



# BURMA REPORT

April 2011

မြန်မာ့ - မှတ်တမ်း

Issue N° 95

**Free all political prisoners, free Burma.**

"Burma\_News" <[burma\\_news@verizon.net](mailto:burma_news@verizon.net)>, 30 March 2011 Datum: Wed, 30. Mar 2011 23:12:20

UN – Secretary-General – Office of the Spokesperson - <<http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp>>

## Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on Myanmar

New York, 30 March 2011 -

The Secretary-General has taken note of the official announcement in Naypyitaw of the transfer of power from the State Peace and Development Council to the new Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

The Myanmar authorities now have an opportunity and, indeed, an obligation to their people, to demonstrate that this change is one of substance and that it is the start of a genuine move away from almost fifty years of direct military rule. The Secretary-General believes the authorities must engage in an inclusive dialogue with all relevant parties on broad reforms necessary for the development of a credible system of government that can effectively address the political and socio-economic challenges facing Myanmar. Responding to the longstanding aspirations of the Myanmar people for national reconciliation, democratization and respect for human rights remains essential to laying the foundations for durable peace and development in the country.

The United Nations is committed to continue to work with all relevant actors toward building a stable and fully democratic future in which all the people of Myanmar can contribute.

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**The Irrawaddy** - The Irrawaddy Today's Newsletter Fri, 25. Mar 2011 - [news@irrawaddy.org](mailto:news@irrawaddy.org) - [www.irrawaddy.org](http://www.irrawaddy.org)

## Burmese Regime Urged to Respect Laws of War

By KO HTWE Friday, March 25, 2011 - <[http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art\\_id=21015](http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=21015)>

A US-based human rights group has sent an open letter to Burma's ruling regime urging it to respect international humanitarian laws, or "laws of war," and cooperate with a UN investigation into alleged war crimes by the Burmese military.

The letter, addressed to the regime's judge advocate general, Maj-Gen Yar Pyae, and signed by James Ross, the legal and policy director of Human Rights Watch (HRW), also urged the regime to ensure that those responsible for abuses are held accountable.

"The army leadership needs to send the message that abuses must stop, and enforce that message by prosecuting the perpetrators," the letter said.

Burmese military forces have long been accused of directly targeting civilians for attack in a number of ethnic minority areas, including in Karen, Karenni, Shan, Chin and Arakan states.

The letter cited a variety of offenses, including extrajudicial killings, torture, sexual violence against women and girls, forced labor, targeting of food production and other objects indispensable to the survival of the population, and confiscation of property.

The regime and other armed groups in Burma have also been criticized for using anti-personnel landmines and actively recruiting and deploying child soldiers. There have also been widespread reports of the junta using prisoners as army porters, in some cases even forcing them to act as human minesweepers.

The letter said that the regime should show it is serious about addressing these issues by "expressing a willingness to cooperate with a proposal to establish a United Nations Commission of Inquiry on laws-of-war and human rights violations."

Such a move would "help curtail abuses by the country's warring parties," Ross said. "It would also open the door within the country for serious discussions about justice and accountability."

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Zin Linn <[zinlinn@cscoms.com](mailto:zinlinn@cscoms.com)> INLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK1 News & Articles on Burma Datum: Fri. 25. Mar 2011  
**The Irrawaddy** - The Irrawaddy Today's Newsletter Fri, 25. Mar 2011 - [news@irrawaddy.org](mailto:news@irrawaddy.org) - [www.irrawaddy.org](http://www.irrawaddy.org)

## UWSA Calls for Dialogue with Junta

By KO HTWE Friday, March 25, 2011 - <[http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art\\_id=21014](http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=21014)>

In a statement issued last Saturday, Burma's largest ethnic armed group, the United Wa State Army (UWSA), called on the country's military junta to resume dialogue with cease-fire armies in order to avoid a resumption of hostilities.

The statement, issued during a conference attended by around 200 key members of the UWSA and addressed to the Burmese junta and the group's ethnic allies, said the regime and cease-fire groups should not allow their differences over the border guard force (BGF) issue and territorial claims to spark a new outbreak of war.

Although it urged a conciliatory approach, however, the statement was critical of the regime for pushing its agenda on cease-fire groups.

