

Statement on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

25 November 2004

Today, 25 November 2004 is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. On this day, activities designated to raise public awareness of the problem are organized worldwide by governments, international organizations and NGOs.

The Women's League of Burma would like to reiterate that organized violence against women and girls by the State has been ongoing and the situation in Burma has not changed. Without genuine political reform, no women and girls will be safe under the rule of the Burmese junta.

On 7 November 2004, another incident of sexual assault occurred in Kyaukpru Township, Rakhaing State. An SPDC Sergeant named Myo Aung of IB 34 attempted to rape a Rakhaing woman from Nang Me Village, Kanti Tract. At the time of the incident, she was a labourer at a forced-labour camp to build the Rangoon-Arn-Kyaukpru motor way. Fortunately the woman was able to struggle free and escape.

The regime has in the past week been releasing some political prisoners. However, there is no evidence yet that this is anything more than the periodic token release of prisoners to ease pressure before key international forums, in this case the upcoming Tenth ASEAN Summit in Laos on November 29-30.

WLB therefore calls on the international community not to ease, but to step up pressure on the regime to immediately implement a nationwide ceasefire, withdraw all Burma Army troops stationed in the ethnic states, and to begin tripartite dialogue with the opposition.

Also, on the basis of the signed Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN Region,

- WLB urges ASEAN during the upcoming summit in Laos to publicly raise their concerns with the SPDC military regime about their systematic violation of human rights, particularly rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls nationwide.

Note: The General Assembly at its 83rd plenary meeting of the fifty-fourth session on 17 December 1999 designated 25 November as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and has invited governments, international organizations and NGOs to organize on that day activities designated to raise public awareness of the problem. Women's activists have marked 25 November as a day against violence since 1981. The date came from the brutal 1961 assassination of the three Mirabal sisters, political activists in the Dominican Republic, on orders of Dominican ruler Rafael Trujillo (1930-1961).

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