The Tatmadaw continues its offensive against the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) in Kokang Self-Administered Zone for the third consecutive month. Meanwhile, clashes continue with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) in Kachin, Shan, and Karen States.

Armed conflict breaks out in Arakan and Chin States, between Tatmadaw troops and Arakan Army forces. Tatmadaw soldiers commit acts of civilian abuse and burn down a village in Arakan State.

Arakan State immigration officials confiscate 300,000 temporary ID cards from mostly Rohingya, despite repeated UN concern.

Six-party talks on constitutional reform in Naypyidaw yield no conclusive results.

The National Parliament approves the Population Control Bill, which restricts marriage and reproductive rights.

The regime arrests and charges two people and sentences six others for peaceful protests.

In an unprecedented move ahead of the ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, former ASEAN leaders issue a public appeal to current ASEAN leaders to act against rising intolerance in Burma.

Calls to limit ASEAN’s non-interference policy gain traction amongst ASEAN legislators, Malaysian politicians and civil society at the ASEAN Peoples’ Forum in Kuala Lumpur.

Despite opposition from residents, the regime approves a 1,280-megawatt coal-fired power plant in Mon State, expected to cause environmental damage.

KEY STORY

Conflict continues in Kokang Self-Administered Zone

In April, conflict between the Tatmadaw and Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) continued for the third month in Laogai Township, Kokang Self-Administered Zone, Shan State.

- **5 April**: Tatmadaw troops from LIDs 11, 33, and 66 clashed with MNDAA forces.¹
- **8 April**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with MNDAA forces.²

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¹ Irrawaddy (08 Apr 15) Fighting on 3 Fronts in Wake of Ceasefire Deal: Ethnic Armies
13 April: Tatmadaw troops clashed with MNDA forces.
23 April: Tatmadaw troops from LID 33 clashed with MNDA forces. MNDA forces said that Tatmadaw troops had used chemical weapons during the clash, in the form of five mortar shells, causing soldiers to feel nauseous and vomit.
26 April: Tatmadaw troops attacked MNDA forces.

On 7 April, WFP estimated that the conflict in Kokang Self-Administered Zone, Shan State, had displaced 78,000 people since 9 February.

**Armed conflict breaks out in Arakan and Chin States**

In April, after having fought alongside the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDA) in Shan State since February, the Arakan Army engaged in fighting with Tatmadaw forces in Arakan and Chin States, in an effort to pressure the regime to include them in peace talks.

10 April: Tatmadaw troops from IB 289 clashed with Arakan Army forces in Pyingso Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State.
17 April: Tatmadaw troops clashed on five separate occasions with Arakan Army forces in Kyauktaw Township, Arakan State.
24 April: Tatmadaw troops clashed with unknown ethnic armed forces in Paletwa Township, Chin State, capturing three soldiers and seizing weapons and ammunition.

During the fighting, Tatmadaw troops in Arakan and Chin States committed several instances of abuse against civilians. In addition, on 21 April, troops in Kyauktaw Township, Arakan State, prevented humanitarian volunteers from entering the area for three days.

19 April: Tatmadaw troops in Paletwa Township, Chin State, raided homes and detained five Rakhine civilians with alleged ties to the Arakan Army.
22 April: It was reported that Tatmadaw troops burned down Aung Lan Chuang Village, Kyauktaw Township, Arakan State, displacing 400 people.
23 April: Tatmadaw troops detained and interrogated a schoolteacher from Minbya Township, Arakan State, over alleged ties to the Arakan Army.

On 29 April, the Arakan National Party (ANP) released a statement calling on the regime to protect detained civilians in Arakan State and to release them as soon as possible.

**Tatmadaw continues fighting, civilian abuse in Kachin, Shan, and Karen States**

Tatmadaw troops clashed with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), and Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) in Kachin, Shan, and Karen States.

5 April: Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA Battalion 11 forces in Mogaung Township, Kachin State.
• **5 April**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA forces in Kyaukme Township, Shan State.\(^1\)
• **7 April**: Tatmadaw troops from LID 77 clashed with TNLA Battalion 987 forces in Kyaukme Township, Shan State.\(^2\)
• **11 April**: Tatmadaw troops fired mortar shells and clashed with KIA Battalion 36 forces in Muse Township, Shan State.\(^3\)
• **17 April**: Regime-backed militia clashed with TNLA forces in Namkham Township, Shan State.\(^4\)
• **18 April**: Tatmadaw troops from LIB 423 clashed with KIA Battalion 6 forces in Hpakant Township, Shan State.\(^5\)
• **20 April**: Tatmadaw troops from IB 589 clashed with KNLA forces in Thandaung Township, Karen State.\(^6\)
• **21 April**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA Battalion 14 forces in Tanai Township, Kachin State.\(^7\)
• **22 April**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA Battalion 101 forces in Muse Township, Shan State.\(^8\)
• **24 April**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA Battalion 101 forces in Muse Township, Shan State.\(^9\)
• **25 April**: Tatmadaw troops fired mortar shells and clashed with KIA Battalion 36 forces in Muse Township, Shan State.\(^10\)

Tatmadaw troops also committed instances of civilian abuse in Kachin and Shan States.

