



# LAST MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

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

NOV  
2011

## ANSWERS TO WRITTEN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

### *International Development*

#### *Children*

**7 Nov 2011 Rushanara Ali:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what funding his Department provides for humanitarian and psychological support for former child soldiers from Burma.  
**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** The UK provides significant core funding to UNICEF who deliver programmes of rehabilitation, reintegration, family-tracing and other support to former child soldiers in Burma. Further details of DFID's work in Burma can be found in the DFID Burma Operational Plan, available on the DFID website at: [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)

#### *Overseas Aid*

**7 Nov 2011 Valerie Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how his Department evaluates the ability of recipient organisations in Burma to meet project objectives and to account properly for aid funds.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** In Burma as in all other countries, DFID officials rigorously review the evidence provided by organisations when they bid for funds. Proposals are assessed against criteria such as: the credibility of the link between the planned activities and the results to be achieved; the strength of results monitoring plans; experience the organisation has of delivering similar projects successfully; and the cost-effectiveness of the proposed work.

During implementation DFID projects are routinely scrutinised to assess whether objectives are on track. They are also evaluated after implementation to assess whether objectives have been met, and to ensure lesson learning. All DFID projects need to be accessible to credible audit teams to certify that aid funds are being properly accounted for.

**7 Nov 2011 Rushanara Ali:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development for what reason his Department did not approve a grant application from the Kachin Women's Association, Thailand, for funding for support for people internally displaced by conflict in Kachin state, Burma.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** Department for International Development officials reviewed the grant application from the Kachin Women's Association—Thailand (KWAT) alongside other organisations offering programmes to support people internally displaced by conflict in Kachin state, Burma. After careful consideration officials decided that significant work would have been needed to strengthen the design of KWAT's proposal for us to be able to fund it. Officials therefore decided the most effective way to reach the largest number of IDPs quickly would be to increase our existing support to those organisations that had ongoing programmes which could be scaled-up, rather than designing and approving new programmes as would have been necessary in order to support KWAT.

#### *Aid*

**8 Nov 2011 Rushanara Ali:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid he plans to provide to Burma in (a) 2011-12, (b) 2012-13 and (c) 2013-14.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** The Department for International Development's assistance to Burma has been

designed to achieve results for poor and vulnerable people there, with programmes in areas including maternal health, livelihoods and malaria. To enable this, I have allocated the following levels of aid to Burma: £36 million in 2011-12; £36 million in 2012-13; and £55 million in 2013-14.

Further details are available in the DFID Burma operational plan which is available on the DFID website; [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)

### ***Aid & Displacement***

**28 Nov 2011 Nicola Blackwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that humanitarian assistance is provided to refugees and internally displaced peoples along the Thailand-Burma border.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** During my visit to Burma from 15 to 17 November 2011, I pressed the Burmese President and his Ministers to move urgently towards a resolution to the ethnic conflicts in Burma and to increase humanitarian access in border areas.

Through its project "Assistance to Conflict Affected People, Eastern Burma" the Department for International Development (DFID) is contributing towards the provision of food, shelter, other necessities and improved access to legal assistance to nearly 150,000 Burmese refugees in camps in Thailand. The project also finances the purchase of pharmaceuticals and other medical supplies which benefit people affected by conflict in eastern Burma, supports TB treatment for Burmese people on the border with Thailand, and provides aid for basic health care, food security, improved sanitation, and grants to help with the costs of schooling for internally displaced people in eastern Burma. The total cost of the project over three years from 2009 to 2012 will be more than £8 million.

DFID is in the process of reviewing the effectiveness of this project, which is due to end in 2012. Decisions on future funding for refugees and internally displaced people along the Thailand-Burma border will be taken in the first half of 2012.

### ***Aid & Kachin***

**28 Nov 2011 Nicola Blackwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to assist internally displaced Kachin people along the China-Burma border.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** During my visit to Burma on 15-17 November, I pressed President Thein Sein and senior Burmese Ministers to move urgently towards a resolution to the ethnic conflicts and for improved humanitarian access in border areas.

