



# BURMA REPORT

July 2008

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Issue N° 62

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

THE  
**IRRAWADDY**

Covering Burma and Southeast Asia [news@irrawaddy.org](mailto:news@irrawaddy.org) - [www.irrawaddy.org](http://www.irrawaddy.org) - THE BURMANET NEWS - July 12-14, 2008 Issue #3510 - "Editor" [editor@burmanet.org](mailto:editor@burmanet.org) - [www.burmanet.org](http://www.burmanet.org)

## The 2010 Election Challenges - [http://www.irrawaddy.org/print\\_article.php?art\\_id=13292](http://www.irrawaddy.org/print_article.php?art_id=13292)

By **MIN ZIN**

**Saturday, July 12, 2008**

Burma's conflict is moving into a new phase of intractability. In other words, the conflict will become institutionalized in 2010.

The military has unilaterally set the rules of the new game with the ratification of its constitution and is preparing to hold elections in 2010 as part of its seven-step "roadmap." But the new constitution will not bring about much-needed state-building, a process in which all parties rally together and make their voices heard.

Instead of entering into the state-building process, Burma ranked 12th out of 177 states in order of their vulnerability to violent internal conflict and societal deterioration in the 2008 "failed state" index, presented by *Foreign Policy* magazine and the Fund for Peace. In the 2007 index Burma was designated 14th in failed state rankings. The country is crumbling.

"I can't really see anything happening that will be positive for the country's better future at this stage," said David Steinberg, a Burma expert from Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

The incompatible goals of the military elites and the opposition, including ethnic minorities, will not be transformed by the new constitution and the 2010 election.

The opposition will continue to fight for the goal of national reconciliation but is likely to find itself ineffective within the new institutional procedures that favor the military's exclusive domination. As result, the opposition will have to pursue alternative course of actions—such as public mobilization and international advocacy.

On the other hand, since the military continues to impose its one-sided goal of exclusive domination with the new constitution and elections it cannot expect to minimize the cost of conflict. The most visible costs of this approach will be the continuation of international isolation and further damage to the country's economy.

"We do not accept the junta's unilateral solution," said Aung Din, a former political prisoner and executive director of the US Campaign for Burma. "Until and unless there is a negotiated political settlement, made by the military, the National League for Democracy led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and ethnic representatives together, the US-led western sanctions against the junta will not be lifted."

Sein Htay, a Burmese economist in exile, goes further, saying: "No matter whether there are western economic sanctions or not, the regime's policy failure and mismanagement will damage the prospect of development and public welfare. The country's economy will continue to worsen after 2010."

The threat of renewed public uprisings will still be present, since the military's intentions do not facilitate a reconciliation of interests. More repression will result, increasing existing grievances and public hostility towards the military.

"As the generals will use the same method of coercion against the people even after 2010, the existing public anger that reached an unprecedented high level during the crackdown against monk-led protests last year and the regime's negligence of cyclone relief in May will then be compounded," said Win Min, a researcher in civil-military relations in Burma. "Antagonistic civil-military relations will continue."

Apart from being unable to transform incompatible goals and relations, the new, post-2010 regime will not change any salience of the issues that the country has been facing and which have earned it pariah status.

According to the military's new constitution, a military chief will independently administer military affairs, including recruitment and expansion of troops, promotions, troop deployment, budget, military-owned businesses, purchase and manufacture of weapons, etc.

Consequently, the issues of child soldiers, forced relocations, forced labor, landmines, internal displaced person, the flow of refugees to neighboring countries, rape and other rights violations—all of which are associated with the military's unchecked interests and behavior— will continue unresolved, especially in ethnic areas such as the eastern areas of

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

Burma.

Since the elected parliament's legislative power will be restricted and because it will not be able to oversee the military, no civilian mechanisms will be available to redress the military's excesses. Military personnel accused of crimes will be tried by a court-martial appointed by the head of the armed forces, the *Tatmadaw*—effectively allowing the military to continue its violations with impunity.

The 2010 elections could, however, contribute to leadership changes, at least on a nominal level during the initial stage. Two power centers will be created—military and government. Aside from the 25 percent of parliamentary seats reserved for the military and its power to appoint the three most important cabinet ministers (Defense, Home and Border Area Affairs) in the Cabinet, the generals are determined to fill the remaining government portfolios and parliamentary seats with members of its own civilian thuggish movement, the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA).

The election is sure to be marked by vote rigging, intimidation and bullying attacks orchestrated by the USDA and its affiliates against opposing candidates. Given the record of USDA violence against Suu Kyi's entourage in 2003 and opposition activists in subsequent years, the world will witness an election model of goon-squad democracy—comparable to the travesty of recent elections in Zimbabwe.