• **10 April**: A landmine explosion killed a 16-year-old boy in Mogaung Township, Kachin State.\(^11\)
• **17 April**: A Tatmadaw soldier from LIB 513 attempted to rape a 14-year-old girl in Loilem Township, Shan State. Regime officials refused to accept a complaint from her parents when they tried to file a case on 22 April.\(^12\)
• **20 April**: During a clash with KIA forces, Tatmadaw troops shot and killed a civilian hunter hiding nearby, in Tanai Township, Kachin State.\(^13\)
• **23 April**: Tatmadaw troops from LIB 501 shot and killed a 60-year-old man in Monkoe, Muse Township, Shan State.\(^14\)
• **25 April**: Tatmadaw troops shot and injured a Kachin youth in Nam Jarap Village, Hsenwi Township, Shan State.\(^15\)

In other conflict-related news:

• **2 April**: In talks with Chinese FM Wang Yi in Beijing, regime Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin formally apologized for the 13 March Tatmadaw bombing of Chinese territory, which killed five people.\(^16\) However, on 28 April in Beijing, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said bombs from Burma had again fallen in China and called on the regime to prevent further spillover.\(^17\)

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\(^1\) Irrawaddy (08 Apr 15) Fighting on 3 Fronts in Wake of Ceasefire Deal: Ethnic Armies  
\(^2\) Irrawaddy (08 Apr 15) Fighting on 3 Fronts in Wake of Ceasefire Deal: Ethnic Armies  
\(^3\) SHAN (09 Apr 15) Two Burma Army troops killed, two injured in fighting with Ta’ang Army  
\(^4\) Kachinland News (15 Apr 15) Battles Rage in Northern Shan State  
\(^5\) DVB (21 Apr 15) At least two killed in TNLA gunfire  
\(^6\) Kachinland News (19 Apr 15) 423rd LIR Troops Attacked KIA’s Anam Camp Post  
\(^7\) KIC (27 Apr 15) Karen Soldiers and Gov’t’s Troops Fight In Northern Karen State…Again!  
\(^8\) Kachinland News (21 Apr 15) A Local Hunter Killed by Burmese Army Troops  
\(^9\) Myanmar Times (28 Apr 15) Tatmadaw silent on Kokang casualties; Kachinland News (29 Apr 15) KIA’s 38th Battalion Fought Burmese Army’s 503rd LIR  
\(^10\) Kachinland News (29 Apr 15) KIA’s 38th Battalion Fought Burmese Army’s 503rd LIR  
\(^11\) EMG (20 Apr 15) Landmine Kills Kachin Boy  
\(^12\) SHAN (23 Apr 15) Loilem authorities reject complaint against Burma Army soldier for attempted rape  
\(^13\) Kachinland News (21 Apr 15) A Local Hunter Killed by Burmese Army Troops  
\(^14\) Kachinland News (28 Apr 15) Burmese Army Soldiers Shot Two Kachin Civilians in a Week  
\(^15\) Kachinland News (28 Apr 15) Burmese Army Soldiers Shot Two Kachin Civilians in a Week  
\(^16\) GNLM (03 Apr 15) Myanmar expresses apology for March 13 incident; Xinhua (02 Apr 15) Myanmar apologizes to China over warplane bombing  
\(^17\) Reuters (28 Apr 15) China protests over shelling as Myanmar battles insurgents; Myanmar Times (30 Apr 15) Government investigating another China shell complaint
• 14 April: In Tokyo, Japan, PM Shinzo Abe met with regime President’s Office Minister Aung Min to pledge support for Burma’s peace process and confirmed Japan’s commitment to provide 10 billion yen (US$83.5 million) in aid for livelihood projects in conflict-affected areas.35

• 21 April: US ambassador to Burma Derek Mitchell visited Chin State for the first time and met with members of the Chin Peace and Tranquility Committee, the Chin National Front, and local leaders.36

• 27 April: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute published a factsheet, which found that Burma, Pakistan, and Bangladesh were among the top purchasers of military equipment from China, and that Burma is one of 20 countries whose military expenditure was over 4% of its GDP.37

