Feb  SPDC Censorship Board orders the Myanmar Nation to suspend publication and to temporarily close its offices.

19 Feb  SPDC announces the completion of its draft constitution.

21 Feb  A 26-year-old Rohingya from Akyab, Arakan State, dies in police custody after being severely beaten by local policemen.

25 Feb  Arakan State’s Maungdaw High Court sentences 12 people from Thinn Baw Gwe Village to seven years in jail for renovation of a mosque.

28 Feb  UN Special Advisor on Burma Ibrahim Gambari urges the SPDC to “reconsider” its draft constitution.

29 Feb  In its annual International Narcotics Control Strategy Report for Congress, the US says that Burma is the largest source of methamphetamine pills in Asia.

29 Feb  SPDC Special Branch police arrest three Rangoon residents for making comments about the referendum.

3 Mar  SPDC Army soldiers from Infantry Battalion 31 shoot dead a 30-year-old woman who is tapping rubber sap in Ye Township, Mon State.

8 Mar  SPDC authorities arrest two NLD members from Rangoon’s Hlaing Township for possession of “Rambo 4” DVDs.

12 Mar  SPDC authorities arrest nine members of the Generation Wave group.

16 Mar  SPDC authorities arrest two All-Burmese Federation of Student Unions’ leaders.
19 Mar  SPDC Censorship Board suspends publication of the 7 Days News for a week for reporting on a multiple murder in Rangoon.

21 Mar  An SPDC Army soldier from Light Infantry Battalion 515 rapes a 17-year-old girl in her home in Shan State.

28 Mar  UN Human Rights Council unanimously condemns the SPDC’s “systematic violations” of fundamental freedoms.

30 Mar  SPDC authorities arrest six NLD members in connection with a 27 March anti-referendum demonstration in front of the party headquarters in Rangoon.

31 Mar  MI and Special Branch police raid the Myanmar Muslim Council’s office in Maungdaw, Arakan State, and arrest 10 members.

1 Apr  Special Branch police in Rangoon arrest NLD youth coordinator Aung Htun and Thingangyun Township’s NLD chairman Tin Myint.

1 Apr  SPDC officials arrests four Township-level members of the Myanmar Muslim Council in raids of their homes in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State.

6 Apr  Police arrest an NLD member from Rambree Township, Arakan State, for possessing statements against the referendum.

15 Apr  SPDC authorities arrest an NLD member for posting “No” signs on billboards during the Thingyan festival in Rangoon.

14 Apr  UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Paulo Sergio Pinheiro dismisses the SPDC’s constitutional referendum as “surreal”.

15 Apr  SPDC authorities arrest NLD youth member Myo Nyunt near Rangoon.

17 Apr  SPDC authorities in Monywa, Sagaing Division, arrest rapper Yan Yan Chan.

22 Apr  SPDC authorities arrest at least 23 people wearing “No” t-shirts in Akyab, Arakan State.

2 May  UN Security Council issues presidential statement calling on the SPDC to create an atmosphere conducive to an “inclusive and credible” referendum process.

3 May  SPDC Army soldiers and riot police open fire on a large group of inmates in Rangoon’s Insein prison, killing 36 and injuring about 70.

4 May  Na Sa Ka arrests two villagers from Rathidaung Township, Arakan State, for possession of anti-referendum posters.

6 May  Police arrest three NLD members in Salin Township, Magwe Division, for distributing copies of the NLD instructions on the referendum voting procedures.

7 May  SPDC Army soldiers arrest four villagers in Paletwa Township, Chin State, for distributing anti-referendum leaflets.

5 May  SPDC Army demands that 270 villagers in Kyaukkyi Township, Pegu Division, perform forced labor as porters.

8 May  SPDC expels Qatar aircraft carrying relief supplies.

9 May  SPDC impounds two UN aid shipments at Rangoon airport.

9 May  Na Sa Ka arrests 48 people in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, for distributing anti-referendum posters.

11 May  SPDC authorities in Namkham, Shan State, arrest a former village headman for possession of “No” vote leaflets.

12 May  UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-moon registers his “immense frustration” with the pace of relief efforts in Burma.