The new post-election power arrangement will nonetheless create conflict between two power centers over the command structure and personal interests. Even now, various reports confirm that there is serious animosity and tension between military personnel and USDA members regarding the latter's interference with the military's administrative mandate and other issues of self-interest.

Given the military's lack of experience of sharing power, it will be harder for the generals to accept being outshone by the USDA.

"Many officers in the military hate the USDA and believe it will go down when Than Shwe goes," said a source close to the military establishment.

The government's operation with two centers of power—no matter who pull the strings—could lead to either a serious internal split or miserable inefficiency of the ruling body.

Some advocates expect it will take an evolutionary shift toward liberalization. They believe the military's constitution, although flawed, can give reform options to a new generation of military officers. They suggest "using the generals' flawed model of democracy as a starting point from which to pursue a more acceptable long-term solution."

However, the nature of the power rivalry within a post-2010 regime will not necessarily lead to a new opening and democratization in the long run. Even if it does so, the question is: how long is the long run? It may be too long to have any strategic relevancy for the opposition movement, within the country as well as abroad.

In fact, political transition is not likely to take place within the framework of a military-imposed constitution. Even amendments made to the constitution in the hope of gradual reform will not be possible within military-dominated parliamentary debate and a new power arrangement. It could happen only if the status-quo is challenged by public pressure and a negotiated settlement is reached with the military. Otherwise, the post-2010 prospect remains bleak.

The UN-led international community, therefore, must double its efforts to push for an inclusive political resolution in Burma before 2010, mediating for meaningful political dialogue among all key stake holders by using coercive diplomacy, rather than pleading to the regime to conduct elections that are just "credible and inclusive".

The international community must be fully aware that the result of the election will be in accordance with the military's constitution. Otherwise, it will make the same major mistake committed by EU leaders at their July 19 summit in Brussels when they called on the military junta "to ensure that the elections announced for 2010 will be prepared and conducted in a way that contributes to a credible and fully participative transition to democracy." Without considering contextual and consequential dangers, the EU leaders just pushed for the 2010 election and perhaps felt they were serving the cause of Burmese democracy. Moral misery and strategic blunder!

UN envoy Ibrahim Gambari, who is planning to return to Burma soon, should be especially cautioned not to lend legitimacy to the regime's constitution and elections in 2010. The UN, which once supported the junta's seven-step "roadmap" as a potential for an inclusive transition, must now say clearly that the map is no longer relevant since it has failed to incorporate key stakeholders.

In brief, the UN-led international community should not give up its attempt to enforce an inclusive political resolution in Burma before 2010.

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## Parties to Register for Election: Junta

http://www.irrawaddy.org/print\_article.php?art\_id=13105

By WAI MOE

Wednesday, July 2, 2008

Burma's military junta will make an announcement in the coming months that all political parties must register in advance of the 2010 election, sources told *The Irrawaddy*.

Sources close to ethnic armed groups—which have maintained a ceasefire with the ruling junta since the 1990s—said that military officials told ceasefire groups to organize their political parties in preparation for the junta announcing party registration.

Burmese military officials reportedly also told the ceasefire groups that several high-ranking military generals would run in the election in 2010.

The Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), backed by the ruling military regime, had reviewed its membership list in preparation for the forthcoming election after the regime announced that more than 90 percent of voters supported the new constitution, according to USDA sources in Rangoon.

USDA members had reportedly been told to join a military-backed political party.

Sources said that when members of the USDA met with military officials, they were told that the country's top generals were pleased with the tactic of using advance voting to control and win the constitutional referendum in May.

Military officials also told USDA leaders and local authorities to hold advance voting, in particular for soldiers, civil servants and USDA members, in the 2010 general election.

"The generals are very happy with the referendum result and advance voting. They think they can control people with advance voting rather than in a secret ballot on election day," a township level leader of the USDA in Rangoon said.

"When I went to polling station on May 24 to vote, sub-commissioners at the polling station told me that their records showed that I had already voted. I asked them who voted for me. They told me that they voted on my behalf because they thought I would not come to the polling station," a businessman in Rangoon said.

The main opposition party, the National League for Democracy, has not decided whether it will compete in the 2010 election. The party still regards the 1990 election result as valid and its policy is to call the People's Parliamentary Assembly with elected persons from the last election, said Win Naing, a spokesperson for the NLD.

"The result of the 1990 election has never been honored by the ruling regime. So how can we consider the outcome of another election under the same rules?" he added.

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**AFP** -Sat, 19. Jul 2008 -

## Suu Kyi banned from Myanmar Martyrs' day gathering

Tin Kyi [miinkyi7@yahoo.com](mailto:miinkyi7@yahoo.com) - [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] Burma Related News - July 19, 2008 NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK@yahoo.com

**YANGON (AFP)** - Myanmar's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi was kept under house arrest Saturday as others gathered to pay tribute to her late father on Martyrs' day.

