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Press Release

WLB demands an immediate end to war crimes in Burma

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Recent incidents of sexual violence by the Burmese military regime's troops in western, eastern and central Burma have lent urgency to demands for an immediate end to war crimes in Burma made by the Women's League of Burma in a position paper released today at the United Nations in New York.

On 9 October 2006, six soldiers from Infantry Battalion No. 9 gang-raped three Palaung women, including a 14-year-old girl, in southern Shan State; one of the women died from her injuries. On 10 October 2006, three naval cadets gang-raped a 14-year-old girl in Sittwe, in western Burma's Arakan State. On August 22, 2006, a Russian-trained Burma Army officer raped a 17-year-old village girl at gunpoint near Tada-U Airport in central Burma while on security duty. None of the rapists has been punished.

In the position paper released by WLB for the Sixth Anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325, the WLB reiterates that the sexual violence being committed by the regime's troops in Burma are war crimes. They are not committed by rogue elements within the military but are systematic, structuralized, and central to the modus operandi of the regime.

"These *political* rapes, these war crimes, have been continuing because of the system of impunity that exists in Burma and the complete lack of any improvement politically inside Burma," says Thin Thin Aung, a WLB Presidium Board member, one of the WLB team lobbying at the United Nations Security Council in New York.

The position paper also exposes how the regime's increased militarization and prioritization of military spending has seriously affected the social sectors of health and education, resulting in a dire impact on women and children.

The WLB team is currently joining the Women, Peace and Security Advocacy Week activities at the United Nations, where it is using UNSC Resolution 1325 to lobby for a Security Council resolution on Burma, and for an increased role for women in peace-building processes.

"The UN Security Council must pressure the regime to implement an immediate ceasefire and cease all war crimes against civilians in Burma," says Thin Thin Aung. "Then the UNSC must ensure that an irreversible peace and reconciliation process takes place."

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