The Department for International Development is in contact with a number of organisations working in the conflict-affected areas of Kachin State both from inside Burma and from across the border in China. I have agreed that funding through the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and a humanitarian non-governmental organisation delivering aid to Kachin State from China may be used to assist people who have been displaced by the recent outbreak in fighting. Humanitarian assistance provided cross-border from China has now reached an estimated 10,000 IDPs in Kachin State, and more than 5,000 Kachin IDPs have received assistance from inside Burma.

### ***Displacement***

**28 Nov 2011 Nicola Blackwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government has taken to help internally-displaced peoples in (a) Karen, (b) Shan and (c) Kachin states, Burma in the last six months.

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** During my visit to Burma from 15 to 17 November 2011, I pressed the Burmese President and his Ministers to move urgently towards a resolution to the ethnic conflicts in Burma and to increase humanitarian access in border areas—including in Karen, Shan and Kachin States.

In Karen State, the Department for International Development (DFID) is helping internally displaced people (IDPs) through programmes which provide funding for the purchase of food by IDP families, basic health care, pharmaceuticals, other medical supplies, and improved food security and sanitation.

In Shan State DFID is supporting the work of the Shan Women's Action Network, including grants to help with the costs of schooling for IDPs.

DFID's aid for IDPs in Karen and Shan States forms part of a three year programme of support for people affected by conflict in eastern Burma at a cost of more than £8 million from 2009 to 2012. DFID is in the process of reviewing the effectiveness of this project. Decisions on future funding for refugees and internally displaced people along the Thailand-Burma border will be taken in the first half of 2012. In Kachin State I have agreed that funding through the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and a humanitarian non-governmental organisation delivering aid to Kachin State from China may be used to assist people who have been displaced by the recent outbreak in fighting. Humanitarian assistance provided cross-border from China has now reached an estimated 10,000 IDPs in Kachin State, and a further 5,000 Kachin IDPs have received assistance from inside Burma.

## HOUSE OF LORDS

### *Aid*

**1 Nov 2011 Lord Hylton:** To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will remove any remaining restrictions on the provision of technical advice or expertise to Burma.

**Baroness Northover:** UK aid to Burma is delivered in line with the European Union Council Decision on Burma which restricts development assistance to certain sectors and to aid delivered through United Nations agencies, non-governmental organisations and through decentralised co-operation with local civilian Administrations. These restrictions will continue until the council decision is revised in response to genuine and substantive political change in Burma.

**1 Nov 2011 Baroness Tonge:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what assistance the Department for International Development provides ethnic women from Burma who have been raped by Burmese army soldiers.

**Baroness Northover:** I am deeply concerned about reports of rape having been committed by members of armed forces in Burma. The Government have consistently called upon all armed actors including the Burmese army and ethnic militia to protect civilian populations. The United Kingdom secured a strongly worded resolution at the March 2011 UN Human Rights Council which called on the Burmese Government to end continuing grave violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including the targeting of civilians in conflict areas, and to immediately end impunity for such actions.

The Department for International Development (DfID) does not have programmes in Burma which provide direct assistance to women who have been raped by members of armed forces. However, DfID does provide support for legal assistance centres in Burmese refugee camps in Thailand, which can help in dealing with rape cases.

### *Education*

**7 Nov 2011 Baroness Goudie:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what funding they have provided for education in refugee camps supported by the Thailand Burma Border Consortium.

**Baroness Northover:** The UK is not at present providing direct funding to education in refugee camps supported by the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC). The Department for International Development (DfID) provides £1.1 million per year to TBBC, principally for food and shelter for the refugees and support for internally displaced persons (IDPs) inside Burma. The UK is also providing about £600,000 per year to the International Rescue Committee for its legal assistance centres in the camps and other donors are focused on education. DfID's programme of assistance to Burmese refugees in Thailand and IDPs in eastern Burma is about to be reviewed in order to inform decisions on future funding.

Human Rights

**28 Nov 2011 Lord Alton of Liverpool:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Government of Burma about reports of violations of human rights in Kachin State.

**The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Howell of Guildford):** The

Government are deeply concerned about the fighting that continues in Kachin State, and the resulting displacement of tens of thousands of people, as well as the credible reports of human rights abuses taking place.