Suu Kyi had not been invited to attend the annual ceremony by the ruling military, according to an official from her National League for Democracy party.

"She wasn't invited to attend the ceremony although the authorities used to send her an invitation," the official told AFP.

Martyrs' day commemorates the assassination of General Aung San and eight other leaders on July 19, 1947 while they were holding a meeting for Myanmar independence from Britain.

The military government hosted a short memorial early Saturday morning at the Martyrs' mausoleum close to the famous Shwe Dagon pagoda in the country's main city Yangon.

The mayor, Brigadier General Aung Thein Linn, some government officials and family members of the country's late leaders all attended the 61st anniversary event.

But invitations to foreign embassies were cancelled by the foreign affairs ministry without reason, the diplomats

confirmed.

Suu Kyi was only two-years-old when she lost her father. Myanmar got its independence a year later in January 1948.

Aung San Suu Kyi has spent most of the last 18 years under house arrest and has currently been detained since 2003.

About 300 NLD members gathered in front of party headquarters on Saturday morning, saluting the spot where the leaders were gunned down.

Amid tight security and with armed police trucks present, the gathering was peaceful with no shouting or marching as has been known in previous years.

But the NLD reiterated its call for the immediate and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners.

Earlier this month 14 Suu Kyi supporters were charged for protesting against the extension of her house arrest.

Myanmar has been ruled by the military since 1962. The NLD won a landslide victory in 1990 elections but the junta never allowed them to take office.

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**Mizzima News** - Wednesday, 09 July 2008 15:15

## **G-8 leaders urge junta to free Aung San Suu Kyi**

Tin Kyi [mtinkyi7@yahoo.com](mailto:mtinkyi7@yahoo.com) - [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] Burma Related News - July 09, 2008. -NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK@yahoo.com

New Delhi - Leaders of the Group of Eight, meeting in Japan, on Tuesday urged the Burmese military junta to free all political prisoners and usher in political transition to democracy.

Leaders of eight industrial powers - Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States "C in a statement called on Burma's military junta, "to immediately release all political detainees, including Aung San Suu Kyi, and to foster a transition to a legitimate, democratic, civilian government."

Ignoring international calls and pressures, Burma's military regime in May, extended the house arrest term of pro-democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for another year.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Burmese democracy icon has spent over 12 of the last 18 years in solitary confinement at her lakeside villa in Rangoon. She was last arrested in May 2003, after a brutal attack by junta-backed mobs during her political tour in upper Burma.

The leaders of G8, in its statement, also called on the Burmese junta to allow free access to foreign aid workers in order to provide assistance to victims of Cyclone Nargis, which lashed the country's southwest coastal division of Irrawaddy and Rangoon in May 2-3, leaving more than 138,000 dead and missing.

G8 leaders said they are "committed to ensuring aid reaches those affected by Cyclone Nargis and called on the authorities in Burma to lift all remaining restrictions on access for foreign aid workers."

The Burmese government on Tuesday, however, said it has granted more than 1,500 visas to foreign aid experts to deliver humanitarian aid to victims of the cyclone.

According to the UN Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), as of 7 July, visas for 317 UN staff have been approved, while 13 requests remain pending.

"Visas are now issued within two to three days of the application being sent to the TCG. The majority of visas are given as single-entry visas with an initial duration of two weeks," UNOCHA said in a 'situation overview' report released on Tuesday.

Permission to allow travel to the cyclone affected regions has to be requested from the Burmese Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and the average processing time for such request takes about four to five days.

"More than 270 international UN staff and at least as many international staff from NGOs have travelled to affected areas as of 7 July," the UNOCHA said.

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**DVB-Norway** – <http://english.dvb.no/news.php?id=1549>

## **Low expectations for Gambari visit** - Jul 17, 2008

THE BURMANET NEWS - July 17, 2008 Issue #3514 - "Editor" [editor@burmanet.org](mailto:editor@burmanet.org) - [www.burmanet.org](http://www.burmanet.org)

**Jul 17, 2008** (DVB)—Opposition figures and a political analyst have expressed doubts over whether the planned visit of United Nations special envoy Ibrahim Gambari to Burma in mid-August will bring about any positive outcomes.

U Nyan Win, spokesperson for the National League for Democracy, said the party did not have high expectations for the envoy's visit.

"The only thing this shows is that Mr Gambari's role, as a negotiator for national reconciliation in Burma on behalf of the UN Security Council and General Assembly, still exists," Nyan Win said.