"One-way 'negotiations' that merely force ethnic representatives to listen to representatives of the military only lead to tension and fighting," the statement said.

"For the development of the country and the good of the people, both sides must make an effort to avoid conflict," it added.

The statement also mentioned that when the regime's chief negotiator, Lt-Gen Ye Myint, met with UWSA leader Bao Youxiang in June 2009, he said that junta head Snr-Gen Than Shwe recognized the group as a "partner".

The UWSA is the most powerful armed cease-fire group in Burma. Like most of the other groups, it has rejected the BGF plan, which requires ethnic militias to transform themselves into special units under Burmese military command.

The regime has been pushing the plan since April 2009, with little success. Although a handful of groups have already joined the BGF scheme, others have rejected it, raising the specter of a return to hostilities after more than two decades of relative peace.

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THE BURMANET NEWS, March 24, 2011 Issue #4165, "Editor" <[editor@burmanet.org](mailto:editor@burmanet.org)>, email newsletter covering Burma, [www.burmanet.org](http://www.burmanet.org)  
 Shan Herald Agency for News - <[http://www.shanland.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=3525:wa-mongla-advised-by-china-to-shun-new-alliance&catid=86:war&Itemid=284](http://www.shanland.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3525:wa-mongla-advised-by-china-to-shun-new-alliance&catid=86:war&Itemid=284)>

## Wa, Mongla "advised" by China to shun new alliance -

Hseng Khio Fah

March 24, 2011 -

Two of the anti- border guard force groups: United Wa State Army (UWSA) and National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), were reportedly warned by China not to get involved with any groups opposing the military junta, otherwise they would be open to attacks like the Kachin Independence Army and Shan State Army (SSA) 'North', according to a Sino-Burma border source.

"The junta will leave you alone if you don't get involved with the new alliance," a source quoted one of the Chinese officials as saying.

The report however has yet to be confirmed by Wa or Mongla authorities.

In February, the SSA and KIA participated in the formation of UNFC (United Nationalities Federal Council), an alliance of 11 ethnic armed ceasefire and non-ceasefire groups, which is to embark on an ambitious plan to set up a Union Army to be made up of armed forces from its member organizations. (The SSA later backed out, saying it could join it only on a state basis, not on an organization basis.)

A few days before the formation, a clash broke out between the KIA and the Burma Army in Manzi township for the first time in 18 years of their ceasefire period.

Likewise, the SSA is being under attack by the junta since 13 March. Fighting between the two sides are informed in several places in Shan State South's Monghsu and Kehsi Townships and in Shan State North's Mongyai township yesterday and today.

So far there has been 5 clashes: three yesterday and twice this morning. One took place near Mongkhang village, Tuya village tract, Mongnawng Sub-township of Kehsi Township, between SSA's No. 801 Battalion and some Burma Army troops patrolling in the area.

Other include one at Kawngsaamong hill near Longkawng village in Shan State North's Mongyai with SSA's Battalion No. 1 and another between Nam-nga and Wan Hwe village in Monghsu township with SSA's Battalion 196. Each attack

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lasted for half an hour, a SSA officer said.

“At least 3 were killed on the Burma Army’s side. We are still gathering the full data,” the officer said.

This morning clashes were at Loi Zang in Mongnawng with SSA’s 801, lasting for almost 6 hours from 3 am to 9 am, local sources said.

Yet again the two fought between Mong Awd and Tawoonkeng crossing on the Salween. At present, thousands of Burma Army troops are moving around the SSA controlled area and along the Salween which serves as a shared boundary with the UWSA.

The Burma Army also brought in hundreds of mules and horses for transportation in the roadless countryside.

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Zin Linn <[zinlinn@cscoms.com](mailto:zinlinn@cscoms.com)>, [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on BurmaDatum:Thu, 17. Mar 2011

**The Irrawaddy** - <[http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art\\_id=20957](http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=20957)>

## Thein Sein Likely to be Sworn in before Chinese Visit

By WAI MOE

Thursday, March 17, 2011



Than Shwe will retain his power over the Tatmadaw, or armed forces, and Burma's national politics. (Photo: Getty Images)

The Burmese military junta is planning to hold an inauguration ceremony for President-in-waiting Thein Sein and his Cabinet ahead of a visit to Burma by a high-ranking Chinese leader, according to intelligence sources in Naypyidaw.

