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Free all political prisoners, free Aung San Suu Kyi, free Burma.

May 31, 2008 9:00 AM - My article in today's Guardian online site, commentisfree - Ben - 01.06.2008 [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK]

Tea with a dictator - By **Benedict Rogers** - "Ben Rogers" <brogers50@hotmail.com>

http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/benedict_rogers/2008/05/tea_with_a_dictator.html

The UN secretary-general, Ban Ki-moon, reminds me of Lady Hester Random in the movie *Tea with Mussolini*. Lady Hester, widow of a former British ambassador to Italy, played by the famous actress Maggie Smith, lives in 1930s Florence. As the fascists gain ground, she seeks an appointment with the Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini. He promises her his personal protection, and she naively takes him at his word.

The local newspaper features a photograph of Lady Hester having tea with the dictator, a picture she proudly keeps in a frame on her mantelpiece. Events, however, turn out rather differently, though it takes a long time for Lady Hester to realise that Mussolini could not be trusted. Watch the movie to find out what happens.

On May 23, Ban Ki-moon met Burma's ruthless dictator, Senior General Than Shwe. In the comfort of the Hotel Sedona in Rangoon, the UN secretary-general then declared to the world media: 'I am happy to report that we have made progress on all these issues. This morning, I had a good meeting with Senior General Than Shwe. He agreed to allow international aid workers into the affected areas, regardless of nationality. He has taken quite a flexible position ...' It sounds almost as promising as Neville Chamberlain's 'peace in our time'.

Today's world, when it comes to Burma, is full of Neville Chamberlains and Lady Hesters. No sooner had Ban Ki-moon left the country than the regime began its backtrack. Prime minister Thein Sein announced that the regime would 'consider' allowing access to international aid workers, 'if they wish to engage in rehabilitation and reconstruction work'. Storm swept their homes away. Others have been forced into camps controlled by the regime. Notices have been put up prohibiting relief distribution. Soldiers have shot dead several cyclone survivors, for no apparent reason.

Declaring the relief phase 'over' before it has even begun is a death sentence for the desperate survivors, thousands of whom are still bereft of basic emergency aid, including food, medical care and shelter. To talk of reconstruction and rehabilitation when people are dying of starvation and treatable disease is a scandal. Unless aid workers are permitted to enter the cyclone areas without restriction, to assess the needs and monitor the distribution of aid, there will be few people left to rehabilitate and little point in reconstruction.

The brutality of the regime has not changed. It shows no concern for human life - yet in its Orwellian eccentricity, it has announced that Cyclone Nargis killed 665,271 ducks, 56,163 cows and 1,614,502 chickens. The junta fails to realise that hundreds of thousands of people have died, and their corpses continue to float in the flood waters alongside the dead ducks and chickens. Rotting corpses spread diseases, causing yet more deaths. Regime officials don't even attempt to conceal their contempt for human life. One official told foreign aid workers: "What you, westerners, don't seem to understand is that people in the delta are used to having no water to drink and nothing to eat."

The regime has no regard for the rule of law either, not even its own. Burma's democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, has spent over 12 years under house arrest. Her current period of house arrest began in 2003, following an assassination attempt against her at Depayin which resulted in the slaughter of more than 100 of her supporters. She is held under the State Protection Act, which imposes a five-year sentence. Her five years has expired, but on May 27 the regime extended her detention for yet another six months. Instead of taking this opportunity, with the world watching, to initiate a meaningful process of national reconciliation, it continues to clamp down. At least 15 of Aung San Suu Kyi's supporters were arrested as they attempted to march to her home.

Burma's military regime is ranked as the most corrupt in the world, alongside Somalia, and it has shown its character in full colours in the past month. Of the aid that has arrived in Burma, only a trickle has reached the people. No more than a fifth of the 2.5 million cyclone survivors have received help. Much of the aid has been seized by the authorities and taken for their own use, or sold on the streets. Even the aid that has reached people has been painstakingly re-packaged and re-labelled for propaganda purposes. In just one example, packages labelled "Aid from the Kingdom of Thailand" were pasted over with labels bearing the junta's stamp. And then, incredulously, the regime has the audacity to demand \$11.7 billion in reconstruction aid - almost the entire gross domestic product of the country.

But still the world's diplomats and politicians wait, and talk, and grasp at straws. Even the aid workers are too scared to speak the truth. Some will argue that we should not 'politicise' a humanitarian situation. But it is already politicised, whether

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we like it or not, by the regime. It is the regime's policies - not simply neglect, but deliberate, calculated obstruction - that are at the root of the crisis. It is the regime that is playing politics with people's lives.