"Whether or not this will be a successful mission doesn't depend on the UN's efforts alone," he said.

"But we can still hope for the success if everyone starts participating – Mr Gambari, the UN and everyone who has a concern."

U Chan Htun, a veteran politician and former Burmese ambassador to China, said the government had approved the trip in order to push its own agenda on issues such as the constitution and 2010 elections, and to press Gambari to encourage opposition groups to participate in the elections.

"They invited Mr Gambari because they have confidence that they can get something they want," he said.

"Our government doesn't do anything without being sure of the outcome; they know only what they want and they do not care about anyone else."

Burma analyst Aung Naing Oo said he had little hope for the efforts by Gambari and the UN.

"[Gambari] would just keep going to Burma until the end of his term or until the Burmese government stops allowing him into the country," Aung Naing Oo said.

"If he doesn't want to go, a new person will be appointed to continue this work. So he'll just have to go there regardless what outcome is going to result."

Aung Naing Oo said no noticeable successes had come out of the special envoy's previous trips.

"A very common question from both inside and outside Burma is what he is going to do seeing as the government's road map for democracy is going forward," he said.

"In Mr Razali Ismail's era, people used to have some hope from his trips to Burma because there was always something to hope for," he went on.

"But with Mr Gambari, a lot of people are starting to think he is only being used by the Burmese regime for their own ends."

Razali Ismail, the former UN special envoy to Burma, said that it was important to keep channels of communication with the junta open.

"The ability to talk to the regime must be maintained in all aspects, including the political," he said.

"I don't think the people of Myanmar should lose hope in the UN. The UN is doing the best it can," he went on.

"When I was working there, I was doing the best I could, but finally it is up to the government and the people of Myanmar to make all the necessary changes."

*Reporting by Htet Aung Kyaw*

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"Hla Kyaing" bla.kyaing@gmail.com - http://www.google.ch/search?q=Myanmar+politics+roiled%2C+but+junta+grip+firm&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:de:official&client=firefox-a

# San Francisco Chronicle

AP Associated Press

## Myanmar politics roiled, but junta grip firm

By DENIS D. GRAY, Associated Press Writer

Wednesday, July 2, 2008

**(07-02) 00:01 PDT BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) --**

The cyclone that devastated Myanmar's heartland has also roiled a political landscape dominated by the military for more than four decades.

Buddhist monks are regrouping after the battering they took nine months ago, civil society groups are emerging and foreign aid workers — often agents of political change in the wake of humanitarian crises — are present in unprecedented numbers.

The junta's grip on power remains absolute. But anger against the regime has probably never run so high.

"Perhaps incremental change will emerge from engagement on humanitarian problems," said Joel Charny, vice president of U.S.-based Refugees International who visited Myanmar just before the cyclone struck.

People were already incensed by the brutal suppression last September of anti-government demonstrators, including the country's revered, saffron-robed Buddhist monks.

Then came Cyclone Nargis, exposing the junta as inept and heartless, initially blocking international aid efforts and even now still hampering them.

"The people are blaming the government. They are responsible for many deaths. They don't care about right or wrong and they let people die just to hold onto power," said Aung Myoe, a 32-year-old driver in a comment typical of the mood in Yangon, Myanmar's largest city.

"In the 'Saffron Revolution' they lost their Buddhist legitimacy; with the cyclone they lost whatever concept of efficacy they had with the public," said David Steinberg, a Myanmar expert at Georgetown.

Steinberg said the junta constantly trumpet achievements in modernizing the isolated and impoverished Southeast Asian nation formerly named Burma.

Analysts say these passions and emerging trends may in the longer term loosen the junta's grip on power. But for now it's business as usual: dissidents are arrested, a brutal campaign against ethnic minorities rages on and the military strides toward elections guaranteed to perpetuate its control.

But the 500,000-strong Buddhist monkhood, the only viable national institution after the army, is regaining strength and cohesion by assuming a leading role in helping cyclone survivors.

Their work is seconded by quietly burgeoning civil society groups, which Steinberg said could foster pluralism and democracy in the future. These groups include professional guilds, including those of actors and singers, charity organizations and loose associations of like-minded citizens.

So could the influx of foreign aid workers and agencies in what may be the most intense interaction Myanmar has experienced with the outside world since gaining independence from Great Britain in 1948.

The operative word is "incremental." Analysts don't foresee meaningful political changes in the short run, discounting a dramatic turn of events, such as social upheaval in face of cyclone-induced rice shortages, or a split within the military.

The regime will be hard-pressed to provide enough rice to keep its 400,000 troops and their families loyal and ensure that shortages, which could last several years, don't trigger major popular unrest as they have in the past, said Donald Seekins, a Myanmar watcher at Japan's Mejo University.