The possible dates for the swearing-in ceremony are reportedly during the week following Armed Forces Day on March 27 to Friday, April 1. Jia Qinglin, the fourth highest ranking leader in the Chinese politburo hierarchy, arrives on Saturday, April 2.

A senior official in Naypyidaw confirmed the Jia Qinglin visit, describing the trip as a “congratulatory visit” by Beijing.

“The Chinese always keep our government close to them,” he said. “The Chinese leader will come to congratulate U Thein Sein.”

He added that following the visit, a Burmese delegation consisting of several members of the new government will travel to China to meet their counterparts.

Officials from both countries have been preparing for the Burma visit of Jia Qinglin who is the chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and a member of the powerful Politburo Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China.

Nearly three months after Burma's Nov. 7 general election, the opening session of the Parliament—which is dominated by military officers and members of the junta-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party—was held on Jan. 31. The parliament chose Prime Minister ex-Gen Thein Sein as President, while Secretary-1 ex-Gen Tin Aung Myint Oo and a Shan USDP MP, Sai Mauk Kham, were selected as vice-presidents on Feb. 4.

Two day later, the state-run New Light of Myanmar reported Chinese President Hu Jintao and his successor Vice-president Xi Jinping sent congratulation to Thein Sein and his two vice-presidents, the first recognition of Burma's new presidency by a foreign nation.

Burma's junta are anxious to swear in its new cabinet ahead of the start of the new fiscal year on April 1. This date will not, however, mark the end of the era of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) which has ruled the country since 1988. Observers have pointed out that the SPDC's official budget is included in Burma's 2011/12 fiscal year budget.

Observers also noted that Beijing's decision to sent its fourth-ranking official to Naypyidaw marks a diplomatic recognition of Thein Sein as No. 4 in the Burmese junta's hierarchy after Snr-Gen Than Shwe, Vice Snr-Gen Maung Aye and ex- Gen Shwe Mann who is now house speaker.

Jia Qinglin's visit comes shortly after a senior official of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) made a four-day visit to Burma. Lt-Gen Jia Tingan, the PLA's deputy director of General Political Department, visited the country on March 12-16.

The Chinese army officer's trip came at a time of heightened tensions between Burmese government troops and ethnic armed groups in Shan State, one of overland gateways to China.

Burma's state media reported on Thursday that Jia Tingan met his Burmese counterpart, Maj-Gen Tin Ngwe who is the chief of the Bureau of Special Operations-5, in Rangoon on Wednesday following a visit to Naypyidaw, Mandalay and the military town of Pyin Oo Lwin.

China is the Burmese junta's closest ally, as well as a leading investor and business partner in the country. On the other hand, Burma is China's strategic route to access the Indian Ocean. China has invested at least US \$2.5 billion in Sino-Burmese oil and gas pipeline projects from Burma's western port town of Kyaukpyu to Kunming, the capital of China's southwest province of Yunnan.

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THE BURMANET NEWS - newsletter covering Burma, March 11, 2011 Issue #4157, "Editor" <[editor@burmanet.org](mailto:editor@burmanet.org)>, [www.burmanet.org](http://www.burmanet.org)

The Irrawaddy - <[http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art\\_id=20923](http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=20923)>

## Burmese MPs Question, Get Stonewalled by Ministers

By HTET AUNG

Friday, March 11, 2011



A still image from a video footage shows lawmakers sitting in parliament in Naypyidaw. (Photo: Reuters)

Burma's bicameral parliament has been meeting since January 31, but Thursday marked the first time that legislators were allowed to question and discuss proposals submitted by fellow MPs, leading some observers to be skeptical about whether any immediate change in current government policies could be expected to come out of this session of parliament.

According to *The New Light of Myanmar*, a state-run newspaper, in the Thursday sessions of both the Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) and Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House), MPs were allowed to question incumbent junta ministers and discuss proposals submitted in advance by fellow parliamentarians on a range of state affairs.

Among the issues raised by the members of parliament are the role of central government in the relief and rehabilitation efforts required by natural disasters, the issues of land ownership and land confiscation, a free health-care scheme for poor citizens, educational reform and environmental concerns related to a jade mine in Kachin State.