The time has come for action instead of talk. The time has come for the diplomats, politicians and aid workers to cease putting their confidence in the regime's 'noises', however positive, and demand practical results. A deadline should be set for visas to be issued and access to be granted, without restriction, to all international aid workers. That deadline should be hours and days, not weeks, from now. If the deadline is not met, the UN's 'responsibility to protect' should be actioned. The French, British and American navy vessels waiting off Burma's shores should go in, to deliver the aid they are carrying and be prepared to deal with the consequences.

Such intervention - with humanitarian objectives accompanied if necessary by military tools - would be welcomed by everyone in Burma except the top generals and their cohorts. Even many in the Burma Army would not resist. The sentiment is summed up in a letter to President Bush, dated 20 May, signed by several Burmese democracy groups including Buddhist monks and exiled 88 Generation Students. They write: 'Intervention will be seen as divine intervention by the Burmese people, not only to help the cyclone victims but also to finally free the entire nation from the military yoke'. The authors conclude: 'Please do not compare Burma with Iraq, because Buddhist monks, students, Burmese patriots will happily assist you with whatever you need to go inside Burma and help the cyclone victims and entire nation. We are willing to go together with whoever enters Burma first. We will recruit translators, doctors and nurses. Many concerned Burmese citizens are willing to join the intervention. Please do not waste precious time.'

A failure to act not only results in more deaths and suffering in Burma, it sends a signal to tyrants all over the world: that the world may huff and puff, but when it comes to it its words are meaningless. Too many times the international community has shown its impotence in the face of dictators. Burma presents an opportunity to be different.

The French, surprisingly, have been the most robust government on this. Surely, if the French are hinting at intervention, it's a sign that something is up? Critics cannot dredge up Iraq as a reason not to act in Burma. Foreign minister Bernard Kouchner wrote in *Le Monde* that a failure to act to help the people of Burma 'would be an act of cowardice'. Lady Hester Random and Neville Chamberlain showed that placing trust in dictators is not simply naive, it is costly cowardice. The time has come to bring an end to the deadly delay in helping Burma's people, and replace naivety and cowardice with courage and action - for the sake of Burma, and the world.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide has launched a campaign, ChangeforBurma!, which includes an online petition calling for action, available at www.changeforburma.org



http://www.irrawaddy.org/opinion_story.php?art_id=12466&page=2

2008-06-09 Burma News Summary - anil verma <anilverma7@yahoo.com>, 09.06.2008

‘No Warships Please, We’re Burmese’ By AUNG ZAW - Tuesday, June 3, 2008 - news@irrawaddy.org

US Pentagon chief Robert Gates was wrong to accuse Burma's military rulers of being deaf and dumb of not allowing US warships with aid to Burma's delta region.

Burma's feudal warlords are not deaf and dumb—although these politically traumatized generals are paranoid, self-important and live under the illusion that once they relinquish power, the country will disintegrate.

Indeed, as some observers suggest, the regime's refusal to allow US warships to assist the cyclone relief effort has little to do with Burma's colonial past and apparent xenophobia.

What the generals truly fear is that if they allow US warships and foreign forces to come to the aid of cyclone survivors in the Irrawaddy delta, people will soon rise up and the regime would be overthrown. That fear prevented the Than Shwe regime from allowing the US to come in and help.

The generals may, in fact, believe the humanitarian nature of a US intervention, while distrusting their own people—believing that were foreign forces to land Burma, it would spell the end of the regime.

Imagine a scenario where US marines and other servicemen land in the Irrawaddy delta, to be greeted by desperate Burmese urging them to overthrow the hated regime in Naypyidaw. The relief mission could quickly turn into one of regime-change and support for an anti-Tham Shwe uprising.

But the regime has nothing to fear—the US warships, led by the USS Essex, will be leaving in a matter of days, according to US Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who traveled to Southeast Asia recently. Last week, French warship Mistral with 1,000 ton of aid had left near Burmese water expressing “shock” as the Burma had not permitted the Mistral to unload its aid cargo directly for distribution in the Irrawaddy Delta — the worst-hit area.

The US naval presence includes three amphibious ships, led by the Essex, carrying 22 heavy-lift helicopters and a small fleet of landing craft. The American helicopters were banned from Burmese air space, although the regime allowed several C-130 relief flights to Rangoon airport from Thailand's Utapao airport—illustrating the regime's selective policy in accepting US aid.

The regime leaders also insisted that only civilian aid workers will be allowed in the affected area. Even this promise has not yet been fully honored.