INSIDE BURMA

Regime confiscates over 300,000 temporary IDs in Arakan State despite UN concern

In April, immigration officials in Arakan State confiscated thousands of temporary ID cards, ahead of a 31 May deadline for turning over expired cards.38 On 3 April, in accordance with President Thein Sein’s 11 February order to revoke all temporary ID cards, the regime formed a nine-member “Advisory Commission for Reviewing Laws, Rules, Regulations, and Tasks Relating to Temporary Identity Cards.”39 On 28 April, officials stated they had collected 300,000 cards and expected to collect all 660,000 issued in Arakan state by the end of May.40

Over 83% of temporary ID card holders in the State identify as Rohingya.41 For decades, temporary ID cards have mostly been used by Rohingya to access public services. The seizure of these cards would deny holders certain rights, including the right to vote in a planned May referendum on constitutional amendments and could place them at greater threat of arbitrary detention and expulsion. [See February 2015 Burma Bulletin]

On 24 April, at a meeting of the Partnership Group on Burma in New York, UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-moon expressed renewed concern over lack of action to regularize the status of temporary ID card holders, and called on the regime to address the issue of Rohingya citizenship before the 2015 general election.42 Earlier this year the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Burma Yanghee Lee also formally expressed concern over the issue. [See March 2015 Burma Bulletin]

Long-awaited six-party talks inconclusive

On 10 April, long-awaited six-party talks on constitutional reform took place in Naypyidaw. The six parties were Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, President Thein Sein, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Sr Gen Min Aung Hlaing, National Parliament Speaker Shwe Mann, National Assembly Speaker Khin Aung Myint, and Arakan National Party Chairman Aye Maung as a representative of ethnic parties.43 The National Parliament had formally proposed the meeting in November, but President Thein Sein had previously rebuffed the proposal. [See November 2014, January 2015 Burma Bulletin] The 10 April talks yielded no political commitments.44

35 DVB (16 Apr 15) Shinzo Abe pledges support for Burma’s peace process; Kyodo News (15 Apr 15) Japan vows to assist peace process in Myanmar
36 Chinland Guardian (21 Apr 15) US ambassador to Burma visits Chin State; Mizzima News (22 Apr 15) US ambassador visits Chin State
37 DVB (27 Apr 15) Burma among world’s highest spenders on military
38 Myanmar Times (29 Apr 15) More than 300,000 white cards returned: government
39 GNLM (04 Apr 15) Advisory Commission to review laws, rules and regulations and tasks related to the temporary identity cards formed
40 Myanmar Times (29 Apr 15) More than 300,000 white cards returned: government
41 Myanmar Times (29 Apr 15) More than 300,000 white cards returned: government
42 UN (24 Apr 15) Lauding Myanmar’s Exemplary Resolve towards Achieving Peace and Stability, Secretary-General Says Much More Hard Work Lies Ahead
43 GNLM (11 Apr 15) Six-way talks tackle country’s pressing political issues; Reuters (10 Apr 15) Myanmar’s government, military leaders hold rare talks with Suu Kyi; AP (10 Apr 15) Myanmar high-level meeting political talks consider reforms
44 Irrawaddy (10 Apr 15) At High-Level Dialogue, Six Parties Agree to More Talks; AFP (10 Apr 15) Myanmar election talks close without resolution
NLD’s caution over Thein Sein, elections

In April, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi voiced criticism of the regime and caution over electoral commitments while speaking to the press. On 3 April, in an interview, Daw Suu stated that President Thein Sein was insincere about reform, and she refused to rule out the possibility of a National League for Democracy (NLD) boycott of the 2015 general election. On 9 April, at a press conference in Naypyidaw, Daw Suu welcomed the planned six-party talks on constitutional reform, emphasized the need for amendments to the 2008 constitution, and again refused to rule out an NLD electoral boycott.

Parliament’s 12th session continues, Population Control Bill approved

In April, Parliament continued its 12th session. Important developments included:

- **3 April**: The National Parliament approved President Thein Sein’s appointment of eight additional members, representing the largest ethnic groups, including Shan, Kachin, and Karen, to the regime Election Commission.
- **6 April**: The National Parliament approved the Population Control Bill, which is part of the ‘National Race and Religion Protection’ package. The bill would allow the regime to designate areas, based on socio-economic indicators, in which women would have to wait 36 months between pregnancies. Designation criteria, enforcement and punishment for those who violate the law have not been specified. Rights groups, including Amnesty International and Physicians for Human Rights, issued statements condemning the bill, warning that it could entrench discrimination and represent a setback for maternal health in Burma.
- **7 April**: The People’s Assembly approved a bill amending the National Education Law, following the National Assembly’s approval of its version of the bill on 26 March. [See March 2015 Burma Bulletin] Both bills failed to address several student demands, including the free formation of independent student unions and a commitment to devote 20% of the national budget to education within five years.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Regime continues to arrest and imprison peaceful protesters

In April, the regime continued to arrest and imprison activists and peaceful protesters across Burma.