The junta ministers, who are also members of parliament, responded to all of the questions and proposals with long explanations that included a large amount of statistical data, but in the end they either rejected the proposal, demanded it be withdrawn, or gave a vague promise to address the issue when the time was appropriate.

Observers pointed out that the ministers are backed by ministry bureaucrats with full resources and so are able to generate as much data as necessary to support their position, while normal MPs could conduct only minimal research due to the lack of time, material, money and technical resources.

"After the election, we didn't know how much the emerging parliament would exercise democratic principles—the situation was like groping in the dark," said Khin Maung Swe, the leader of the National Democratic Force (NDF), which won 16 seats in the national and regional parliaments. "So what we can do in this first parliamentary session is to raise some urgent issues, but we have to follow up on these issues with research at a later time."

A member of parliament told *The Irrawaddy* that the junta's newspaper censored details regarding questions the MPs asked the ministers.

"Some members of parliament discussed issues in detail, but the newspapers didn't describe their comments," said a Pyithu Hluttaw representative on condition of anonymity. "For example, there were detailed discussions on the issue of inadequate rice assistance to the Cyclone Giri victims, partly because of the corruption of the local authorities."

In addition, there is speculation in parliament that a motion for the release of political prisoners and a general amnesty for exiles has been dropped from discussions.

But asked about the possibility of discussing the issue in parliament, Khin Maung Swe said: "As far as we know, it is still on the table and we hope to discuss it soon."

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The Irrawaddy Today's Newsletter for Saturday, March 5, 2011, [news@irrawaddy.org](mailto:news@irrawaddy.org), [www.irrawaddy.org](http://www.irrawaddy.org), 05.03.2011, 07:43:17

**The Irrawaddy** - <[http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art\\_id=20881](http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=20881)>

## **NLD Slams Military Fund**

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS Saturday, March 5, 2011

RANGOON—Burma's pro-democracy group on Friday criticized a new law that allows the country's military chief access to a special fund without any oversight from parliament.

The fund—created at the same time as the new budget of which almost one-fourth was allocated to the military—can be used by the commander in chief to pay for expenses related to national defense and security. He needs only the president's approval to do so, according to a statement from Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy.

Burmese President-elect Thein Sein is a former general who served as the outgoing ruling junta's prime minister. He now heads the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party, which won a huge majority in last November's election that much of the international community dismissed as rigged in favor of the junta. A mandatory allocation of one-quarter of the seats in parliament to military appointees assures that the ruling generals remain in charge.

The Special Funds law allows the money to be used "to safeguard national sovereignty and protect disintegration of the union" and says the military commander "shall not be subject to questioning, explanation or auditing by any individual or organization" regarding its use.

So-called secret funds are used in several countries to conceal details of sensitive military and intelligence activities. However, they can also serve as slush funds, leading to corruption because users are not held accountable for them.

"Since the law allows the commander in chief to use the funds without having the need to answer to anyone or any

organization, the law is not in line with norms of the law," said the NLD statement.

Suu Kyi's organization also criticized the government's recently released budget for allocating too much money to the military and not enough to social services.

Its statement also said the fiscal year 2011-2012 budget should have been passed by the newly seated parliament, rather than enacted by the junta.

The government enacted the budget on Jan. 27, just a few days before parliament met for the first time in more than two decades. Details published in the official Government Gazette revealed that almost one-quarter of the 7.6 trillion kyat (\$8.45 billion) national budget will be allocated to defense. Education will get a 4.3 percent share, and health 1.3 percent.

Burma is one of Asia's poorest countries, reflected in its health indicators. It has the 44th highest infant mortality rate of 193 countries listed by the UNICEF in its 2011 State of the World's Children report.

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**Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB)** - <<http://www.dvb.no/news/monks-condemn-germanys-sanctions-line/14864>>

## Monks condemn Germany's sanctions line thumbnail

**Burmese monks are due to present a letter to the German government today, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2011 (Reuters)**

By **JOSEPH ALLCHIN**

Published: **21 March 2011**

Two monks representing the All Burma Monks Alliance (ABMA) will present an open letter to the German foreign ministry today and lead a silent protest outside its Berlin headquarters.

