

**25 November 2006**

**WLB calls for zero tolerance for Burma's military regime's nationwide violence against women**

To mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the WLB is calling for a Security Council resolution to bring an immediate end to the Burmese military regime's nationwide violence against women.

At the UN Security Council 1325 open debate in New York last month, an SPDC spokesperson claimed that the regime had a "zero tolerance policy with regard to violence against women and girls," and spoke of their "endeavors to protect women and girls from human rights abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence."

It is frankly outrageous that the regime, which has been systematically committing sickening acts of violence against women nationwide, is shamelessly posturing to Security Council members as a protector of women's rights and promoter of gender equality.

The regime has continued to build up its military infrastructure and deploy increasing numbers of troops in ethnic areas. Evidence has continued to mount up of these troops conscripting women as sex slaves, committing gang-rape, mutilation and murder. Military offensives have been continuing, particularly in Karen areas, despite the regime's claims to have brought "peace and stability to the country."

On top of this, the regime is forcing women inside Burma to conduct nationwide campaigns against "terrorism." In fact, the regime is labelling all activists seeking to promote fundamental human rights and democracy in Burma as "terrorists." This includes women human rights defenders from WLB member organisations who are exposing the regime's crimes.

We find these labels absurd. WLB and our member organisations have been working continuously for the promotion of gender equality in our communities and defending the human rights of all women through capacity building and internal and external advocacy. Meanwhile, mounting evidence indicates clearly who the real terrorists in Burma are; who is holding the person of Burma hostages with constant abuse; who is misusing state money to consolidate their military power while neglecting the well-being and basic needs of the people inside Burma.

Moreover, the regime is claiming that women inside Burma are "taking an active part in the National Convention process". How can there be real women's participation when the proceedings are a fiasco, with every word closely monitored to ensure no disruption to the preordained plans?

Therefore WLB urges the international community to have zero tolerance for the regime's lies and abuses against people in Burma, particularly women and girls. There must be an end to their impunity through a binding resolution at the UN Security Council.

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