Calling the regime's behavior "criminal neglect," Gates said the US had made more than 15 overtures to the regime to allow the use of the Essex's helicopters to deliver aid, but all had been rejected. Thousands of villagers would die because of the regime's obduracy, Gates said.

It is safer for an impassive Than Shwe to allow hundreds of thousands of villagers in the Irrawaddy delta region to die rather than permitting a US relief mission to save them—a deadly decision indeed.

Than Shwe knows full well that millions of Burmese wait in hope for the arrival of US warships, and not only for the relief supplies they would bring.

At the time of the 1988 democracy uprising, Burma's military leaders lodged a complaint with the US embassy after sighting a US naval fleet of five warships, including the aircraft carrier Coral Sea, within Burmese territorial waters on the morning of 12 September, six days before the army staged a bloody coup.

The sighting caused "major concern" among Burmese leaders including Ne Win, who in the 1970s had secured US military assistance, including helicopters, in fighting communists and drug warlords.

In those years, Burma sent its officers to the US General Staff College for training and study. Burma's official policy was, and remains: Americans are welcome, except in times of political crisis.

Applying this policy, the military leaders even refused permission for a US C-130 plane to land in Rangoon in 1988 in order to evacuate US embassy staff during the anti-government uprising.

There were rumors that US warships were on their way to help democratic forces in the uprising in 1988, prompting thousands of young Burmese to leave the jungle and take up arms shortly after the September 18 coup. But the rumors were just wishful thinking—the US warships never materialized.

Twenty years later, the Burmese are still waiting for those warships, which this time carry humanitarian aid. And, by a bitter irony, the ships remain as illusory as ever.

When the US invaded Iraq in 2003, a joke shared among Burmese was 'After diamonds, it will be the turn of gold'—referring to the Burmese words for diamonds (sein) and gold (shwe), meaning Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and Burma's junta leader Snr-Gen Than Shwe.

Now, a new rumor is spreading throughout Burma.

While looking skywards in vain for relief supply airlifts, people are saying that astrologers told Than Shwe that as soon as white men in uniforms landed in Burma, the regime would immediately collapse. For that reason, Than Shwe, supported by his equally superstitious wife, refused assistance from the US fleet.

US soldiers landing from amphibious ships and helicopters with relief supplies could be mistaken for "liberation forces" and would no doubt ignite a popular uprising beyond the Irrawaddy delta. Foreign forces would meet appeals for help from survivors and the refugees who are now being forcibly ejected from temporary shelters. Armed clashes could occur between Burmese government and foreign forces, and the Irrawaddy delta could become a battlefield.

But the battle wouldn't be confined to the delta region. There would be a national uprising against the oppressive regime in Naypyidaw.

US soldiers would be asked to attack Than Shwe's stronghold and remove the regime. Observers and dissidents say it would take no more than 30 minutes to topple Than Shwe and his coterie of no more than two dozen.

There's popular agreement that members of Burma's armed forces would join the endeavor.

But that's all wishful thinking now. Than Shwe has again escaped justice, saving his own life by sacrificing the lives of his countrymen and women by refusing humanitarian aid from the warships.

Perhaps the US knew from the start that its ships would not be allowed into Burmese waters, conscious that its forces might end up dislodging the world's most hated regime instead of delivering relief of another kind. And that mission could

prove to be open-ended, resolving a political mess no less complicated than the task of clearing up after Cyclone Nargis.

Mizzima News - June 20, 2008 - THE BURMANET NEWS - June 20, 2008 Issue #3496 - "Editor" <editor@burmanet.org> - www.burmanet.org

Change of guard in Burmese junta

<http://www.mizzima.com/news/breaking-news/1-breaking-news/697-change-of-guard-in-burmese-junta>

In a change of guard, Burma's secretive military rulers have carried out a major reshuffle in the cabinet and in key positions held by its military commanders.

While the junta officially announced the reshuffle of its cabinet ministers, the change of guard in its military command and Bureau of Special Operations was not disclosed, as usual.

The junta's state-run radio and television on Friday announced that Major General Maung Maung Swe, who earlier held two posts, has been left with just one - Minister for handling Post-Cyclone Management, Resettlement. One of his earlier portfolios, Minister for Immigration and Population, was given to Maj. Gen. Saw Lwin.

Saw Lwin's earlier post, Minister of Industries (2), has been given to Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, Vice Admiral Soe Thein, a move viewed by observers as shunting him from power.

Meanwhile, the Burmese junta not surprisingly made several other changes among its military commanders, including promoting younger officers to commanders and pushing effective commanders into higher ranks. This, however, was not announced.

Sources in the military establishment said the junta has ordered the transfer of four of its key military commanders to positions at the Bureau of Special Operations (BSO).