Ashin Sopaka, who will present the letter alongside Ashin Kovida, told *DVB* that he was calling on the German people to oppose their government's alleged lobbying of other EU nations to remove sanctions on the country. "They are more interested in business with this regime; they said this is a new government so they want to work together – this is their interest. That's why they want to lobby and work with the junta, and they don't want to hear criticisms from other countries."

Activist group Burma Campaign UK corroborates that the German government as well as Italy and Spain have been lobbying other EU nations to support the removal of the EU's weak sanctions on Burma. This allegation also appeared in a leaked Wikileaks cable, where a British diplomat told his US counterpart that the Germans had "heard what they wanted to hear" about the situation in Burma and therefore 'have subsequently started discussions within the EU about relaxing the current measures'."



Burmese monks are due to present a letter to the German government today (Reuters)

Since the junta held an election in November last year there have been renewed calls for an end to sanctions. Sopaka however told *DVB* of the protest: "We want to tell the story that is going on behind – how they organised the election and formed the new government. We want to tell them that they changed only their clothes, their uniforms, from soldiers to normal; they didn't change their policies. We want to tell them that there are more political prisoners now, and the monks are still in jail.

"We wish that they stay with the EU common position; that is our hope. I hope they understand and hear our voice."

Germany has a long history of business dealings with the Burmese junta, and following the September 2007 monk-led protests German campaigners noted that slain Japanese journalist Kenji Nagai was in all probability murdered by a German-made G3 assault rifle, which has been the primary battle assault rifle of the Burmese army since the 1960s. Moreover, in a [major investigation](#) by *DVB* a Burmese defector alleges that the German machine parts company Deckel Maho Gildemeister (DMG) had supplied parts for Burma's nuclear program.

Reflecting what activists allege to be an attitude of appeasement by the German government, a large [EU delegation](#) of some 30 diplomats met with Aung San Suu Kyi in Rangoon to discuss sanctions. This was also joined by a plea from parties, including the National Democratic Force (NDF), which split from the National League for Democracy (NLD) in order to take part in last year's elections, to [remove sanctions](#).

Sopaka will lead the silent protest today outside the foreign ministry in central Berlin from 2pm to 6pm.

The junta meanwhile responded to the NLD's continued support of sanctions with the threat that the party, including Aung San Suu Kyi, could meet a "tragic end".

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Democratic Voice of Burma <<http://www.dvb.no/news/suu-kyi-says-sanctions-must-remain/14898>>

# Suu Kyi says sanctions must remain

By AFP

Published: 23 March 2011



Suu Kyi addresses crowd during a ceremony to mark 63rd Independence Day at the NLD head office in Rangoon in January (Reuters)

Burma's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi said on Wednesday that sanctions against the military junta in her country should remain, as the European Union prepares to decide whether to lift the action. In an interview with German daily **Frankfurter Rundschau**, the Nobel peace laureate insisted: "Sanctions must remain in place. Sanctions should only be lifted when something has changed here."

The EU is poised to decide in April whether to continue sanctions against the regime for human rights abuses following Suu Kyi's release from house arrest in November.

Last week, EU diplomats held talks with Suu Kyi, 65, about the possibility of lifting Western sanctions, which global think-tank International Crisis Group recently criticised as "counterproductive".

Supporters of the trade and financial sanctions say they are the only way to pressure the military rulers of Burma, where there are believed to be about 2,200 political prisoners behind bars.

Despite the restrictions on Western businesses, Asian companies, especially from China, India, Thailand and South Korea, have overlooked the political situation and human rights abuses to invest in resource-rich Burma.

