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Press release

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Jailing of gang-raped schoolgirls in Burma a shame on the region

The recent jailing of four Kachin schoolgirls in Burma who had been gang-raped by SPDC soldiers is an outrageous mockery of justice which brings shame on all regional bodies of which Burma is a member.

Early last month, the four girls, aged 14-16, from a village south of Putao, northern Kachin State, were gang-raped by three army officers and four soldiers from a local SPDC military base. The army gave hush money to the girls and their parents and ordered them not to report the incident to police or other authorities. After news of the incident was reported by independent Burmese media, the girls were arrested and jailed.

This is further conclusive evidence of how the SPDC military is continuing to practice systematic sexual violence in Burma. The WLB has repeatedly exposed the ongoing state-sanctioned sexual crimes against women and girls throughout Burma and appealed to all stakeholders to take action against the regime to bring an end to this violence.

Burma is a signatory of the ASEAN regional pact to end violence against women, according to which they should “enhance the protection, healing, recovery and integration of victims/survivors.” It is frankly shameful that an ASEAN member is so blatantly flouting this agreement, to the extent of committing the inhuman act of jailing girls who have already suffered the horror of gang-rape.

Today, as women all over the world commemorate International Women’s Day, the Women’s League of Burma urges ASEAN countries and Burma’s immediate neighbours to publicly condemn the state-sanctioned sexual violence against women and girls throughout Burma and stop providing support to a regime that brings shame to the region.

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