The four commanders - Maj Gen Aung Than Htut, Commander of the Northeastern Military Command, Maj Gen Ohn Myint Commander of Northern Military Command, Maj Gen Min Aung Hlaing, and Maj Gen. Ko Ko Commander of Southern Military Command – were transferred to positions in the Bureau of Special Operations.

According to the source, among the retiring BSO officers are seniors like Junta's Joint Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Gen. Thura Shwe Mann, who is number three in the junta's hierarchy.

The source said it was inconvenient for Shwe Mann to give orders to BSO officers, as they were senior to him.

Burma's military establishment has a total of five officers in its BSO. While Maj Gen Maung Bo, one of the five BSO officers was spared, the other four – Maj. Gen. Ye Myint, Maj. Gen. Aung Htwe, Maj. Gen. Kyaw Win, and Maj Gen. Khin Maung Thann - were made to retire, in order to make way for the newly transferred officers.

Sources said Brig. Gen. Kyaw Phyo, Commandant of General Staff College in Kalaw was promoted to Commander of Triangle Command, Brig. Gen. Yar Pyae, former Defence Services Medical Academy (DSMA) to Commandant of Eastern Command Commander, and Brig. Gen. Hla Min of the LID 11 has been promoted to Commander of Southern Command.

While Brig. Gen Soe Win commandant of General Staff College in Than Daung has been promoted to Northern Command Commander, Brig. Gen Win Myint of the Light Infantry Division (LID) 77 was promoted as Commander of Strategic Command, Rangoon Division, which is crucial for maintaining power.

The junta also switched two of its commanders' posts. Brig. Gen. Thaung Aye was transferred from Eastern to Western Command, while Brig. Gen. Maung Shein from Western to Northeastern Command.

Meanwhile, the junta also transferred Rangoon Commander Maj. Gen. Hla Htay Win to Chief Military Training, a post held by Lt. Gen Aung Htwe, who will now retire, sources said.

"Almost all commanders have been reshuffled, the only two who are not transferred are [Snr. Gen.] Than Shwe and [Vice Snr. Gen.] Maung Aye," the source in the military establishment said.

Reuters - June 11, 2008 -

Myanmar junta says Suu Kyi deserves to be flogged - Aung Hla Tun

THE BURMANET NEWS - June 11, 2008 Issue #3489 - "Editor" <editor@burmanet.org>, www.burmanet.org

Myanmar's military junta said on Wednesday that detained opposition leader and Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi deserved to be beaten like an errant child for threatening national security.

Seeking to justify the 62-year-old's latest stretch of house arrest, now in its sixth year, official newspapers said Suu Kyi and other detainees had been in contact with and had received cash from rebel guerrillas and foreign governments.

"Due to the crimes they have committed, they well deserve flogging punishment as in the case of naughty children," the papers said in Burmese and English-language editorials thought to reflect the thinking of the junta's top brass. The editorials added that the government was behaving like the "parent of the people" and exercising "great patience".

It detained Suu Kyi and others "in order that they will not be in a position to commit similar crimes again", they said.

Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) won more than 80 percent of seats in a 1990 election, only to be denied power by a military that has ruled the former Burma since a 1962 coup.

As the daughter of independence hero Aung San, she exercises enormous personal political clout in the nation of 57 million. It is largely out of fear of this that the ruling generals have kept her in some form of detention for nearly 13 of the last 19 years.

The newspaper commentaries also sought to explain the specific security law under which Suu Kyi is being held, but they failed to clarify whether the extension of her detention order on May 27 was for six or 12 months.

The papers also cited Singapore, Malaysia and the United States as countries which had laws to "prevent those who pose danger to the state".

(Writing by Ed Cropley; Editing by Darren Schuettler and Alex Richardson)

Associated Press - June 11, 2008 - <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/feedarticle/7577470>

Myanmar says detention of democracy leader legal

THE BURMANET NEWS - June 11, 2008 Issue #3489 - "Editor" <editor@burmanet.org> - www.burmanet.org

A state-controlled newspaper said Wednesday that Myanmar's military rulers were breaking no laws by holding pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest for a sixth straight year.

The junta's recent decision to extend Suu Kyi's detention by one year sparked international outrage, with the Nobel Peace laureate's party and foreign defense lawyers arguing the junta could legally only hold her for five years.

But a commentary in the New Light of Myanmar newspaper said detentions are permissible for as long as six years under a 1975 "Law Safeguarding the State from Dangers of Subversive Elements."

Yearly extensions must be approved by the Council of Ministers and then by the Central Body, which includes the home, defense and foreign affairs ministers, the newspaper said.