We have frequently raised our concerns about the situation in ethnic regions and pressed for the authorities to make serious efforts towards national reconciliation. Most recently during his visit to Burma on 15 to 17 November, the Secretary of State for International Development, my right honourable friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr Mitchell), pressed President Thein Sein and senior Burmese Ministers to move urgently towards a resolution to the ethnic conflicts and to improve humanitarian access in border areas. Our ambassador has also raised our concerns about Kachin State with Burma's National Human Rights Commission.

We have also continued to press for reform through the United Nations (UN). We helped to secure a resolution reflecting our concerns in the UN General Assembly in November, with specific reference to Kachin State. This was passed with a record majority.

### **Attacks**

**28 Nov 2011 Lord Alton of Liverpool:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Government of Burma about reports of attacks by soldiers of the Burmese Army on the Assemblies of God church in Muk Chyik village, Wai Maw Township, Kachin State, on 6 November.

**Lord Howell of Guildford:** The Government are deeply concerned by reports documenting violations of human rights by the Burmese military, including around freedom of religion, in Kachin State. We condemn all instances where individuals face persecution or discrimination in Burma because of their faith or belief. We have raised our concerns over religious and ethnic persecution directly with the Burmese Government. The Secretary of State for International Development, my right honourable friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr Mitchell), raised this issue during his visit to Burma on 15 to 17 November, with the President, Vice-President Tin Aung Myint Oo, the Speaker of the Lower House and other senior Ministers. Our Deputy Head of Mission in Rangoon accompanied the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, to a meeting with the Burmese Minister of Religious Affairs on 19 November and specifically raised the question of religious freedoms and the restrictions placed on Christians in Kachin State. Our ambassador to Rangoon discussed freedom of religion with the Burmese Human Rights Commission in November.

We have also continued to press for reform through the United Nations (UN). We helped to secure a resolution reflecting our concerns in the UN General Assembly in November, with specific reference to Kachin State. This was passed with a record majority.

### **Religion**

**28 Nov 2011 Lord Alton of Liverpool:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Government of Burma about an order issued on 14 October in Phakant Township, Kachin State, requiring Christians to submit a request for permission whenever they wish to engage in acts of religious devotion; and whether they will make representations to the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion or Belief to seek an invitation to visit Burma to investigate reports of violations of freedom of religion or belief.

**Lord Howell of Guildford:** The Government condemn all instances where individuals face persecution or discrimination in Burma because of their faith or belief. We raise our concerns over religious and ethnic persecution directly with the Burmese regime and with the international community. Our deputy head of mission in Rangoon accompanied the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, to a meeting with the Burmese Minister of Religious Affairs on 19 November, and specifically raised the question of religious freedoms and the restrictions placed on Christians in Kachin State. Our ambassador in Rangoon also raised this issue with the Burmese Human Rights Commission in November.

The United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion requested permission to visit Burma in 2007. He sent a reminder letter in April 2008, but as yet the Burmese Government have not responded. The Government extend an open invitation to all UN Special Rapporteurs and encourage the Government of Burma to do the same.

## **Aid & Displacement**

**28 Nov 2011 Lord Alton of Liverpool:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to address the situation of internally displaced Kachin people along the China-Burma border; and what steps they will take to increase funding to the Thailand-Burma Border Consortium to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced peoples along the Thailand-Burma border.

**Baroness Northover:** During my visit to Burma on 15 to 17 November 2011, I pressed President Thein Sein and senior Burmese Ministers to move urgently towards greater political reform, including a full release of political prisoners, continued progress in their dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi, free and fair elections, a resolution to the ethnic conflicts in Burma, and improved humanitarian access to people affected by conflict in the border areas. I also had very positive discussions with Aung San Suu Kyi, representatives of ethnic groups and other political figures, and I visited a monastic school supported by British aid.

Department for International Development (DfID) staff have been closely monitoring the humanitarian situation in Kachin State following the outbreak of conflict earlier this year. They are in contact with a number of organisations working in the affected areas, both from inside Burma and from across the border in China. DfID has agreed that funding through the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and a humanitarian non-governmental organisation already working in the area may be used to assist displaced people in Kachin State.