Meanwhile, the junta marches forward along its so-called "road map to democracy." Elections are scheduled in 2010, based on a referendum-approved Constitution which guarantees the military 25 percent of parliamentary seats and power to run the country in event of a national emergency.

The cyclone response, the referendum and the extension of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi's detention for a sixth year all sparked international outcry, but the absence of U.N. or other foreign action reassured the junta it needn't fear outside intervention.

"The people of Myanmar would have been happy if the United States or France invaded," said Ye Htun, a 30-year-old English teacher. "In Myanmar, the government is too strong and people are too scared. We can't do it alone."

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"euro\_burma" [euro\\_burma@verizon.net](mailto:euro_burma@verizon.net) - Sun, 20. Jul 2008 - [johanna.kruger@international.gc.ca](mailto:johanna.kruger@international.gc.ca) - Euro- Burma Office 1000 Bruxelles, Belgium

## MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SINGAPORE

20/07/2008

### Statements by ASEAN Chair, Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs George Yeo, Singapore, 20 July 2008

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers had a full and frank discussion on the political situation in Myanmar. They were briefed by Myanmar Foreign Minister Nyan Win on recent political developments, including the constitutional referendum in May 2008 and preparations for general elections to be held in 2010.

The Foreign Ministers expressed their deep disappointment that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's detention under house arrest had been extended by the Myanmar Government. They repeated the call by ASEAN Leaders for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political detainees, as part of Myanmar's national reconciliation process. The Foreign Ministers reiterated their view that the Myanmar Government should engage in a meaningful dialogue with all political groups, and work towards a peaceful transition to democracy in the near future.

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers also encouraged Myanmar to continue working closely with the Good Offices of the UN Secretary-General and his Special Advisor Ibrahim Gambari in ensuring an inclusive process towards national reconciliation. They stressed the importance of Professor Gambari's work in helping Myanmar move forward. They welcomed the Myanmar Government's invitation last week to Professor Gambari to visit Myanmar in August 2008 and reiterated their call for Myanmar to extend its fullest cooperation to Professor Gambari. They urged the Myanmar government to give him access to senior leaders and to facilitate meetings with the widest possible range of contacts, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

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### Information Release

**Date: July 25, 2008**

### **Saffron Revolution Muslim students sent to labor camps**

This week 10 young students were each sentenced to 2 years imprisonment at Kyauktada Township Court. They had participated in last September's Saffron Revolution and were arrested in October due to their involvement. AAPP has learned that after they were sentenced, they were placed in iron shackles and sent to forced labor camps, by order of the Minister for Home Affairs. The majority of the students are Muslims.

As they were detained and sentenced under political charges, they are political prisoners. There have been very few cases of political prisoners being sent to forced labor camps like this before. Some

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

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monks who participated in the 1990 Monastic Boycott (Pattamni Kujjana) and were subsequently imprisoned for their involvement were sent to forced labor camps. 19 monks passed away in the camps due to hard labor and malnutrition.

Tate Naing, Secretary of the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, said, "The transferal of those Muslim students to forced labor camps is religious persecution. Those young students are now facing a life-threatening situation."

The 10 students who were sent to forced labor camps are as follows:

1. Tun Myint Aung (Muslim) (Kyaikmayaw New Life (6) forced labor camp)
2. Tun Tun Naing (Kyaikmayaw New Life (6) forced labor camp)
3. Eisud (aka) Thaug Htut (Muslim) (Paan New Life (7) forced labor camp)
4. Naing Lin (Paan New Life (7) forced labor camp)
5. Nyi Nyi Zaw (Muslim) (Third Year Philosophy, Eastern Rangoon University) (Zinkyaik gravel forced labor camp)
6. Kyaw Hlaing (aka) Japangyi (Muslim) (Zinkyaik gravel forced labor camp)
7. Myo Thant (Muslim) (Yinnyein gravel forced labor camp)
8. Myo Win (Muslim) (Yinnyein gravel forced labor camp)
9. Han Thaw Min Aung (Dala) (Taungzun forced labor camp)
10. Nay Lin Oo (Muslim) (Taungzun forced labor camp)

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[http://www.irrawaddy.org/print\\_article.php?art\\_id=13501](http://www.irrawaddy.org/print_article.php?art_id=13501)

[news@irrawaddy.org](mailto:news@irrawaddy.org) The Irrawaddy Today's Newsletter for Wednesday, July 23, 2008

## UN Security Council to Discuss Burma

By LALIT K JHA / UNITED NATIONS

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

NEW YORK — As the United Nations plans to send special envoy Ibrahim Gambari to Burma in September and the Security Council prepares to discuss Burma on Thursday, the US says it will push for a "focused" political approach on Burma.