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Zin Linn <[zinlinn@cscoms.com](mailto:zinlinn@cscoms.com)>, [NLDmbrsnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma, Datum: (08.03.2011) Heute 14:32:02  
The Irrawaddy Today's Newsletter for Tuesday, March 8, 2011, [news@irrawaddy.org](mailto:news@irrawaddy.org), [www.irrawaddy.org](http://www.irrawaddy.org), 08.03.2011, 13:51:36

**The Irrawaddy** - <[http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art\\_id=20894](http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=20894)>

## "Nowhere to be Home"

By MA SU MON

Tuesday, March 8, 2011

*This month, Voice of Witness releases the book *Nowhere to be Home: Narratives from Survivors of Burma's Military Regime*. *Nowhere to be Home* is a powerful collection of first-person testimonies from Burmese people who have been affected by the repression of Burma's military regime. The testimonies were compiled and edited by writers Maggie Lemere and Zoë West. The book is the seventh title in the Voice of Witness series, and will be available in the US on March 15th, 2011. To learn more about the book and the work of Voice of Witness, visit [www.voiceofwitness.org](http://www.voiceofwitness.org).*

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*The Irrawaddy has been given access to excerpts of some of those testimonies. This week, we feature Ma Su Mon.*  
**MA SU MON'S STORY**



**MA SU MON**

*Ma Su Mon became involved in Burma's democracy movement in 1996, when the ruling military junta shut down all of the nation's universities for four years. She began studying at the National League for Democracy office, where she met "Auntie"—Daw Aung San Suu Kyi—and was inspired to become a full youth member of the opposition group. As a result of her involvement with the NLD, Ma Su Mon was arrested by military intelligence officers and taken to Insein Prison, where she was subjected to cruel treatment, deprived of adequate food, and held in solitary confinement for eleven months. She was twenty-two years old. Since her release, she has become a journalist and is now living in Thailand, where she is pursuing her master's degree in communications and a career in journalism.*

When I became a full member of the NLD, I was just doing very simple things at first. But things changed after March 13, 2000, when we celebrated Human Rights Day in Burma. The NLD had a ceremony for Myanmar Human Rights Day, and we also had a poetry and picture competition. I wrote about my university experience in Burma, about how I was very worried about not being able to continue my education. I wrote that the military government's oppression made me want to fully participate in the political movement; I realized that politics was the new university in my life. My poem won and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi handed me the prize at the ceremony.

We were really busy that month. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was traveling to our towns to help set up networks of NLD members and to assign student leader positions. Each town had three top youth leaders—first leader, second leader, and third leader. I was chosen to be the third leader in my town.

We knew that we could get arrested, so some of my friends didn't stay at their family's homes. I

knew that something would happen to us when our leaders gave us those positions, but I didn't think it would happen so soon. Soon the government started arresting all the members, and then they came to my house.

They just entered my room and started searching everywhere. They found some papers—some official statements and the document from when I won the poetry prize. They took everything. I was really afraid at the time, really nervous. I couldn't stand on my two feet.

It took about twenty-five minutes for the military officers to collect all of my papers. They had my mom and the local township authorities sign a paper saying they knew and approved that they were taking me from my home. They blindfolded me, and they were very rough when they put me in the car.

When they took me to the military intelligence compound, there were maybe a hundred people there who had been arrested and brought in for interrogation. I could see the others—some of my friends had been arrested—but we couldn't talk to each other. The MI officers said, "If you sign this paper, you can go back home right now." The paper said, "I will not be involved in any kind of political movement. I will not participate any more in politics. I will not support this any more." Some of my friends signed the paper, but I never signed it. It would be shameful for me, because I could not promise that.

After I said I would not sign, they divided us all into two groups. They put hoods over our heads, like they do for people getting the death sentence. We couldn't see anything. Then they put our group in a police van, the kind with the bars. There were so many people we couldn't even breathe. We couldn't see each other, we didn't know who was who. Maybe the trip took just a minute, but it felt like an hour until they opened the door of the van. They had sent us to Insein Prison, the biggest prison in our country.

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Alexandra Rösch <a.roesch@green-pix.de>

## Meeting with representatives of the German Foreign Ministry in Berlin

by Alexandra Rösch dated 28<sup>th</sup> March 2011

**“Those who claim that they will not interfere in the internal affairs of Burma do not hesitate to be involved economically in Burma. As long as they are involved economically, how can they say that they are not interfering in the internal affairs of our country?” (Ashin Kovida)**

On 21 March 2011, the Burmese monks Ashin Kovida and Ashin Sopaka offered a statement to the German government to ask for support for the Burmese people. The statement was issued at the beginning of December 2010, by the ABMA – the All Burma Monks Alliance – the organization that organized the uprisings in Burma in 2007.