The military regime extended Suu Kyi's house arrest May 27, despite international pressure to set her free. She has been detained for more than 12 of the last 18 years at her home in Myanmar, also known as Burma.

Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party denounced the extension as illegal and urged the regime to open a public hearing on the case.

Party spokesman Nyan Win said he usually doesn't comment on articles published in state-run newspapers, which constantly attack the country's pro-democracy movement without allowing a response.

But he said the article's explanation of how it was not illegal to hold Suu Kyi for another year "is legally wrong. The law says that detention period should be a total of five years."

Nyan Win declined to elaborate because the party will submit an appeal and fight the case in court if allowed to.

An American lawyer hired by Suu Kyi's family to push for her release also condemned her continued detention as illegal.

"The Burmese junta's extension of Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest in clear violation of its own law comes as no surprise," Jared Genser, the lawyer, said at the time. "Adherence to the rule of law is not their forte, and the junta remains deeply concerned about her appeal to the Burmese people."

How the opposing sides interpreted the same 1975 law differently could not be immediately explained.

The junta also came under fire from the international community for initially refusing to allow urgently needed foreign aid workers to enter areas of Myanmar to assist in relief and recovery in areas devastated by Cyclone Nargis.

THE IRRAWADDY http://www.irrawaddy.org/article2.php?art_id=12843 - "Burma_news" <burma_news@verizon.net> (EBO)
Covering Burma and Southeast Asia

Brown, Sarkozy Call for Immediate Release of Suu Kyi

By DAVID STRINGER / AP WRITER / LONDON Thursday, June 19, 2008

Britain and France demanded Thursday that Burma's regime release pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, as she marked her 63rd birthday under house arrest.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and French President Nicolas Sarkozy said that her release is essential. Suu Kyi has spent more than 12 of the last 18 years under detention, since her party swept national elections in 1990. Military rulers refused to honor the results.

"You have sacrificed your freedom for the freedom of others. You have shown exceptional courage and dedication to your people. Your release from house arrest and your freedom to participate in Burma's political future remain essential," the leaders said in a joint letter to Suu Kyi.

Brown and Sarkozy met in Paris on Thursday, before a European Union summit in Brussels, Belgium.

In their letter, Brown and Sarkozy also deplored Burma's response to the May 2-3 Cyclone, Nargis, which Burma's ruling junta says killed more than 78,000 people and left another 56,000 people missing.

The men said it was regrettable that Burmese people "already deprived of basic human freedoms and economic opportunities, have fallen victim to such a major natural disaster."

Their letter rebuked the military regime in Burma for failing to take up sufficient offers of aid.

Sarkozy and Brown criticized the junta's decision to hold a referendum on a new constitution in the aftermath of the cyclone.

The constitution, which gives the military broad powers, was overwhelmingly approved in the national referendum held on May 10, about a week after the cyclone.

"We believe the recent referendum lacks credibility as a genuine reflection of the people's will and the new constitution cannot provide a sound basis for Burma's future political development," the European leaders said.

 [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] 2008-06-09 Burma News Summary - anil verma <anilverma7@yahoo.com>

UN Expert Urges Investigation Of Prisoners Killed In Burma -

By Lisa Schlein - Geneva -Mon, 09 June 2008

The U.N. Special Investigator into the Human Rights situation of Burma, also known as Myanmar, is calling for an investigation into the alleged killing of prisoners during the early days of Cyclone Nargis. The expert has submitted a report on violations in Burma to the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva, from where 'Lisa Schlein' reports for VOA.



Tomas Ojea Quintana, 09 Jun 2008

Argentinian lawyer Tomas Ojea Quintana assumed his post as the U.N. Special Rapporteur on May 1. This was one day before Cyclone Nargis struck, leaving an estimated 134,000 people dead or missing.

He says this catastrophic event triggered a number of events, which have serious human rights implications. He says the day of the storm on May 2, about 1,000 prisoners in the town of Insein were forced inside a hall after their jail's zinc roofs were torn off.

He says many prisoners panicked and soldiers and riot police were called in to control the situation. He says they reportedly opened fire on the prisoners and a number were allegedly killed.

"It is not that they were trying to escape," said Quintana. "Under the Cyclone circumstances, they were trying to save their lives because apparently the Cyclone was hitting the prison. So, they were trying to save their lives. And, there are some

reports that there are 30 or 40 perhaps, a number of killings in the situation in Insein prison."

Quintana is urging the authorities to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation to clarify the facts and identify the perpetrators of those arbitrary killings.