"The political track needs to be focused on now, front and center, with regard to Burma," said US Ambassador to the UN, Zalmay Khalilzad.

Khalilzad stressed the "process" adopted by the military junta to get a new constitution approved was "very much flawed." A group of five Burmese parliamentarians on Monday sent a letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the five Permanent Representatives on the Security Council urging the UN to declare Burma's new constitution illegitimate.

A UN spokesperson said that Gambari intends to discuss such concerns during his visit to Burma next month.

Khalilzad said the referendum on the draft constitution did not meet the standards of the Security Council and its presidential statement which the council outlined before the referendum.

The council's UN presidential statement asked for the release of all political prisoners including Aung San Suu Kyi, and for a free, fair and transparent process surrounding the referendum. The Burmese junta went ahead with a referendum in the immediate aftermath of Cyclone Nargis that killed more than 130,000 people. Led by the US, the international community called it a sham referendum.

"That's why we have been of the view that the international system and the UN needs to focus on the political track once again in Burma," Khalilzad said.

"Because of the terrible humanitarian situation in the aftermath of the cyclone, there was less attention paid to the political process," Khalilzad said. "We think that's vital, and that's why we have been urging the secretary-general to send his special envoy back and to achieve specific progress."

Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes arrived in Burma on Tuesday for a three-day visit to assess progress in the aid relief and recovery operations.



Holmes visited several affected communities in the Irrawaddy delta on Tuesday during a helicopter tour.

"He noted that significant progress has been made since his last visit (in May)," said a UN spokesperson. "The focus now needs to be on reaching the most vulnerable communities in remote areas."

Holmes planned to meet the humanitarian community and donors in Rangoon on Wednesday. He also planned to travel to Naypyidaw, the capital, on Friday for consultations with Burmese officials.

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"euro\_burma" [euro\\_burma@verizon.net](mailto:euro_burma@verizon.net) - :Fri, 25. Jul 2008 07:44:13 -0700

23 July 2008



Secretary-General  
SG/SM/11716

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

## SECRETARY-GENERAL CONVENES MEETING ON SPECIAL ADVISER'S UPCOMING VISIT TO MYANMAR

The following statement was issued today by the Spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon:

The Secretary-General convened, today, a meeting of the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General on Myanmar to discuss the upcoming visit of his Special Adviser, Ibrahim Gambari, to the country.

The Group expressed strong support for the Secretary-General's good offices efforts. Members of the Group also noted their expectations that Mr. Gambari's next visit would need to yield tangible progress on the issues of concern to the international community, particularly with regard to the resumption of dialogue between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the Government, the credibility of the electoral process and the regularization of engagement with the good offices of the Secretary-General.

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AFP – 24 July 2008

"Burma\_news" [burma\\_news@verizon.net](mailto:burma_news@verizon.net) - Burma News - 25 July 2008 Fri, 25. Jul 2008

## Rice says Myanmar 'badly out of step' with rule of law

SINGAPORE - US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Thursday that Myanmar is "badly out of step" with the world community, even though it ratified a regional charter setting out human rights principles.

Rice attended a ministerial gathering Wednesday of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) which spent considerable time on Myanmar.

"The ASEAN charter aspires to rule of law, human rights, development of more pluralistic political systems, integration into the international community of states and Burma is out of step, badly out of step," she said.

The junta was severely criticised for its delay in allowing foreign aid into the country after a May 2-3 cyclone left 138,000 people dead or missing.

It belatedly allowed aid workers to enter under an arrangement forged with ASEAN and the United Nations.

"You wonder how can the international community stand by and allow that to happen," Rice said.

"I give a lot of credit to ASEAN for developing the mechanism for assistance and for speeding up assistance after a period of time and becoming a kind of an international clearinghouse, if you will, for contact with Burma," she said.

"That was a useful role, but it should never have happened in the first place," Rice said.

"Now the question is, given the slight opening that this has provided, is there a way to move Burma to a political track that would finally make something of what is right now a kind of mockery, which is this 'roadmap to democracy' which is going nowhere," Rice said.

"Would it be possible for regional states and neighbors to press the regime to release Aung San Suu Kyi, to allow real opposition, to get on a path?" she said.

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## Rise of Factions Roils Relations within Burmese Junta

news@irrawaddy.org The Irrawaddy Today's Newsletter for Thursday, July 10, 2008

By **MIN LWIN**

Thursday, July 10, 2008

On the surface, the high-ranking generals in the Burmese military junta appear to be united. But since a reshuffle in early June, speculation has been rife that the regime is undergoing a major realignment, with competing forces jostling for influence.