Next to the monks present at the meeting were Ko Aung Htoo General Secretary of Burma’s Lawer Council, Aung Thu from Burma Büro Germany e.V., Michael Funk for the German Buddhist Council (DBU) and Alexandra Rösch for The Best Friend International e.V.. Theo Kidess from the Southeast Asia department, Dirk Sanders for the Human rights department and a deputy for the Human rights Ambassador of Germany attended the meeting for the German Foreign Ministry.



Lawyer Aung Htoo at the meeting



Ashin Kovida and Ashin Sopaka offered a statement to the German government

In the open letter the ABMA is asking the UN, EU, ASEAN and the governments of the international community for support. The monks’ organizations want to publicly support the call from Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, especially now. For this reason a statement was issued in which they ask:

the regime: to immediately release all monks who were arrested in 2007 and all political prisoners;  
the international community: not to recognize the November 2010 election results;  
to support the organization of a Second Panglong Conference and to do all they can to help achieve a dialogue between the regime, the opposition and ethnic leaders.

Theo Kidess from the Southeast Asia department of the German Foreign Ministry agreed on the release of all political prisoners.

“They have to be

released unconditionally at once”, he said. “It is unacceptable that the monks are still imprisoned.”

He also agreed on the 2010 elections being a sham. „But we think we can not go back to the 1990 election results. There is a civil society in Burma now, there are different parties with different views. We try to support the civil society.” Theo Kidess also said that Germany would be ready to support a second Panglong conference “if the parties inside Burma all agree to it. We are waiting for that.”

Apart from the open letter Germany’s position on the moves to refer Burma’s military leaders to the international criminal court for investigation into war crimes and crimes against humanity were discussed along with Germany’s position regarding sanctions on Burma.

Theo Kidess said „We never said we do not support an inquiry into crimes against humanity in Burma. But we need to see all the evidence. If all facts are brought clear we will support it. Even Aung San Suu Kyi answered very cautious on the inquiry into crimes against humanity in Burma in her New York Times interview. We are fighting impunity but in a very careful way. The important steps must come from inside the country. We can not impose democracy on Burma.”



Theo Kidess from the Southeast Asia department, Dirk Sanders for the Human rights department and a deputy for the Human rights Ambassador of Germany at the meeting



a silent demonstration

“The sanctions should stay in place until details have changed in substance. The EU is working on the details regarding the sanctions. Ten political parties from Burma have requested to lift the sanctions. But we can say so far, that the sanctions will be extended by the EU.”

All present representatives of the German government insisted that “Germany’s economic interests are separated from human rights. The basis is a “rule of law”. This is the main point. Germany has an interest of the rule of law established in Burma, but it should be established by the Burmese country itself. The human rights issue and economic interests are no contradiction.”

Aung Htoo, General Secretary of Burma’s Lawer Council, pointed out that, actually, there is no rule of law in Burma. “Without the existence of free trading inside our country”, Aung Htoo said, “how can you separate human rights from the economic issue? All companies are in the hands of the cronies of the military regime.”

Simultaneously to the meeting a silent demonstration of around twenty people was held outside the Foreign Ministry as a reminder of the ongoing human rights abuses in Burma.

[more photos attached](#)

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Zin Linn <[zinlinn@cscoms.com](mailto:zinlinn@cscoms.com)>, [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma, 03.03.2011, 15:06:52  
The Irrawaddy Today's Newsletter for Thursday, March 3, 2011, [news@irrawaddy.org](mailto:news@irrawaddy.org), [www.irrawaddy.org](http://www.irrawaddy.org), (03.03.11) Gestern 13:59:32

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## ICC for Libya ... Why Not Burma? By HTET AUNG Thursday, March 3, 2011

2011 has begun with a series of pro-democracy uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East quickly nicknamed by the world’s media the “Jasmine Revolution.” But the sweet scent of freedom drifting across the Maghreb got lost along the way in Libya.

In mid-February, inspired by successful demonstrations that ousted leaders in neighboring Tunisia and Egypt, disgruntled Libyans took to the streets to protest the stagnant corrupt rule of Muammar al-Qadhafi, who has ruled his so-called “Jamahiriya,” his very own people’s republic, with an iron fist since staging a coup in 1969.

