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Statement on International Women's Day

8 March 2010

Every year on the 8th of March, women all over the world commemorate the International Women's Day for the advancement of the lives of women and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and oppression. However, in Burma we are not allowed to observe this day.

As a signatory country of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, the Burmese junta has an obligation to promote, protect and fulfil the rights of women. However, they are in fact committing all kinds of violence against women and crimes against humanity throughout Burma, in particular in the war zones. We, the Women's League of Burma and our members, have continuously exposed these inhuman crimes by releasing reports as evidence, and have called for an end to these violations. Yet the junta has continued to perpetrate crimes with increased boldness and arrogance.

At the same time, the junta has systematically oppressed and prevented women political activists from carrying out political activities. The junta has just rejected the appeal of Nobel Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and continued to detain her unlawfully. They have recently sentenced Naw Ohn Hla, the leader of the "Tuesday Prayer Group," to two years in prison, and auctioned off the fabrics store in Zaygyo, Mandalay, which belonged to political prisoner Daw Win Mya Mya. The junta has also transferred women political prisoners to remote prisons far away from their families.

All these acts have clearly demonstrated that the junta's 2008 constitution and 2010 election are a sham. We would like to point out again that their acts completely contradict their claims that they are "moving forward to a future democratic and developed nation."

Moreover, the junta has recently sent riot police to control the women-led strikes at garment and other factories which started in February. It is evident that the regime is deliberately encouraging more exploitation and abuses of the rights of workers in Burma.

We believe that all women will continue to face injustice and violence in Burma as long as the junta is holding on to power. Therefore, we urge all women in Burma to work together and rise up using all means to end the military dictatorship.

We also urge the international community to collectively support a resolution by the UN Security Council to set up a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the crimes committed by the Burmese junta, so that they may be referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

We, the Women's League of Burma, hereby reiterate that we will continue to work for the advancement of the lives of women and the restoration of democracy in Burma.

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