12 May  SPDC Army soldiers force 62 villagers in Toungoo District, Pegu Division, to porter army rations.

13 May  SPDC Army soldiers force 52 villagers in Toungoo District, Pegu Division to porter army rations.

13 May  SPDC Army soldiers from Light Infantry Division 66 arrest eight local journalists who allegedly failed to inform authorities of their presence in Labutta Township, Irrawaddy Division.

15 May  SPDC announces that 92.4% of the voters approved the constitution during the first phase of balloting with a turnout of more than 99%.

15 May  Police arrest an NLD member from Rangoon’s South Dagon Township for attempting to meet with UN officials in Rangoon.

16 May  Police arrest two youths from Rambree Township, Arakan State, for telling their family members and village elders to cast “No” votes in the constitutional referendum.
19 May  SPDC soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion 289 order villagers in Paletwa Township, Chin State, to perform forced labor to construct and renovate army barracks and dig trenches.

20 May  SPDC Army soldiers torture to death a 35-year old retired New Mon State Party medical worker during interrogation in Khawzar police station, Mon State.

22 May  Police arrest 13 NLD members in Rangoon.

24 May  SPDC soldiers gang rape a 21-year old woman in Kunhing, Shan State.

26 May  SPDC announces that 92.4% of voters in the 47 cyclone-affected Townships approved the constitution, with a turnout of 98.1%.

26 May  SPDC officials force residents in 500 households of Meepya village in Kyauktan Township, Rangoon Division, to work on a reconstruction project in order to receive aid materials.

27 May  Police arrest at least 15 NLD members as they are marching from the party headquarters to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s residence in Rangoon.

27 May  SPDC extends the house arrest of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

3 Jun  SPDC forces 128 prisoners to do physic nut cultivation in Ann Township, Arakan State.

3 Jun  State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar says the SPDC’s constitutional referendum has “washed away” the NLD’s victory in the 1990 elections.

4 Jun  Police arrest 16 Rohingya villagers from Buthidaung Township, Arakan State, for receiving money from relatives living abroad.

4 Jun  Police in Rangoon arrest comedian Zarganar during a night raid on his home.

4 Jun  SPDC Army troops from Infantry Battalion 240 attack Te Mu Der village in Papun District, Karen State. Soldiers burn rice stores, destroy homes, farms, and damage a church.

8 Jun  SPDC Army major rapes two girls, aged 13 and 14, in Thangtlang, Chin State.

10 Jun  SPDC authorities arrest at least 16 cyclone survivors for protesting outside the UNDP headquarters in Rangoon about not receiving any help from the regime.

10 Jun  SPDC authorities in Rangoon’s Tamwe Township arrest Ein Khine Oo, a 24-year-old journalist of the weekly journal Ecovision.

12 Jun  Special Branch police arrest five activists for helping cyclone survivors in Bogale and Labutta Townships, Irrawaddy Division.

12 Jun  Special Branch police in Rangoon detain three 88 Generation Students.

13 Jun  SPDC authorities in Minbu Township, Magwe Division, arrest Zaw Thet Htwe, the former editor of First Eleven weekly sports journal.

14 Jun  SPDC Army starts building seven new bases in Mon State using forced labor.

14 Jun  SPDC authorities in Pyapon Township, Irrawaddy Division, arrest seven volunteer relief workers, including Myanmar Tribune journal chief editor Aung Kyaw San and two All Burma Federation of Students’ Unions members.

14 Jun  SPDC authorities evict monks and close Theikpan monastery in Rangoon’s Bahan Township.

18 Jun  UN Human Rights Council passes resolution that condemns the SPDC’s “ongoing systematic violations of human rights” in Burma.

19 Jun  More than 100 USDA members and Swan Arr Shin thugs arrest at least 10 NLD members and one Buddhist monk.

20 Jun  SPDC requires hundreds of villagers in Myitkyina Township, Kachin State, to perform forced labor to plant castor oil trees.

20 Jun  SPDC authorities require 150 villagers to perform forced labor on the Rangoon-Akyab Highway in Kyauktaw Township, Arakan State.