The U.N. investigator is calling for the government to free all political prisoners, starting with Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who remains under house arrest.

Burma's military rulers deny they are holding political prisoners, but Quintana says he has received reports of people having been detained while protesting the recent constitutional referendum. He says they are among 1,900 political prisoners, including monks rounded up after protests last September.

He says he is worried about the arrest of the popular Burmese comedian Zarganar, who had been leading some of the relief efforts after the Cyclone.



Zarganar (file photo)

"I am very concerned because I do not know, so far, about his whereabouts. I do not know if he is in detention in the police station or where. So, I ask for clarification from the government on that," said Quintana.

Quintana has sharp words regarding alleged obstruction of humanitarian assistance to the victims of Cyclone Nargis. He says under international human rights law, if a country cannot provide for the needs of its people, then other means have to be found to assist them. He says aid should be allowed to flow freely to the victims.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/2008-06-09-voa51.cfm>

Women's League of Burma

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WLB calls for General Than Shwe to be charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity under new UNSC resolution

24 June 2008

The Women's League of Burma (WLB) welcomes the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1820 on sexual violence during the Council's debate on 19 June 2008. WLB believes that this historic resolution gives hope to women around the world and in Burma in particular for justice.

The Resolution notes that rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, and stresses the importance of ending impunity for such acts.

Rape has been used for decades as a weapon in the Burmese military regime's war against ethnic nationalities, to demonstrate the army's absolute power to retaliate against those who resist them. SPDC soldiers use women in conflict areas as porters to carry their military equipment and supplies during the day, and use them as sex slaves at night. Many women, and their family members, have been brutally killed to eliminate evidence of these crimes.

While the military remains in control, rule of law remains absent, and to this day incidents of rape committed by SPDC troops with impunity continue to be reported. A very recent rape incident took place on 8 June, 2008, when an SPDC Army Major and a lawyer raped two teenaged ethnic Chin girls, aged 13 and 14, in Thangtlang, Chin State, Northwest Burma. One of them has been hospitalized with serious injuries as a result of the sexual abuse.

When the State itself is the abuser of human rights and the perpetrator of rape and other forms of genderbased violence, we can only rely on international laws and criminal courts to deal with such heinous crimes and protect the women of Burma.

We call on the UNSC to consider referring Burma's General Than Shwe, top leader of the Burmese military junta, and his cronies to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for the war crimes and crimes against humanity for which they are

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accountable. We urge the Council members to live up to the commitment shown during their debate.

We believe that a campaign to bring the top leaders of the junta before the ICC or some other international judicial body would send a strong warning to other officers in Burma, and let them realize that it is pointless to continue supporting the dictator Than Shwe, who has no future.

WLB hereby affirms that it will start a campaign, along with our supporters around the world, using this new UNSC Resolution-1820 to punish the regime and bring justice for the women of Burma

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Read this posting online: <http://www.badasf.org/2008/cyclone-news.htm> - anil verma <anilverma7@yahoo.com> -16.06.08

To arrest one of Burma's most famous public figures (Zarganar) for talking to the media at the time he was distributing aid shows the Burmese government is more concerned with controlling its citizens than assisting them.

Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch

Mizzima News -18 June 2008 - THE BURMANET NEWS - June 18, 2008 Issue #3494 -"Editor" <editor@burmanet.org>, **Aung Thu** <aungthu@t-online.de>

NLD calls for parliament to be convened - <http://www.mizzima.com/news/inside-burma/686-nld-calls-for-parliament-to-be-convened>
Solomon

The National League for Democracy, Burma's main opposition political party urged the military junta yet again to convene Parliament to solve the political dilemma the country is facing.

The statement issued by the NLD said the country is facing a national crisis in the aftermath of the devastation wrought by Cyclone Nargis. And it needs to be tackled at the earliest.

"The Parliament legally exists. When we talk about national crisis, it means not only economic crisis but also the legitimacy of the constitution. We need the Parliament to solve this environment of crisis in a legal manner," Thein Nyunt of the party's information department said.

"We want international aid to effectively tackle the devastation caused by Cyclone Nargis and to reach succour to the victims," he added.

The statement said that the damage caused by the cyclone is far too big and needs the help of international experts. Aid is needed because Burma alone cannot handle the reconstruction.

Severe inflation and the run away increase in prices of essential commodities are interlaced with the political crisis and no country in the world can ignore this, it said.

<http://www.adnkronos.com/AKI/English/Politics/?id=1.0.2281967506>

www.adnkronos.com anil verma <anilverma7@yahoo.com> [NLDmembersSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] Tue, 24 Jun 2008

Burma: Exiled opposition leader calls for meetings with China and India



Bangkok, 24 June (AKI) - The prime minister of the Burmese opposition's government-in-exile, Sein Win, has asked for a meeting with representatives from the governments of India and China.