There are persistent rumors that several of the former Bureau of Special Operations heads who were sacked in June are now under investigation on corruption charges. Some are even believed to be under house arrest, facing charges of high treason.

Although international news agencies reported that around 150 officers were reshuffled, well-informed observers say the number who were reassigned or removed outright was probably closer to 400.

It is believed that three powerful factions have now emerged, all of them loyal to Snr-Gen Than Shwe, who remains the commander in chief of the armed forces.

The three factions are led by Gen Thura Shwe Mann, Lt-Gen Myint Swe and Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo.

Thura Shwe Mann, 60, is the third-ranking general in the military hierarchy, holding the title of joint chief of staff. He has been groomed to take over as commander in chief of the armed forces when Than Shwe sees fit to step down.

Shwe Mann also has the lofty title of "Coordinator of the Special Operations, Army, Navy and Air Force"—a position that allows him to oversee all the main branches of the military, including the powerful Bureaus of Special Operations.

Shwe Mann is seen as a protégé of Than Shwe. He is also close to several businessmen and scholars who have recently been involved in getting humanitarian assistance to cyclone-affected areas of the Irrawaddy delta.

Shwe Mann's son, Aung Thet Mann, is involved in the fertilizer and rice mill business in the delta. The Shwe Mann camp has recently been releasing news that the general is business-minded and in favor of cooperating with the United Nations and the international community. His close friend and former classmate, Lt-Gen Soe Thein, was recently removed from his position as navy chief and named minister for industry (2).

Another rising star is Lt-Gen Myint Swe, 59, who heads Bureau of Special Operations 5 (BSO-5).

Myint Swe is an ethnic Mon who has played a key role in controlling security in Rangoon since the early 2000's. He is a distant relative of Than Shwe's wife, Kyaing Kyaing, and is known to be close to the senior leader. He was involved in several important operations against top leaders, including the arrest of former Prime Minister Gen Khin Nyunt, who was ousted in October 2004.

Myint Swe has been seen in the state-run media more frequently since Cyclone Nargis slammed into Burma in early May, prompting observers to wonder if he is in line to assume a top commander position.

Lt-Gen Tin Aung Myint Oo, the quartermaster-general who was named secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council in 2007, is the putative leader of a third faction.

Burmese observers believe that Tin Aung Myint Oo was one of the regime's main opponents of foreign assistance and UN involvement in the Cyclone Nargis relief effort. He recently visited the Irrawaddy delta and was named deputy head of the National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee.

All three powerful generals have visited the affected area. Shwe Mann accompanied Than Shwe, while Tin Aung Myint Oo went with Maung Aye, the deputy commander in chief of the armed forces and army chief, along with other powerful commanders, including air defense department and intelligence chiefs. Myint Swe toured the affected area alone, giving "necessary instructions" to officials.

Insiders have noted that all three are close to Than Shwe and his family, removing any likelihood of a coup against the top commander.

Meanwhile, Maung Aye, the army chief, remains the second-most powerful military leader in the armed forces. Maung Aye was locked in a bitter fight with Gen Khin Nyunt, and Than Shwe benefited from the power struggle between the two. Now Maung Aye, who has little political ambition, is not a threat to Than Shwe.

But if speculation about the emergence of three powerful factions within the top command turns out to be true, it is likely that further purges and changes at the top are in store.

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**DEMOCRACY FORCES WILL CHALLENGE  
THE CREDENTIALS OF THE MILITARY JUNTA  
AND OBJECT ITS RIGHT TO REPRESENT BURMA IN THE  
2008 UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

July 14, 2008

The democratic movement of Burma will be challenging the credentials of the Burmese military junta at the 2008 United Nations General Assembly session and object to its right to represent Burma at the United Nations. Since the endeavor is aimed at prompting reforms in the country as well as protecting the people of Burma from the ruthless suppression of the junta, we call upon the nations of the world to cooperate with us and to extend their active support for the effort.

For decades, the people of Burma have been peacefully endeavoring for political reforms in the country but the successive military regimes have been resorting to murder, intimidation, and oppression to overcome these endeavors and maintain their power through brute force. The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), formerly known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), is commonly recognized to be one of the most repressive and secretive governments in the world. The SPDC refused to honor the results of the last legitimate elections in 1990, when Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy won 80% of Parliamentary seats. Despite years of work by activists from both inside and outside Burma, efforts to foster a peaceful negotiated transition to a democratic civilian government have made little headway. To date, the junta's leadership has failed to honor any promises made with respect to democratic change and has instead increased measures to silence pro-democracy groups.