21 Jun  Six SPDC soldiers abduct and rape a 24-year-old woman in Kenglom, Shan State.

25 Jun  Police arrest a woman calling for the release of political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, near Rangoon’s City Hall.

26 Jun  The UNODC’s 2008 World Drug Report notes that after six years of decline, opium poppy cultivation in Burma increased by 29% in Burma during 2007.

1 Jul  Police in Rangoon arrest Shwepyithar Township NLD member Khin Maung.

1 Jul  SPDC officials require over 100 villagers from N’Jang Dung village, Myitkyina Township, Kachin State, work at a physic nut plantation near the village.
1 Jul Five SPDC Army soldiers rape and kill two Palaung women in Maung Nawng village, Kehsi Township, Southern Shan State.

11 Jul ILO blasts the SPDC’s Supreme Court for denying an appeal by six activists who received lengthy jail sentences for attending a Labor Day event.

15 Jul SPDC authorities arrest nine monks at Rangoon railway station and detain them in Insein prison.

17 Jul Special branch police in Rangoon arrest five NLD members.

18 Jul SPDC authorities in Rangoon arrest two NLD members.

24 Jul UN says that it has lost US$10 million in aid funds to the SPDC because of the regime’s manipulation of currency exchange rates.

27 Jul Three SPDC soldiers rape and kill a 15-year-old girl in Bhamo Township, Kachin State.

6 Aug SPDC authorities in Rangoon’s Kyimyindine Township arrest Human Rights Defenders and Promoters member Myo Myint.

7 Aug Police in Rangoon’s Hlaingtharyar Township arrest five NLD members for publicly calling for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 15 May.

8 Aug SPDC authorities in Rambree, Arakan State, detain Taung Kyaunn monastery’s abbot U Thumana.

8 Aug Police in Taunggoat Township, Arakan State, arrest 48 activists for peacefully demonstrating to mark the anniversary of the 8-8-88 uprising.

8 Aug Police in Rangoon arrest Human Rights Defenders and Promoters member Myint Aye.

8 Aug SPDC authorities in Rambree, Arakan State, detain teacher Maung Aye Thein.

11 Aug SPDC authorities arrest NLD elected MPs Nyi Pu and Tin Min Htut.


15 Aug A court in Sandoway Township, Arakan State, sentences five NLD youth members to two-and-a-half years in jail for marking the anniversary of the 8-8-88 uprising.


23 Aug SPDC authorities arrest two young monks from Thardu monastery in Rangoon’s Kyimyindine Township.

28 Aug A court in Rangoon’s Hmawbi Township sentences an NLD member to three years in prison for taking photographs at polling stations during the May constitutional referendum.

29 Aug SPDC court sentences protester Aye Win to two years in prison.

10 Sep SPDC Army soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion 420 abduct and forcibly recruit 19 people traveling on a train to Meikhtila, Mandalay Division.

12 Sep Police in Taungnyunt Township, Rangoon Division, arrest monk U Candima for allegedly planning anti-junta protests.

19 Sep SPDC sentences activist Thet Wei to two years in prison with hard labor.

21 Sep SPDC soldier abducts a 13-year-old boy from his home in Akyab, Arakan State, and forces him to join the army.

22 Sep SPDC sentences two NLD members to two-and-a-half years in prison on charges of “disturbing tranquility.”

24 Sep Police re-arrest NLD member Win Htein, the day after his release.

30 Sep A court in Rangoon’s North Dagon Township sentences 29-year-old former student Myo Lwin Oo to seven years in prison on charges aiding and abetting the distribution of an 88 Generation Students’ statement.

1 Oct SPDC authorities in Rangoon’s South Okkalapa Township arrest former journalist and Mandalay NLD elected MP Ohn Kyaing.

2 Oct A court in Rangoon’s Kyauktada Township sentences NLD youth member Mya Than Htike to four years in prison with hard labor for participating in the September 2007 protests.

6 Oct SPDC sentences NLD members Soe Kywe, Khin Aye, Myint Thein and activist Soe Kywe to two-and-a-half years in prison on charges of “disturbing tranquility.”