In an interview with the Thai-based Irrawaddy news website, Win said that he was asking for a meeting with the leaders of the "countries that play an important role for a peaceful solution to the political crisis" in Burma.

Win said that it was support from these two Asian giants was "necessary".

"I want to travel to India and China and talk with their government officials and meet

their people and present our views," he said adding that he was undeterred by previous attempts to open discussions with New Delhi and Beijing which has so far not produced any positive results.

He said that the two countries "are very elusive because they are afraid any contact with us could jeopardize their relationship with the (ruling) military junta."

However he added that the desire for stability, prosperity and dialogue could become the basis of talks between these two government and the Burmese government-in-exile.

"Since 1990, I could not go to China and India," said Sein Win, who in an interview last year said he would like to have his government-in-exile located in India, rather than in Washington DC.

Win is a cousin of Burma's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who is currently under house arrest. Suu Kyi is the leader of the National League of Democracy.

Win said the recent referendum conducted by the Burmese military junta was "unacceptable" not just in the way in which it was conducted but also in the basis of the referendum.

The referendum was for the people of Burma to vote on whether to adopt a new constitution. The referendum was carried out on 10 May despite the devastation caused in Burma by Cyclone Nargis just days before.

The military-drafted new constitution also bars Suu Kyi's National League of Democracy from taking part in elections in 2010. Suu Kyi led the NLD to a landslide victory in elections in 1990 but the party was never allowed to take office.

<http://www.adnkronos.com/AKI/English/Politics/?id=1.0.2281967506>



QUOTE OF THE DAY “ We agree with China and India on many points ”

Dr. Sein Win, Burmese prime minister in exile - 24.06.08

http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=12936

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IRRAWADDY
Covering Burma and Southeast Asia

STATEMENT - (Unofficial Translation) June 12, 2008 - THE BURMANET NEWS - June 12, 2008 Issue #3490 - "Editor" <editor@burmanet.org>, www.burmanet.org

National League for Democracy Special statement: 13/06/08

Washington Post: Burma Gives 'Cronies' Slice of Storm Relief (and other cyclone news) <http://www.badasf.org/2008/cyclone-news.htm> - anil verma <anilverma7@yahoo.com> -16.06.2008

1. In accordance with the Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law and the authorities' promises after the 1990 General Election in Burma, "the Union of Myanmar Draft Constitution," for which a referendum was conducted in Burma on 10 and 24 May 2008, was drafted illegally. As per the Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law, the Members of Parliament elected in the 1990 General Election by the people of Burma were legally responsible for drafting the constitution. Instead, "the Union of Myanmar Draft Constitution" was written solely by handpicked representatives and associates of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). Officially and legally elected Members of Parliament, let alone citizens, were prohibited from reviewing or discussing the content of this constitution. The drafting process did not provide any opportunities for political parties, ethnic nationality groups, or democratic organizations to review or critique the constitution.

2. The above mentioned facts directly contradict the following laws and statements issued by the authorities:

a) Section 3 of the Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law, issued with the Law Number 14/89 by the authorities on 31 May 1989, states that: "Hluttaw [Assembly] must be formed with the Hluttaw representatives who have been elected."

b) Paragraph 12 of Statement 1/90, issued by the authorities on 27 July 1990, states that: "Section 3 of the Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law requires Hluttaw to be formed with the elected representatives of the Hluttaw from the respective constituencies. According to this provision, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) will be held responsible for convening the Hluttaw."

c) Paragraph 20 of Statement 1/90, issued by the authorities on 27 July 1990, states that: "under the present circumstances, the representatives elected by the people are those who have the responsibility to draft the constitutionträgerin Aung San Suu Kyi wie ein abgeirrtes Kind wegen Bedrohung der Staatssicherheit Prügel verdient. for the future democratic state."

3. Prior to the referendum, the draft constitution's content was not explained to or discussed with voters through State

media sources, such as the daily newspaper or radio and television programming. The draft constitution was not for sale or available for people to read and study it throughout many State and Division townships.

The draft constitution was issued without collecting or incorporating people's recommendations and requests and solely for approval. More importantly, the authorities held the referendum one month after releasing the draft constitution, which provided an extremely short timeframe for people to study the entire constitution. Authorities systematically managed this process so that they could gain support for the draft constitution through injustice force.

