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## WLB welcomes and urges support of the UNSR's recommendations on Burma

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The Women's League of Burma (WLB) welcomes the groundbreaking report and recommendations to the UN Human Rights Commission of UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Burma, Mr. Tomás Ojea Quintana. This report marks the first time an acting UN official has called for an UN Commission of Inquiry into Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes in Burma, both crimes which fall under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. The findings of the Special Rapporteur confirm the numerous reports produced by the WLB and its member organizations documenting the commission of crimes against humanity and war crimes in Burma and the widespread and systematic use of rape and sexual violence as a weapon of war.

The WLB thanks Mr. Quintana for his forthright and compelling report and urgently calls on the international community to support the Special Rapporteur's recommendation for the creation of an UN Commission of Inquiry. Burma's military regime has systematically employed torture, rape, slavery, murder, and mass imprisonment for decades in order to silence any dissent within Burma and to maintain its power. Mr. Quintana acknowledges the "gross and systematic" human rights violations and the culture of impunity that surrounds these crimes.

Mr. Quintana said that respect for human rights is a fundamental condition for the positive changes ahead of the 2010 elections. Nevertheless during his last mission, the Special Rapporteur received no indication that all prisoners of conscience will be released or that freedom of opinion and association will be guaranteed in the context of these elections. Without these guarantees, the elections cannot be free and fair.

He recognizes that the culture of impunity surrounding these violations indicates that they are "the result of a state policy that involves authorities in the executive, military and judiciary at all levels." Because Burma's regime has shunned its responsibility to investigate these crimes against humanity and war crimes, the UN is the only option for justice and accountability in Burma.

The persons responsible for these serious violations of international law in Burma must be investigated by an impartial and internationally supported Commission of Inquiry. The WLB implores the members of the Human Rights Council and the Security Council to support the implementation of the Special Rapporteur's recommendations in order to ensure that the voices of those suffering in Burma are no longer silenced.

Mr. Quintana's recommendation is a significant first step towards justice and accountability in Burma. As the next step, the Women's League of Burma strongly calls on the United Nations and the international community to seize this opportunity to initiate investigations in Burma and to refer dictator General Than Shwe and his cronies to the International Criminal Court to be prosecuted for all international crimes committed in Burma.

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