8 Oct Police arrest Ni Min Aung, a first-year student from Akyab University, Arakan State, for alleged ties with a student group in exile.
8 Oct  The SPDC Censorship Board suspends publication of the Action Times and True News weekly journals for one and two months respectively.

9 Oct  SPDC authorities in Rangoon’s South Okkalapa Township arrest eight activists, including four Generation Wave members, for distributing anti-junta leaflets.

16 Oct  A court in Insein prison sentences 88 Generation Students Khin Moe Aye and Kyaw Soe to three years in jail for illegally handling foreign currency.

20 Oct  SPDC authorities force 200 villagers to work in a rubber plantation near Aung Mamgala model village in Arakan State.

20 Oct  SPDC authorities force about 100 Rohingya in Kyakpru and Rambree Townships, Arakan State, to do construction work on the new Kyaukpru–Maayee road.

20 Oct  UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-moon voices frustration that the SPDC has failed to take up proposals by the UN to bring democracy to Burma.

24 Oct  A court in Mandalay sentences six NLD members, including elected MP Than Lwin, to prison terms ranging from two to 13 years for creating public alarm and promoting hatred.

29 Oct  SPDC sentences nine 88 Generation Students to six months in prison for contempt of court.

30 Oct  A court in Insein prison sentences three NLD members to six months in jail for contempt of court.

2 Nov  DKBA attacks on KNLA Battalion 201 in Kawkareik Township, Karen State, displace 500 villagers.

4 Nov  Maungdaw Court in Arakan State sentences 14 members of the Myanmar Muslim Organization to prison terms ranging from three months to 13 years.

6 Nov  Kyauktada Township court sentences the abbot of Maggin monastery U Indaka to 16 and a half years in prison and monk U Eindriya to eight years.

7 Nov  Supreme Court sentences lawyers Aung Thein and Khin Maung Shein to four month in prison for contempt of court.

9 Nov  Unknown assailant rapes a primary-school-aged girl in Myitkyina, Kachin State.

10 Nov  A court in Insein prison sentences blogger and NLD member Nay Phone Latt to 20 years and six months in prison.

10 Nov  A court in Insein prison sentences Poet Saw Wei to two years in prison on charges of “inducing crime against public tranquility.”

11 Nov  A court in Insein prison sentences 23 members of the 88 Generation Students group to 65 years in prison.

11 Nov  A court in Insein prison sentences labor rights activist and NLD member Su Su Nway to 12 years and a half in prison.

11 Nov  SPDC courts sentence 12 NLD members to prison terms ranging from eight to 24 years.

11 Nov  SPDC courts sentence musician Win Maw and HIV/AIDS activist Than Naing to six years in prison.

11 Nov  A court in Insein prison sentences five monks from Rangoon’s Ngwe Kyar Yan monastery to six and a half years in prison.