4. During the fourteen (14) year National Convention period, the Chairman of the Working Committee of the National Convention determined and detailed the principles for the constitution. This same person then became the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee and drafted the constitution based on the principles he established. This same person then became the Chairman of the Referendum Convening Commission, allowing him to commit unjust and biased acts. Other members of the Referendum Convening Commission had also participated in the National Convention or in the constitution drafting. This process was not fair or acceptable for the people. The Referendum Convening Commission was not an independent organization but instead was completely influenced by the SPDC.

5. Authorities violated their own Referendum Law and Technical Law by using blackmail, threats, cheating, tragerin Aung San Suu Kyi wie ein abgeirrtes Kind wegen Bedrohung der Staatssicherheit Prugel verdient. misinformation, coercion, and persuasion to obtain votes supporting the constitution. Authorities also disregarded the principle rule of a referendum: a secret voting system. According to reports and documents submitted to the headquarters by State, Division, Township, and Ward/Village Organizational Committees, important facts are as follows:

a) Authorities at all administrative levels as well as their supporting organizations had the right to organize people and propagate information freely. However, NLD members were restricted and harassed. NLD pamphlets and statements were seized, and NLD members were interrogated, threatened, and arrested using Law Number 5/96 and Referendum Law.

b) Advanced voting ballots were distributed by each polling station, and the results were fixed and controlled to secure supporting votes. Advanced voting ballots were collected from civil servants, workers, civilians and Cyclone Nargis victims, which violated the provision in the Referendum Law that only granted advanced voting privileges to people who had to travel, were sick, were disabled, or were elderly.

c) People who wanted to vote against the constitution faced many threats from authorities including but not limited to: a three year prison sentence and a 300,000 kyat fine, trial, confiscation of their farms and their businesses, being fired from their jobs, being expelled from school, and being required to report how other people voted.

d) Police officers in uniform and members of organizations supported by authorities were present at various polling stations.

e) Police officers permitted voters who wanted to cast "Yes" votes and prevented voting by people who wanted to cast "No" votes.

f) Voters were forced to vote using pre-marked "Yes" ballots.
tragerin Aung San Suu Kyi wie ein abgeirrtes Kind wegen Bedrohung der Staatssicherheit Prugel verdient.

g) One family/household member was required to cast votes on behalf of the entire family/household

h) One person representing the authorities cast votes on behalf of a large group of people formed by the authorities.

i) Polling station and Referendum Commission staff cast "Yes" votes for some voters.

j) Commission members cast additional "Yes" votes in the ballot boxes.

k) Some polling stations closed early and prior to 4:00pm, which was prohibited by the Referendum Law.

l) The people were prevented from seeing the counting of "Yes" votes, "No" votes, and invalid votes at all levels of the commissions.

m) At some polling stations, "No" votes were burned or destroyed

6. Section 23 of Chapter 9 of the Referendum Law states that: "after the Referendum, the Commission must announce the Referendum result by combining and accounting for votes by all eligible votes at all locations." However, the Referendum Commission declared the result on 15 May 2008 by issuing Statement Number 10/2008, which stated that: "The result of the previous referendum was 92.4 percent supportive votes." This statementtragerin Aung San Suu Kyi wie ein abgeirrtes Kind wegen Bedrohung der Staatssicherheit Prugel verdient. disregarded the Referendum Law, as it was announced before the referendum was held for the people living in the forty-

seven (47) Townships affected by Cyclone Nargis.

7. The record and list of eligible voters was collected before Cyclone Nargis. However, that list was no longer valid after the storm devastated the seven (7) Irrawaddy Division Townships on 2 and 3 May 2008 and left thousands of people dead and missing. The Cyclone also destroyed many national identity cards. The authorities did not revise their list of eligible voters; thus, the "Yes" votes in Irrawaddy Division cannot be vindicated.

8. The referendum does not represent the real will of the people, as it was neither free nor fair. A constitution is a contract between the ruler and the ruled. In this respect, because the referendum is not representative of the people's free will, its results are automatically nullified according to international law and standards. A contract cannot be ratified based on unlawful acts.

9. The Referendum Convening Commission issued Statement 12/2008 on 26 May 2008 and declared the referendum's result approving 'the Union of Myanmar Draft Constitution.' The State Peace and Development Council issued Statement 7/2008 on 29 May 2008 declaring that 'the Union of Myanmar Constitution' was approved. However, these declarations were not legal or lawful, as the referendum violated provisions in the above mentioned laws and statements. The National League for Democracy, mandated by the people during the free and fair 1990 General Election in accordance with the Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law, does not accept 'the Union of Myanmar Constitution.'

As per the decision in the meeting of the Central Executive Committee held on 6 June 2008.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy
Yangon

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