Over the last year, the international community has witnessed numerous demonstrations of the brutal and callous tactics the SPDC uses to maintain power, including the ruthless crackdown on peaceful monks and citizens calling for democratic reform in the Saffron Revolution; the disregard for human suffering in refusing international assistance following Cyclone Nargis; the illegal extension of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's confinement; and the fraudulent constitutional referendum conducted just days after Cyclone Nargis, even before the government assessed the damage from the storm. The injustice of these latest crimes is compounded when viewed in light of the junta's past atrocities, such as its violent repression of 1988 protests, its refusal to honor the 1990 elections, and its murder of NLD members in the 2003 Depayin massacre.

The most fundamental principle of democracy is that sovereignty rests with the people. Although the military junta has brutally oppressed the Burmese people and scoffed at the requests and demands of the international community, United Nations Member States have continued to extend the junta the privilege of illegally representing the people of Burma at the United Nations. Because the SPDC does not and cannot legitimately represent the state or people of Burma, it is now time to revoke its privilege of representing Burma to the United Nations.

The pro-democracy movement for Burma, united in coalition throughout the world, calls upon the Member States of the United Nations to stand up for the principles of democracy and human rights and reject the credentials of the SPDC's delegation to the United Nations during the upcoming session of the General Assembly.

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QUOTE OF THE DAY - visit [www.badasf.org](http://www.badasf.org) for update

“The roadmap is the worst way forward. The roadmap is accepting the lies, the fake referendum, the questionable reform of the constitution, excluding people who won the election.”



— Jody Williams, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate

Mon, 28. Jul 2008 18:05:04 -0700

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## UN Wants 'Tangible Progress' in Burma

By LALIT K JHA / UNITED NATIONS

Thursday, July 24, 2008

The UN Secretary-General's "Group of Friends" on Burma on Wednesday said the UN special envoy's return to Burma in August needs to obtain "tangible progress" on issues of concerns to the international community.

The "Group of Friends" on Burma met with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and special envoy Ibrahim Gambari at UN headquarters in New York to discuss the visit.

The US ambassador to the UN, Zalmay Khalilzad, told *The Irrawaddy*: "The time has come for concrete results."

Gambari's previous mission produced very little results, Khalilzad said, and on this trip he must "come back with concrete achievements."

Ban and Gambari declined to make any comments after the meeting, which was attended by representatives from Australia, China, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Norway, Russia, Singapore, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, Britain, the US, Vietnam, the European community and the European Union.

While the US, Britain, Russia, Singapore, India and several other countries were represented by their respective ambassadors, China sent a third-level official to the meeting.

Among issues of concern for the international community are a resumption of dialogue between pro-democracy advocate Aung San Suu Kyi and the Burmese government, the credibility of the electoral process and a regular process of engagement with the good offices of the secretary-general.

Khalilzad said that in the aftermath of Burma's constitutional referendum and the humanitarian response to Cyclone Nargis, which killed more than 130,000 people in the Irrawaddy delta, "There hasn't been any progress. Actually, there has been some regress on the political track."

"We need to send a strong message through Gambari that there has to be progress on the political track, with regard to time-bound negotiations, with regard to elections in 2010, with regard to the release of [political] prisoners, with regard to including Aung San Suu Kyi, and with regard to dealing with the issue of the future reconstruction of the country, but that reconstruction of the country is very much tied to the political progress."

Meanwhile, Burma's neighbors India and China have joined hands with Indonesia to establish what they describe as an informal meeting group on Burma.

Burma and UN envoy Gambari are the other two members of the informal group recently established at the initiative of Indonesia.

Officials said permanent UN representatives of China, India, Indonesia and Burma to the UN along with Gambari plan to meet regularly over lunch at the United Nations headquarters in New York to discuss issues related to Burma.

The group has had two meetings so far, both hosted by Indonesia.

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"It is not a [official] group. It is not institutionalized. It's a luncheon meeting at which we have India, Indonesia, China, Myanmar and Gambari," the Indian ambassador to the UN, Nirupam Sen, told *The Irrawaddy*.

"The main objective is to understand each other better. Second, unlike the UN group, this luncheon meeting includes Myanmar (Burma). So there is a sense of ownership," Sen said. "Without involving Myanmar, its government and the sense of ownership there, we can't really carry out any fundamental changes."

Calling it a "focused group," US ambassador Khalilzad said it was formed to help Burma move "in the right direction."

India is in close touch with many key players on Burma, he said. "India is keen that the Good Offices Mission should be a sustainable process."

Ambassador Sen said the issues include a mechanism for a socio-economic plan tied to Burma's "road map" towards democracy and the resumption of dialogue with the National League of Democracy. Gambari will be taking up these issues on his next visit, he said.

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## Ten Years On

The Life and Views of a Burmese Student Political Prisoner

by **Moe Aye**

(Former Burmese Student Political Prisoner)

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