



LAST MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

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

MAY
2012

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

Sanctions

23 May 2012 The Bishop of Derby: To ask her Majesty's Government whether trade sanctions against Burma will be lifted in light of recent democratic progress.

Lord Howell of Guildford: On 23 April, the European Union Foreign Affairs Council agreed to suspend all sanctions against Burma for 12 months, except for the arms embargo, which remains in place. In recognition of the progress that has been made in Burma, and after careful consideration, the Government lifted their policy of discouraging trade with Burma on 26 April. We believe that at this moment in time the right kind of responsible trade and investment can aid Burma's transition.

Burma extract from the UK Government's statement on G8 and NATO Summits

Taken from the House of Lords

23 May 2012

"I raised Burma and the need to support the foundations of a lasting and irreversible transition to democracy, and I will be making this a feature of our G8 next year. I am sure the whole House will look forward to welcoming Aung San Suu Kyi when she addresses Parliament next month."

For a full statement, click here; <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/120523-0001.htm>

Documents considered by the European Scrutiny Committee

16 May 2012

Restrictive measures against the regime in Burma

Council Decision 2012/225/CFSP of 26 April 2012 amending Council Decision 2010/232/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against Burma/Myanmar

For a full statement, click here; <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmeuleg/86ii/86ii22.htm>

EARLY DAY MOTIONS

EDM 131 AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND VISIT TO PARLIAMENT 21 JUNE 2012

23. 05. 2012

That this House welcomes Aung San SuuKyï's election into PyithuHluttaw, the Lower House of the Burmese Parliament, as an indication of change in the country; congratulates the National League for Democracy on its success in the by-election; welcomes change in the Burmese government; notes that Burma still holds a considerable number of political prisoners, who should be released immediately; welcomes Aung San SuuKyï's visit to speak to both Houses of Parliament on 21 June 2012; and calls on the Government to continue actively to promote the transition to free democratic government in Burma.

Total number of signatures: 12

EDM 2961 - AUNG SAN SUU KYI

17.04.2012

That this House offers sincere congratulations to Nobel peace prize laureate Aung San SuuKyï on the

electoral success of her party in the Burmese elections; encourages the National League of Democracy in its attempt to bring peace and stability; and offers the support of this House in the establishment of a truly democratic process in Burma.

Total number of signatures: 32

EDM 2942 - BURMA (No. 2)

16.04.2012

That this House recognises the enormous sacrifices made by Daw Aung San SuuKyi throughout her long confinement and congratulates her and the National League for Democracy on their success in the by-elections in Burma; welcomes the reform steps taken so far by President TheinSein; supports a limited relaxation of EU sanctions, in order to encourage further reform while maintaining trade and investment sanctions, until the unconditional release of all political prisoners and an end to military attacks against ethnic minority civilians are met; expresses concern that hundreds of political prisoners remain in jail and that the International Committee of the Red Cross is still being denied access to assess conditions and the number of prisoners; and calls on the British Government to ensure pressure is maintained on the government of Burma to begin repealing repressive laws and making sustainable democratic reforms.

Total number of signatures: 57

EDM 2949 - AID FOR BURMA

16.04.2012

That this House welcomes the political reforms already taking place in Burma and the election of Aung San SuuKyi and the National League of Democracy to the Burmese Parliament; still recognises that there are huge humanitarian and political problems in Burma that need to be addressed; supports the fact that the UK is working together with non-governmental organisations to provide assistance to 27,500 internally displaced people in Kachin State as well as with the UN to provide basic aid to families involved in the conflicts; and urges the Government to do more to help provide the peoples of Burma with the basic aid they need as well as to encourage more political reform and a handover of power from the military to the democratically elected parliament.

