



အမျိုးသမီးများအဖွဲ့ချုပ် (မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ) Women's League of Burma

October 12, 2007

Calling for EU to strengthen sanctions against Burma's military junta

The Women's League of Burma is greatly heartened by the international response to the recent crackdown in Burma, and the collective condemnation of Burma's military regime by the UN Security Council. However, raids, arrests, torture and killing of peaceful protestors, including Buddhist monks, are continuing inside Burma, meaning that increased pressure is needed from the international community to force the regime to stop these ongoing atrocities. We therefore call on the EU to impose stronger economic sanctions against the regime.

Brutal army crackdowns of peaceful protestors, as witnessed recently by the international media, have in fact taken place repeatedly in Burma since July 1962. Such crackdowns have always been followed by raids, arrests, interrogation and torture, and lengthy imprisonment of suspected activists.

In this recent crackdown, at least 63 women protestors have been arrested by the regime, and other prominent women activists, including Phyu Phyu Thin, Mi Mi and Nilar Thein, are being hunted down and are in hiding. Nilar Thein has had to abandon her baby daughter, who she was breast-feeding. Most recent reports have revealed that wives, mothers and daughters of activists have also been detained, to induce them to surrender to the authorities.

Women arrested in previous crackdowns, for example in 1988, were sexually assaulted by the Special Police ("Lon Htein"), and during the recent arrests in August 2007, women were witnessed being sexually harassed by army and paramilitary personnel. We are therefore gravely concerned at the fate of the women currently being held in various prisons and detention centres.

The safety of these women, and other political prisoners, cannot be guaranteed while the regime maintains its grip on power, and refuses to enter into a genuine political dialogue to bring peace and democracy to Burma. This is why we urgently need stronger sanctions from the EU to put increased pressure on the regime.

Foreign investment in Burma has prolonged military rule, by providing the regime with financial support to buy weapons and build up its army to cruelly oppress its own people. Therefore WLB calls on the EU to impose a complete ban on all investment in Burma, an arms embargo and a ban on all financial transactions benefiting the regime and its associates.

Contact person: Nang Yain 66 89 8584668