



LAST MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

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

AUGUST 2007

The British Government is in recess during August so there is no parliamentary activity this month.

The following is a list of government and parliamentary statements on the events in Burma this month.

UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office 22 August 2007

Burma: Arrests of Democracy Activists

Commenting on the arrests of a number of Burmese democracy activists last night, FCO Minister, Meg Munn said:

'The British Government condemns the detention of a number of Burma's '1988 Generation' student leaders on the evening of 21/22 August. Those detained, and their colleagues, have exercised their right to peaceful protest at the harsh economic burdens being heaped on the long-suffering Burmese people. We support their call for the restoration of democracy and genuine political dialogue. We urge the Burmese government to free them immediately'.

US State Department 22 August 2007

Arrest of Pro-Democracy Activists in Burma

We condemn the Burmese regime's arrest of Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, and several other pro-democracy activists on August 22 for organizing peaceful demonstrations to express public concern about recent increases in the price of fuel. The United States calls for the immediate release of these activists and for an end to the regime's blatant attempt to intimidate and silence those who are engaged in peaceful promotion of democracy and human rights in Burma. We call on the regime to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the leaders of Burma's democracy movement and ethnic minority groups and to take tangible steps toward a transition to civilian, democratic rule.

We renew our call for Burma's military leaders to release all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi. Further, we call on the Burmese regime to end its military attacks and human rights abuses against civilians in ethnic minority areas, and to lift restrictions on humanitarian organizations in Burma. Improving bilateral relations between Burma and the United States depends on the Burmese regime taking concrete and credible steps in this direction.

French Foreign Ministry 22 August 2007

Birmanie : arrestations en marge des manifestations de Rangoun

La France condamne fermement les nouvelles mesures d'arrestation qui viennent de frapper, en marge des manifestations qui se déroulent actuellement à Rangoun, plusieurs militants des droits de l'homme, dont les anciens dirigeants étudiants Min Ko Naing et Ko Ko Gyi, membres du mouvement démocratique «Génération 88».

Il s'agit d'une étape supplémentaire dans la répression par les autorités du mouvement démocratique birman. Les autorités françaises appellent instamment la junte militaire au pouvoir en Birmanie à libérer ces défenseurs des droits de l'homme comme, d'une manière générale, tous les prisonniers politiques actuellement détenus en Birmanie, parmi lesquelles Mme Aung San Suu Kyi.

La France est par ailleurs vivement préoccupée par l'utilisation de la force par des milices pro-gouvernementales à Rangoun contre des manifestations pacifiques et démocratiques. La junte militaire est responsable des éventuelles conséquences que cette répression inacceptable pourrait avoir sur les manifestants.

La France réaffirme que seul un dialogue entre le gouvernement et toutes les autres forces politiques et de la société civile permettra d'engager un authentique processus de démocratisation du pays. La France se tient aux côtés des acteurs de la société civile birmane qui s'efforcent de promouvoir, dans des conditions dramatiques, la réconciliation et la transition pacifique vers la démocratie en Birmanie.

Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

22 August 2007

Canada Condemns Detention of Prominent Burmese Pro-Democracy Activists

The Honourable Maxime Bernier, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today issued the following statement on the detention of leaders of the 88 Generation Students Group, a prominent Burmese pro-democracy organization:

“Canada condemns the detention of the leaders of the 88 Generation Students Group, including, among others, Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi and Kyaw Min Yuu, known as Jimmy. Their arrest is yet another example of the Burmese authorities' continued disregard for freedom and democracy. Canada calls for their immediate and unconditional release.

“Canada urges Burma to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Burma. We further call upon the Burmese authorities to release Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners, and to engage in a genuine dialogue with members of the democratic opposition ”

Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

23 August 2007

Burma: Condemnation of the arrest of pro-democracy students

During the past few days, the Junta in Burma has arrested a number of student leaders from the 1988 Generation - a prominent pro-democracy group. The arrests followed demonstrations against a sudden rise in energy prices, which the Burmese Government introduced on 15 August.

Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Per Stig Møller, states:“The Danish Government strongly condemns the recent days' arrest of several of Burma's leading human rights activists. The arrests are yet another example of the regime's lack of respect for civil rights. Denmark encourages Burma to release these activists immediately, and to release all political prisoners including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who is now detained for the 11th consecutive year. We maintain our demand that Burma's Government initiates a real process of democratisation and national reconciliation and opens up to political dialogue with the democratic forces in Burma. Denmark supports the civil forces who are working under very difficult conditions to establish a peaceful transition to democracy and reconciliation in Burma.”

(Unofficial translation by The Danish Burma Committee)

Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs

24 August 2007

Statement of the MFA on the Arrest of Burma Activists

During demonstrations, which took place on 21st and 22nd August, a number of Burmese democratic activists were arrested, including student leaders of the „1988 Generation“. The arrested people and other participants to the demonstration applied their right for a peaceful protest against economic measures imposed by the Government of Burma on the long-time suffering population of Burma.

The Czech Republic calls on the Government of Burma for an immediate release of the arrested democratic activists and all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi.

The Czech Republic strongly condemns the arrest of the Burmese democratic activists and supports their efforts leading to the restoration of democracy and political dialogue.

Unofficial translation

Irish Department of Foreign Affairs

24 August 2007

Minister Condemns Detention of Democracy Activists in Burma

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Dermot Ahern T.D., expressed his deep concern today at the arrests of a number of democracy activists by the Burmese regime on Tuesday night.

“I utterly condemn the detention of 13 democracy activists in Burma from the 1988 Generation of student leaders, including Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, Jimmy, Min Zayar, Mya Aye, Phone Kyaw and Pan Daiq, on Tuesday evening. Those detained had, with many others, been exercising their right to peaceful protest at the substantial increase in fuel prices by the Burmese regime, which have placed further harsh economic burdens on the people of Burma.

The Irish Government believes that these arrests, and the continued detention of other political leaders, including Aung San Suu Kyi, manifestly contradicts the professed aim to transform Burma into a democratic society through an inclusive, broadly-based process. I again call urgently for the release of all political prisoners in Burma and urge the Burmese government to ensure that the work of the National Convention proceeds in a more inclusive way.

In this context I believe it would be useful for the Burmese authorities to give serious consideration to the proposals by 92 MPs from the 1990 Burmese General Election made to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for national reconciliation and democratisation in Burma.”

Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

24 August 2007

Statement by Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Carl Bildt on recent developments in Burma

“Recent peaceful demonstrations in Rangoon by leaders of the 88 Generation Students is an expression of widely felt discontent and despair among the people of Burma. Triggered by steep increases in fuel prices, these demonstrations appear to be a logical consequence of many years of political repression and economic mismanagement.

“Sweden condemns the arrest of pro-democracy activists and calls for their immediate release. We also urge the regime to release all political prisoners and to engage in a genuine dialogue with the democratic opposition groups in Burma.”

USA

30 August 2007

President Bush Condemns Ongoing Actions of the Burmese Regime

I strongly condemn the ongoing actions of the Burmese regime in arresting, harassing, and assaulting pro-democracy activists for organizing or participating in peaceful demonstrations. These activists were voicing concerns about recent dramatic increases in the price of fuel, and their concerns should be listened to by the regime rather than silenced through force.

The Burmese regime should heed the international calls to release these activists immediately and stop its intimidation of those Burmese citizens who are promoting democracy and human rights. I also call on the regime to release all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi, and to lift restrictions on humanitarian organizations that seek to help the people of Burma.

ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC)

30 August 2007

Stop crackdown on peaceful demonstrations now

The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC) strongly condemns the acts of the Myanmar military junta in arresting and detaining 'pro-democracy 88 Generation Students Leaders', human rights activists and civil society in Burma participating in peaceful demonstrations.

Regional legislators are also concerned that the regime has also arrested two of Burma's most internationally renowned activists, Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi, for reasons of 'undermining stability and the security of the nation'. Reports from within Burma show that the protesters are nothing but peaceful. The protests, occurring because of a recent astronomic hike on fuel prices, are a clear appeal by the people of Burma to their military rulers to address the desperate economic and political state the country is in. Recent reports state that over a hundred people have been detained since demonstrations began, more are detained everyday.

