



LAST MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

A summary of Burma-related issues
in the British Parliament and Europe

JULY
2011

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

Kachin Ceasefire

20 July 2011 Lord Alton of Liverpool: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of displaced people in Burma's Kachin State following the ending of the cease-fire agreement between the Burmese Army and the Kachin Independence Army.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Howell of Guildford): The Government are deeply concerned by reports that the ceasefire agreement in Kachin State has broken down, leading to renewed conflict and the internal displacement of up to 20,000 people, according to local sources. The number of people who may have crossed the China-Burma border as a result of the fighting is hard to determine as access to information about the situation on the ground is limited. We understand that conflict is reported to have started over local objections to a Chinese hydro-electric dam construction project, but tensions in ethnic areas are increasing following efforts by the Government to force armed ethnic groups to join a national border guard force.

Our ambassador to Rangoon raised concerns with the Burmese Government on 9 and 10 June. We also remain in close contact with UN agencies and other organisations working in the areas affected by the fighting. We are clear that peace and stability in Burma can be achieved only through a process of genuinely inclusive dialogue that addresses the concerns and longstanding grievances of ethnic groups.

19 July 2011 Nicola Blackwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the government of China regarding the conflict in Kachin state, Burma.

Mr Jeremy Browne: The Government are deeply concerned at the breakdown of the ceasefire agreement in Kachin State which has led to renewed conflict and the displacement of up to 20,000 people. We have raised our concern at official level with the Chinese authorities. The Government are clear that countries in the region need to maintain pressure on the Burmese Government to begin a process of genuine inclusive dialogue that addresses the concerns and longstanding grievances of ethnic groups.

Aung San Suu Kyi

14 July 2011 Nicola Blackwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to encourage the regime in Burma to (a) cease threats to Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy and (b) guarantee her safe and free movement around the country.

Mr Jeremy Browne: In response to veiled threats in the Burmese state media towards the National League for Democracy and Aung San Suu Kyi, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Richmond (Yorks) (Mr Hague), issued a statement on 30 June. He reminded the Burmese authorities that Aung San Suu Kyi should be able to travel freely without risk to her personal safety and that the authorities' stance was at odds with their message on dialogue and reconciliation. He reminded the Burmese Government that the safety and security of all Burma's people is their responsibility. Foreign and Commonwealth officials raised this issue with the Burmese ambassador on 8 July. Our embassy in Rangoon continues to monitor the situation and remains in close touch with Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy.

EARLY DAY MOTIONS

EDM 112 HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

That this House sends its best wishes to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who will spend her 65th birthday in detention on 19 June 2010; calls for the immediate release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners in Burma; rejects the elections planned by Burma's generals later this year which, due to election laws and ongoing repression in Burma, cannot be free and fair; condemns Burma's new constitution which is designed to maintain dictatorship in civilian guise and does not grant rights or protection to Burma's ethnic minorities; notes that all diplomatic efforts to reform the dictatorship's sham roadmap to democracy have failed; recalls that the United Nations Security Council, General Assembly, Secretary General and Human Rights Council have all stated that the solution to the problems in Burma lies in dialogue between the dictatorship, Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy, and ethnic representatives; and calls on the Government to support a United Nations-led effort to pressure the dictatorship to enter into such dialogue.

Total number of signatures: 147

EDM 787 AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND ELECTIONS IN BURMA

That this House acknowledges reports that Burmese political prisoner Aung San Suu Kyi may be released on the completion of her current term of arrest on 13 November 2010; is concerned that, as this date falls six days after scheduled elections in Burma on 7 November, Ms Suu Kyi may not be permitted to utilise her vote; is further concerned that her National League for Democracy party will play no part in the election, having boycotted it on the grounds of Ms Suu Kyi's and others' continued political imprisonment, her exclusion from political office and party membership and the Burmese junta's new election laws, which ban groups including civil servants and Buddhist monks from joining a political party; firmly believes that Aung San Suu Kyi should be released unconditionally as a matter of urgency; and calls on the Government to condemn strongly the Burmese junta's recent election laws as obstacles to the free and fair conduct on democracy.

Total number of signatures: 41

EDM 788 BBC WORLD SERVICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

That this House considers the BBC World Service to be not only a world-class broadcasting network, but also a lifeline for political prisoners and other suppressed persons; strongly believes that any move to cut this service, for example in Burma, will remove vital access to current and impartial information from those such as Aung San Suu Kyi who have no alternative source of unbiased news; further believes that such cancellation would constitute a failure of the Government to promote or support human rights on the international stage; and urges the Government to strongly oppose any reduction in this important service.