DfID is in the process of reviewing its last three years' assistance to refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) along the Thailand-Burma border. This will include a full review of results achieved so far, how effective we have been at meeting programme objectives and whether Britain's aid is providing good value for money. The review will help inform decisions on DfID's future programme of support for IDPs and refugees along the Thailand-Burma border and its funding. DfID remains fully committed to providing humanitarian aid to Burmese refugees in Thailand and people affected by conflict in eastern Burma.

**All Party Parliamentary Group for Democracy in Burma:** Jack Dunford Addresses the Parliament On the 22 November 2011, MBE Jack Dunford, the Executive Director of the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC), addressed the APPG Burma in the House of Lords.

Jack Dunford has been working with refugees from Burma since 1981. He was involved in establishing TBBC at the beginning of the emergency in 1984 and has led the organisation ever since. TBBC provides all of the food and shelter for over 140,000 refugees from Burma in 9 camps along the Western Thai border, and provides emergency relief annually to over 100,000 internally displaced persons in South East Burma. TBBC also carries out research and documentation of the situation of the internally displaced persons. Mr. Dunford discussed the challenges for ethnic reconciliation, the current conditions in south east Burma, the politics of refugee and IDP support and the need for greater support and engagement by the United Kingdom Government. [www.tbtc.org](http://www.tbtc.org)

## **DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **The Secretary of State for International Development (Mr. Andrew Mitchell):**

I visited Burma for three days from 15 to 17 November, the first visit by a senior Minister from the European Union since a ban on high-level engagement was suspended in April 2011. In the capital, Naypyidaw, I met President Thein Sein, Vice-President Tin Aung Myint Oo, the Speaker of the Lower House Shwe Mann, and the Ministers of Industry, Railways, Border Affairs and Health. In Mandalay I visited development projects funded by Britain. In Rangoon I spent most of a day with Aung San Suu Kyi including visiting a school run by her party, the National League for Democracy, and I met representatives of ethnic groups, other political parties, activists, civil society groups, and the recently freed political prisoner Zarganar. I was accompanied throughout by British journalists.

Speaking to members of the Burmese Government, I both welcomed the progress that the government has recently made towards political reform and strongly urged that the momentum of reform be maintained. In particular I pressed for:

- a full release of political prisoners, including 1988 Generation leader Min Ko Naing;
- continued progress in the dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi ;
- free and fair by-elections, due to be held in the next two months;

- urgent moves towards a resolution to the ethnic conflicts; and
- improved humanitarian access in border areas.

I made clear that Britain would support a very significant positive international response if the reform process continued.

The President and his Ministers assured me that the reforms would continue, but gave no clear timeframe and argued that considerations about stability were stalling the release of more political prisoners. The President however emphasised the importance of the dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi, and expressed his hope that she and the National League for Democracy would run in the by-elections – they have since confirmed that they will. Burmese Ministers confirmed that they had opened channels of communication with armed ethnic groups. I noted that the international community was watching closely for successful outcomes on these issues.

Aung San Suu Kyi expressed her gratitude for Britain's unwavering support for democracy, development and human rights in Burma. She stressed the need to maintain pressure for the full release of political prisoners, strengthened rule of law in Burma including the independence of the judiciary, and progress on negotiations with the ethnic groups. Aung San Suu Kyi set out her priorities for development and poverty reduction in Burma, focussing on education, health, widening the availability of small-scale finance to poor families, and improving child nutrition. She underlined the importance of improving living conditions equally across Burma, including in ethnic areas.

During the visit I set out the results that British Aid would deliver for the Burmese people over the next four years:

- ensuring that more than 127,000 mothers give birth more safely;
- preventing more than 150,000 unintended pregnancies;
- helping more than 1.8 million people with bed nets to help avoid malaria;
- diagnosis and treatment to reduce drug-resistant malaria;
- supporting 277,000 children through primary school;
- providing 110,000 women with access to affordable credit;
- helping 92,000 women and men produce more food.

I also highlighted the prospect of further British help in the future if the reform process is maintained, for example to encourage wealth creation and to help to improve government accountability, service delivery and the rule of law.

## **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: 151**

### **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: 42**

#### **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: 58**

#### **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: 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 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: 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**