Total number of signatures: 30

EDM 2800 – SANCTIONS RENEWAL

That this House is aware of the significantly different approach adopted by the rulers of Burma over the past year; remains however cautious until such times as action is actually taken by the regime to bring irrevocable and lasting change to the country; believes such actions must include the unconditional release of all political prisoners, announcement of an immediate ceasefire, agreement to begin the process of political dialogue between parties involved in the present conflicts, the ending of strict censorship, abolition of repressive laws and the setting of timescales to hold free and fair elections in the country; and calls on the Government to maintain the present arrangements of sanctions beyond the April 2012 renewal date, until such times as actual changes take place, rather than simply undelivered promises being made.

Total number of signatures: 19

EDM 2719 - AID TO VICTIMS OF CONFLICT IN BURMA

That this House welcomes the continued increase in UK aid to Burma and the visit to Burma in 2011 by the Secretary of State for International Development; further welcomes political reforms made by the government of Burma; is, however, deeply concerned that the number of people displaced last year in that country by conflict and human rights abuses doubled to almost 150,000; is alarmed that the government of Burma is continuing to block humanitarian aid to hundreds of thousands of people in conflict zones; calls on the British Government to increase aid to populations displaced by conflict, including significant increases in cross-border aid which can be the only way to access large numbers of displaced people; expresses deep concern that refugees in camps in neighbouring Thailand who have fled conflict are facing cuts in rations of 22 per cent. Which could cause increased malnutrition in children; looks forward to free and fair elections with the participation of Aung San SuuKyi and her party; and calls on the Government to significantly increase funding for Burma to support food and shelter for refugees.

Total number of signatures: 66

EDM 2710 - BURMA

That this House welcomes the steps taken by President TheinSein to release some political prisoners, enter into ceasefire negotiations with armed ethnic groups and allow more political space in Burma;

further welcomes the visit to Burma by the Foreign Secretary and his meeting with DawAung San SuuKyi; expresses continued support for DawAung San SuuKyi and the people of Burma in their ongoing efforts to secure human rights and democratic reform; notes with concern that hundreds of political prisoners remain in Burma's jails, and that there has been an increase in human rights abuses in ethnic states; further notes that reforms made so far have mostly not been enshrined in law and no constitutional changes have been made; believes that international pressure has played an important role in encouraging reforms so far; and calls on the Government to ensure that EU sanctions on Burma are not relaxed prematurely before substantially more political prisoners are released, conflict is ended and there is an inclusive dialogue process to secure further and irreversible reform.

Total number of signatures: 66

EDM 112 HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

That this House sends its best wishes to DawAung San SuuKyi, who will spend her 65th birthday in detention on 19 June 2010; calls for the immediate release of DawAung San SuuKyi 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 SuuKyi'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: 145

EDM 787 AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND ELECTIONS IN BURMA

That this House acknowledges reports that Burmese political prisoner Aung San SuuKyi 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, MsSuuKyi 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 MsSuuKyi's and others' continued political imprisonment, her exclusion from political office and party membership and the Burmese junta's new election laws, which ban 6 groups including civil servants and Buddhist monks from joining a political party; firmly believes that Aung San SuuKyi 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 SuuKyi 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 SuuKyi 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 DawAung San SuuKyi 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 DawAung San SuuKyi's belief that nothing can be achieved without the participation of the people.

Total number of signatures: 46

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 DawAung San SuuKyi 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 DawAung San SuuKyi as guest director of the 2011 Brighton Festival; notes that although DawAung San SuuKyi 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 DawAung San SuuKyi's 66th birthday and Burma Women's Day, celebrated on 19 June 2011; welcomes DawAung San SuuKyi'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 DawAung San SuuKyi 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: 41

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 SuuKyi 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 SuuKyi and those supporters who are expected to join her; further notes with concern that, despite the release of Aung San SuuKyi 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: 32

EDM 2241 RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN BURMA

That this House warmly welcomes the release of political prisoners in Burma, particularly that of Zarganar, the comedian and film maker, who was originally sentenced to 58 years' imprisonment for alleged public order offences; and calls on the Burmese authorities to follow up this gesture with the further release of all prisoners of conscience and the introduction of genuine democratic reforms.

Total number of signatures: 43

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