Total number of signatures: 57

EDM 989 ELECTIONS IN BURMA AND ADVANCE VOTING

That this House notes with concern reports of widespread manipulation of advance votes during the recent Burmese elections, boycotted by the National League for Democracy; believes that this is yet another blow to the prospects for democracy in Burma; dismisses this election as no more than a sham to reinforce the ruling regime's power; and urges the Government to make further representations for the immediate and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi and more than 2,200 other prisoners of conscience currently detained in Burma.

Total number of signatures: 26

EDM 1014 RELEASE OF AUNG SAN SUU KYI

That this House welcomes the unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from her house arrest in

Rangoon on 13 November 2010; supports her calls for a peaceful revolution and for dialogue with the ruling regime in order to work towards change in Burma; urges continued international attention to the political system in Burma; and further supports Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's belief that nothing can be achieved without the participation of the people.

Total number of signatures: 47

EDM 1649 BURMA AND THE EU

That this House notes that despite holding an election in November 2010, Burma has failed to meet the requests of the EU Common Position, last renewed on 26 April 2010, which called on Burma to take steps to bring about a peaceful transition to a democratic, civilian and inclusive system of government, to release political prisoners, to provide for free and fair elections, to engage with the international community and to respect international human rights and humanitarian law; further notes with concern that these requests have not been met; further notes that the November 2010 elections were widely dismissed as neither free nor fair, and that although Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been released more than 2,000 political prisoners remain in detention; and calls on the Government to make representations in support of a UN Commission of Inquiry into war crimes and crimes against humanity in Burma, ahead of the EU Council Position renewal in April 2011.

Total number of signatures: 37

EDM 1659 BURMA EARTHQUAKE

That this House notes with grave concern reports of an earthquake of magnitude 6.8 in north east Burma near to the Thai border; sends its sincere condolences to those affected by the fatalities, casualties and destruction of homes and infrastructure; acknowledges the logistical and political challenges of providing assistance in this situation; and calls on the Government to take all possible steps to offer emergency aid and assistance to the people of Burma.

Total number of signatures: 29

EDM 1739 AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND THE BRIGHTON FESTIVAL

That this House welcomes Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as guest director of the 2011 Brighton Festival; notes that although Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will not attend the festival she plays a significant role in inspiring the programme through her plea to 'use your liberty to promote ours'; congratulates the Festival organisers for their choice of guest director and planning of a wide-ranging and vibrant programme; looks forward to a dynamic celebration of arts, culture and freedom over the three weeks of the Festival; and urges the Government to maintain pressure on the Burmese regime to free the more than 2,000 political prisoners still in detention and to move towards free and fair democracy in Burma.

Total number of signatures: 13

EDM 1966 BIRTHDAY OF DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

That this House recognises Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's 66th birthday and Burma Women's Day, celebrated on 19 June 2011; welcomes Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Reith lectures on the theme of securing freedom, to be broadcast on 28 June and 5 July 2011 on BBC Radio 4; is concerned that despite the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest on 13 November 2010 the human rights situation in Burma has not improved; notes that more than 2,000 political prisoners remain in detention; is gravely concerned by the Burma Campaign UK reports that the breaking of the ceasefire between the Burmese regime and the Shan State Army has resulted in violence including against civilians in the area; and urges the Government to call for a nationwide ceasefire, to support humanitarian efforts to provide assistance in these areas and to call for the release of political prisoners in Burma.

Total number of signatures: 38

EDM 2101 AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND THE MARTYR'S DAY MARCH

That this House notes that the winner of the Burmese general election and pro-democracy and opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been invited to march in the city of Yangon on Martyr's Day, 19 July, to mark the tragic assassination of her father, General Aung San, and eight other independence leaders in 1947; seeks the reassurances of the Burmese government that it will protect the security of both Aung San Suu Kyi and those supporters who are expected to join her; further notes with concern that, despite the release of Aung San Suu Kyi in 2010, the reported human rights situation in Burma has not improved; calls on the Burmese authorities to permit free speech and peaceful protest; and further calls on the Government to make representations to the Burmese government to ensure these protestors are not exposed to danger.
Total number of signatures: 15

**Published by Burma Campaign UK, 28 Charles Square, London N1 6HT
www.burmacampaign.org.uk tel: 020 7324 4710 fax: +44 20 7324 4717**



**for Human Rights, Democracy
& Development in Burma**