11 Nov  A court in Insein prison sentences three protesters to prison terms ranging from two to four and half years.

13 Nov  SPDC courts sentence 11 NLD members to seven and a half years in prison.

13 Nov  Kyauktada Township court sentences two monks two eight years in prison.

13 Nov  Insein Township court sentences former political prisoner Thein Aye to two years in prison.

13 Nov  SPDC court sentences All-Burma Federation of Student Unions member Honey Oo to nine and a half years in prison.

13 Nov  SPDC court sentences three 88 Generation Students to prison terms ranging from two to 11 years.

13 Nov  SPDC court sentences two NLD members to four and four and a half years in prison respectively.

14 Nov  SPDC courts sentence eight NLD members to prison terms ranging from five to 16 years.

14 Nov  Tamwe Township court sentences journalist Ein Khine Oo to two years in prison.

14 Nov  SPDC courts sentence seven activists to prison terms ranging from two to four years.

14 Nov  SPDC court sentences monk U Khaymar Wanta to 11 years in prison.

14 Nov  Tamwe Township Court sentences protester Kyaw Kyaw Thant to seven years in prison.

16 Nov  Deputy Sec-Gen of Thailand’s Narcotics Control Board Pitaya Jinawat says that opium cultivation in Thailand, Laos, and Burma has increased over the past three years.
17 Nov A court in Insein prison sentences four All-Burma Federation of Student Unions members to prison terms ranging from six and a half years to 11 and a half years.
17 Nov SPDC court sentences two NLD members to six and a half years in prison.
17 Nov SPDC court sentences monk U Sandar Wara to eight and a half years in prison.
17 Nov A court in Insein prison sentences protester Htin Kyaw to 12 and a half years in prison.
18 Nov A court in Insein prison sentences three ethnic activists to prison terms ranging from eight to 33 years.
18 Nov A court in Insein prison sentences monk leader U Gambira to 12 years in prison.
18 Nov A court in Insein prison sentences monk U Kalatha to 35 years in prison.
19 Nov Sanchaung Township court sentences All-Burma Federation of Student Unions member Dee Nyein Lin to six years and a half in prison.
19 Nov SPDC court sentences two student activists to four and five years in prison.
20 Nov Lanmadaw Township court sentences hip hop singer and Generation Wave member Zeyar Thaw to six years in prison.
20 Nov Lanmadaw Township court sentences five Generation Wave members to five years in prison.
21 Nov International Campaign to Ban Landmines says that in 2007 landmine casualties increased by 76% in Burma.
21 Nov The UN General Assembly's Third Committee approves a draft resolution critical of the human rights situation in Burma.
21 Nov A court in Insein prison sentences monk leader U Gambira to 56 more years in prison.
21 Nov A court in Insein prison sentences monk U Kalatha to four more years in prison.
21 Nov A court in Insein prison sentences three relief activists to prison terms ranging from 15 to 29 years.
21 Nov A court in Insein prison sentences comedian Zarganar to 45 years in prison.
21 Nov SPDC court sentences five activists to prison terms ranging from four to four and a half years.
21 Nov SPDC court sentences the abbot of Thu Mingala monastery to four years in prison.
24 Nov Kyimyindine Township court sentences three Generation Wave members to eight years in prison.
25 Nov Sanchaung Township court sentences three activists to 13 years in prison.
27 Nov A court in Insein prison sentences comedian Zarganar to 14 more years in prison.
28 Nov Thingangyun Township court sentences a Myanmar Nation journalist and his office manager to seven years in prison.
28 Nov A court in Insein prison sentences 13 members of the 88 Generation Students group to six years in prison.
ALTSEAN-BURMA

VISION
We are committed to a free and democratic Burma where all the people enjoy human rights in accordance with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
We are dedicated to the creation of a society of empowered individuals and communities in charge of their own destiny.
This can be realized through genuine national reconciliation, regional cooperation and mutual respect.

MISSION
We are a regional network engaged in advocacy, campaigns and capacity-building to establish a free and democratic Burma.
We work with the democracy movement and its supporters to produce resources and create opportunities for:
- Building and strengthening strategic relationships among key networks and organisations from Burma, ASEAN and the international community.
- Implementing innovative strategies that are responsive to emerging needs and urgent developments.
- Inspiring and building confidence for empowerment among activists, particularly women and youth from the different ethnic groups of Burma.

VALUES
- Adherence to the fundamental principles of human rights guides all our actions. In striving for a free and democratic Burma we are committed to:
  - Reform through non-violent means.
  - Non-discrimination, particularly with regard to gender equality and ethnic diversity.
  - Idealism in thought and realism in action.
  - We believe in the importance of education for the purposes of empowerment, especially for women.
  - We value creativity, innovation and adaptability in achieving our goals.

GOALS
- Contributing to efforts to achieve democratic transition in Burma.
- Advancing ASEAN reforms that will uphold democracy and human rights amongst members, particularly Burma.
- Contributing to a more effective regional Burma movement.
- Supporting meaningful participation of women and youth from Burma in the movement.
- Enhancing capacity-building programs to address the human resources and strategic needs of Burmese organizations.
- Promoting mutually reinforcing advocacy messages and strategies by the Burma movement.
- Consolidating and strengthening the effectiveness of the secretariat.

LEARN MORE
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