Unlike the pro-democracy demonstrations in other parts of the Arab world, Libya’s unarmed protesters were met with the wrath of al-Qadhafi who cracked down harshly on the opposition, deploying his loyal armed forces, mercenaries, and even fighter jets.

On Feb. 25, the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) convened a special session in Geneva. It quickly passed a resolution by consensus calling for the Council “to dispatch an independent, international Commission of Inquiry [CoI] to Libya to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law in the country.”

The day after the HRC resolution, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted a historic resolution to impose sanctions against the al-Qadhafi regime, including a referral of the case to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate whether the Libyan regime had committed “a crime against humanity” in attacking its own citizens.

In a rare move in recent UN history, the five nations that wield veto power—the United States, China, the United Kingdom, France and Russia—were united in voting for action against the al-Qadhafi regime.

The ICC initiated on Feb. 28 a process to decide whether to open an investigation on crimes against humanity in Libya. ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo said that there would be no impunity for guilty leaders, and that he would make a decision “without delay,” according to the UN News Center.

Within days, the world body proved that it can be strong and effective in dealing with a rogue regime, and it must be commended for that. But why then is the UN so impotent in dealing with the military junta of Burma?

The answer is plain and simple: in condemning the Libyan government, the UNSC spoke with one voice, an approach that has been totally absent in the case of Burma.

The Burmese people suffered under a barrage of brutal crackdowns each and every time they have stood to call for a transition from military dictatorship to democracy. All the Burmese protesters can expect is: to be shot in the street; to be arrested and tortured; to be forced to flee into exile; or to receive an inhumane prison sentence.

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**FOR PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA**

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In 2007, Burma's military rulers showed their utter contempt by ordering their troops to fire on not just unarmed protesters but Buddhist monks and nuns.

In 2003, the junta committed an act of thuggery by staging a premeditated attack on pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and her motorcade in Depayin, a town in central Burma, with loyalist thugs killing an estimated 70 activists using little more than sticks and stones and their bare fists.

In the past 20 years, the Burmese army has burnt down more than 3,000 villages in Burma's frontier ethnic states, causing a half million displaced persons, mostly ethnic minority groups, in jungles or fleeing across the border into Thailand.

All these human right abuses have been well documented in resolutions, and have been heard at the UN General Assembly and the HRC every year since the early 1990s.

However, the Burmese military junta continues to enjoy impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The lack of the independent CoI has exacerbated the situation, and has convinced the generals that they are untouchable in any of the international legal arenas.

In early 2010, Tomás Quintana, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights to Burma, took an unprecedented move in a report to the HRC, calling for a CoI into possible crimes against humanity and war crimes in Burma. Neither the HRC nor the UNSC have acted on this recommendation to date.

The Asian Legal Resource Center (ALRC) issued a press release on March 3 regarding its separate submission to the 16th regular session of the HRC [Feb. 28 to March 25] in Geneva. In its press release, the ALRC referred to the Japanese government delegation's questions to the Burmese delegation during the session, and said:

"The problem of systemic rights abuse in Myanmar [Burma] is less a problem of refusal to engage with the standards of the international community, less a problem of engagement with international law, than it is a problem of engagement with domestic law, or rather, with any standards of law whatsoever."

The statement also pointed out the weakness of the HRC, stating: "The gap between domestic law and reality in Myanmar is not a simple consequence of practices that engender rights abuses; it is a matter of policy. This is a primary cause of chronic rights abuse in Myanmar, yet it is one that has not yet been properly or fully acknowledged by the Human Rights Council."

Unfortunately, the people of Burma never hear one voice from the UNSC, and the consequence is a lack of any international legal framework to address the junta's continuing code of human rights violations.

Is it because Burmese strongman Snr-Gen Than Shwe has not bombed peaceful demonstrators in the streets like al-Qadhafi? Is it because the junta has successfully covered up its bloody tracks? Is it because there has never been a division within Burma's military ranks?

Although the current state violence in Libya is quite different from the incidents in Burma in terms of intensity and scope, the people of Burma have long deserved that the UN proclaims the injustice in the country with one clear voice.

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## Ten Years On

The Life and Views of a Burmese Student Political Prisoner

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