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WLB refutes SPDC's latest tirade against women advocates

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On February 15, 2007, the SPDC media publicly denounced the latest report of the Karen Women's Organisation, which documented ongoing rape, murder, torture and forced labour suffered by women in Karen State. They accused the KWO, our member organization, of "conspiring to mislead the international community," and called them "destructive elements."

The WLB is astounded at the SPDC's audacity in making such an accusation, when it is common knowledge that they are the ones who have destroyed every sector of our society: our political and judicial system, our health and education system, our economy. At the same time, they have been waging war against the ethnic peoples, obliterating their heritage, destroying their livelihoods, and terrorizing their women and children.

"We have simply relayed the testimonies of women who have suffered, torture, rape, forced labour, whose lives have been shattered by the regime's troops. We are sincerely appealing to the international community to pressure the regime to stop these atrocities. Is this a 'conspiracy'?" said Naw Zipporah Sein, the General Secretary of KWO.

The SPDC also reiterated its claim that the 2002 report "Licence to Rape," by the Shan Women's Action Network, was "totally groundless" and "invented." Yet, precisely, on the day of this denouncement, news emerged that four schoolgirls had been gang-raped by SPDC troops in Putao township, Kachin State earlier this month. Local military officers had tried to cover up this sexual crime by paying a paltry sum to the girls' families. Clearly, the SPDC's actions speak louder than their words.

In the same February 15 media statement, the SPDC defended their unlawful detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, saying she was serving a term for "crimes committed."

"What crime has Daw Aung San Suu Kyi committed?" asked Nang Yain, WLB General Secretary. "Is calling for democracy a crime? In fact the real criminals are the junta who have robbed Burma of democracy. How can they get away with this hypocrisy?"

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