AIPMC urges the junta to promptly release those arrested for taking part in the peaceful demonstrations and to respect their rights to express themselves, especially in the light of the price hike. AIPMC is very concerned that the rampant arrests, on weak grounds and the continued violent suppression of freedom of expression in Myanmar, denies justice to the people.

AIPMC further fully supports the call for democratic restoration in Burma, which would lead to a subsequent reform in the country's economic situation.

Current and former parliamentarians from the region hope that the military regime will respect the rights of its people and allow them the room to express their wishes for better standards of living in the country.

The mandate of democratization in Burma which the military junta accepted from ASEAN as a condition for membership includes the freedom of expression and freedom of public assembly. These are basic principles in the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

AIPMC also strongly urges ASEAN to do more in addressing the unrest happening inside one of its member states and to consider sending a special envoy into the country to monitor the situation and to urge the junta to refrain from further acts of violence and to respect the rule of law in Myanmar

Signed on behalf of AIPMC by:

Zaid Ibrahim (Malaysia)

Mario Mayong Joyo Aguja (Philippines)

Lim Kit Siang (Malaysia)

Loretta Ann P Rosales (Philippines)

Teresa Kok (Malaysia)

Ana Theresia Hontiveros-Baraquel (Philippines)

M. Kulasegaran (Malaysia)
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Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (Malaysia)
Aquilino Q Pimentel Jr (Philippines)
Kraisak Choonhavan (Thailand)
Trisanti Mitayani (Indonesia)
Jon Ungphakorn (Thailand)
Djoko Susilo (Indonesia)
Buranaj Smutharaks (Thailand)
Marzuki Darusman (Indonesia)
Charles Chong (Singapore)
Eva Kusuma Sundari (Indonesia)
Inderjit Singh (Singapore)
Tuti Indarsih (Indonesia)
Son Chhay (Cambodia)
Nursyahbani Katjasungkana (Indonesia)
Muhammad AS Hikam (Indonesia)

Swedish MPs call for immediate release of all activists arrested in Burma

24 August 2007

Over the last few days, Burma, and Rangoon in particular, has witnessed a number of peaceful manifestations. A few hundred, sometimes thousands of people have been protesting against the ruling juntas catastrophic economic policy. Extreme rises in fuel prices and commodities have left the population in despair.

People have taken to the streets, to express their views. Freedom of speech and freedom of assembly are fundamental human rights. No government has the right to take these rights away from their people.

We, members of the Swedish parliament, call for:

- * the unconditional release of all activists who have been arrested under the last few days in Burma.
- * the unconditional release of all political prisoners in Burma, including NLD leader and Nobel prize laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
- * a common EU statement clarifying, that the EU will not tolerate a violent response from the military against the people, who are simply exercising their fundamental right to speak their mind.
- * clear and decisive action from the UN should the regime in Burma decide to try to curb the demonstrations by violent means.

Members of parliament:

1. Bodil Ceballos
2. Magdalena Streijffert
3. Mikaela Valtersson
4. Mats Pertoft
5. Carina Hägg
6. Olle Thorell
7. Lena Hallengren
8. Andreas Norlén
9. Agneta Berliner
10. Rosita Runegrund
11. Jan Ericson
12. Lars Hjalmered
13. Maw Andersson
14. Kerstin Engle
15. Patrik Forslund
16. Göran Lindblad
17. Leif Pettersson

18. Ulrika Karlsson
19. Gunvor G Ericson
20. Eva Olofsson
21. Margareta B Kjellin
22. Helena Leander
23. Britta Rådström
24. Ulf Holm
25. Finn Bengtsson
26. Cecilia Wigström
27. Hans Rothenberg
28. Cecilia Magnusson

The Japanese Parliamentary Group Supporting Democratization in Myanmar (Minshuka Giren)

29 August 2007

On the actions taken by the Myanmar government against peaceful protests by Myanmar citizens The Japanese Parliamentary Group Supporting Democratization in Myanmar expresses a serious concern over the latest actions taken by the Myanmar government, which has been suppressing, arbitrarily arresting and detaining peaceful demonstrators furious over the sudden hike of fuel prices.

1. The arbitrary arrest of the peaceful demonstrators totally contradicts our ideal way of democratization in Myanmar. We demand the Myanmar government to immediately release all the detained demonstrators.

2. From the perspective of peace and prosperity for all Asia, Japan, cooperating with other Asian people, has been contributing to the democratization of the region. We, the Japanese Parliamentary Group Supporting Democratization in Myanmar, regarding the latest action taken by the Myanmar government, plead the Japanese government to pressure the Myanmar government to immediately release all the detained and to ameliorate the whole condition.

In order to put an end to the undemocratic rule by the Myanmar government as soon as possible, in May 2007, the international conference in Tokyo, we confirmed that it is necessary for us to cooperate with The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC).

We believe that the Myanmar government should not suppress the justifiable demand from the citizens, who peacefully protested over the quandary of daily lives caused by the economic policy of the government.

We declare this statement, cooperating with all the citizens and MPs of the world working for the democratization of Myanmar.

Tadamori OSHIMA President of the Japanese Parliamentary Group Supporting Democratization in Myanmar

Yoshinori SUEMATSU Secretary General of the Japanese Parliamentary Group Supporting Democratization in Myanmar

Text word of the statement: Japanese Translated into English by: People's Forum on Burma (Japan)

Resolution by U.S. House of Representatives

2 August 2007

H. CON. RES. 200

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. KING of New York (for himself and Mr. LANTOS) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Whereas in 1990 the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), a military junta in Burma, nullified the victory of the National League for Democracy (NLD);

Whereas NLD leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was not allowed to assume the office of Prime Minister and was subsequently placed under house arrest;

Whereas Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was released in July 1995, yet once again placed under house arrest in September 2000;

Whereas following a second release, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and several of her followers were attacked by a government-sponsored mob on May 6, 2002, and she was then imprisoned at Insein Prison in Yangon;

Whereas on May 16, 2007, more than 50 world leaders released a letter demanding the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, a demand repeated by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 14 United Nations human rights experts, the European Union, the United States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the foreign ministers of three ASEAN member states, yet on May 27 her detention was extended;

Whereas for her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991;

Whereas the ruling military junta in Burma continues to violate the human rights of Burmese citizens, including the systematic use of rape as a weapon of war and extrajudicial killings;

Whereas the armed forces in Burma have been accused of large-scale trafficking in heroin and methamphetamines;

Whereas the Burmese Government has destroyed more than 3,000 villages, displaced approximately 2 million Burmese people, and arrested approximately 1,300 individuals for expressing critical opinions;

Whereas Burma's main broadcasters and publications are state controlled and the media does not report opposing views except to criticize them;

Whereas on September 30, 2006, the United Nations Security Council officially included Burma on its agenda for the first time;

Whereas the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) denounced the ruling military regime of Burma on June 22, 2007, citing the use of detainees as porters for the armed forces and the systematic abuse and murder of both detainees and civilians;

Whereas the last time the ICRC publicly denounced egregious, ongoing, and systemic human rights abuses was in 1994 when the ICRC addressed genocide in Rwanda; and

Whereas the ICRC stated that civilians, especially those residing near the Thai-Burma border, have been subjected to abuse such as destruction of their food supply and forced unpaid manual labor: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That

(1) it is the sense of Congress that United States policy should continue to call upon

(A) the military regime in Burma

(i) to immediately and unconditionally release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other detained political prisoners and prisoners of conscience;

(ii) to immediately cease attacks against ethnic minority civilians; and

(iii) to immediately begin a meaningful process of tripartite dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the NLD, and Burma's ethnic nationalities; and

(B) the People's Republic of China and other countries that provide political and economic support to Burma's military junta to utilize their position and influence to

(i) urge Burma's military generals to immediately release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners; and

(ii) end their attacks on ethnic minority civilians and begin a meaningful process of genuine national reconciliation with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the NLD, and Burma's ethnic nationalities;

(2) Congress urges the United Nations Security Council to immediately consider and take appropriate action to respond to the growing threat the SPDC poses in Burma;

(3) Congress expresses support for the restoration of democracy in Burma; and

(4) Congress expresses the need for freedom of assembly, freedom of movement, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press to be guaranteed for all Burmese citizens.

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**Published by The Burma Campaign UK, 28 Charles Square, London N1 6HT
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**CAMPAIGNING
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
AND DEMOCRACY IN BURMA**