- **1 April**: Rangoon’s Bahan Township Court sentenced Naw Ohn Hla and Than Swe to four months in prison each under Article 18 of the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law for a protest against the Letpadaung (Monywa) copper mine in Sagaing Division in November 2014.
- **2 April**: Rangoon’s Bahan Township Court sentenced activist Naw Ohn Hla to four months in prison under Article 18 of the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law for a 29 September 2014 protest calling for the release of political prisoners.
- **2 April**: A court in Prome Township, Pegu Division, sentenced lawyer Myint Aye and activist Myo Thu Htut to four months in prison under Article 18 of the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law for their involvement in a protest against the reconstruction of a students’ union building.
- **8 April**: Rangoon’s Kyauktada Township Court sentenced activist Wai Lu to one year in prison under Article 505(b) of the Criminal Code. The charge related to Wai Lu’s support of land rights defenders.
from the Michaungkan community who were challenging land confiscation by staging a sit-in protest near Rangoon’s City Hall in December 2014.\(^{54}\)

- **8 April**: Police in Rangoon’s Kamayut Township arrested All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU) member Po Po and charged her under Articles 143, 145, 147, and 505(b) of the Criminal Code for participating in a demonstration in Rangoon against the 10 March crackdown in Letpadan, Pegu Division.\(^{55}\)

- **14 April**: Police in Rangoon’s Thonegwa Township arrested artist San Zaw Htwe after he erected a sign outside his home wishing the regime bad luck in the new year.\(^{56}\)

- **23 April**: Aung Mye Tharzan Township Court, Mandalay Division, sentenced Movement for Democracy Current Force (MDCF) member Thein Aung Myint to six months in prison with hard labor. He was charged under Article 18 of the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law for an October 2014 protest against the Tatmadaw’s killing of Aung Kyaw Naing (aka Par Gyi).\(^{57}\)

### Activists urge reform of regime Prisoners of Conscience Affairs Committee

On 20 April, the eve of the one-year anniversary of former political prisoner and National League for Democracy (NLD) founding member U Win Tin, 23 organizations issued a statement calling for the Prisoners of Conscience Affairs Committee to be reformed.\(^{58}\) The Committee, formed by the regime in January, replaced the previous Committee to Scrutinize Remaining Political Prisoners, and excluded members who were critical of the regime.\(^{59}\) The statement’s ten recommendations included:

- Review cases and secure releases for prisoners sentenced for peaceful exercise of their human rights.
- Review laws used to detain political prisoners and repeal or amend them in line with international human rights standards.
- Provide restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, and other assistance to political prisoners and their families.
- Ensure external oversight, introduce mechanisms for transparency, and develop the Committee’s program of work in consultation with former political prisoners and their families.

### Freedom of information still restricted: Committee to Protect Journalists

On 22 April, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)’s international index, which monitors media freedom, ranked Burma ninth in its annual list of the world’s “10 Most Censored Countries.”\(^{60}\) CPJ found that despite an end to censorship of the media in 2012, the Printing and Publishing Law, approved in March 2014, bans news that insults religion, undermines the rule of law, or threatens ethnic unity. CPJ also said that national security-related laws such as the 1923 Official Secrets Act were used to threaten and imprison journalists and that journalists were regularly barred from reporting on conflict with ethnic armed groups.\(^{61}\)

### DISPLACEMENT

#### 257 enslaved Burmese migrants rescued, Indonesian fishing company admits to abuse

On 3 April, following a 25 March AP investigative report on the use of captive migrants as slave labor in the fishing industry [see March 2015 Burma Bulletin], Indonesian officials in Benjina Island rescued 257 Burmese nationals used as slave labor on fishing vessels.\(^{62}\) On 15 April, Indonesian fishing

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\(^{54}\) [EMG (09 Apr 15)] Michaungkan supporter sentenced to one year in prison
\(^{55}\) [DVB (10 Apr 15)] ‘Fugitive’ ABFSU member taken to Insein prison after police arrest; [Irrawaddy (09 Apr 15)] Police Nab Another Student Linked to Letpadan Protest; [EMG (10 Apr 15)] Detained student attends court hearing
\(^{56}\) [DVB (14 Apr 15)] Artist arrested after casting New Year curse
\(^{57}\) [Irrawaddy (23 Apr 15)] Activist Gets 6 Months for Protest Against Journalist’s Killing; [DVB (24 Apr 15)] Mandalay activist handed maximum sentence under Article 18
\(^{58}\) [BCUK (20 Apr 15)] Burma/Myanmar’s Prisoners of Conscience Affairs Committee needs urgent reform
\(^{59}\) [Irrawaddy (09 Jan 15)] Flawed Scrutiny Process Leaves Political Prisoners Langushing; [Myanmar Times (09 Jan 15)] New political prisoner body is ‘just for show’, say activists
\(^{60}\) [BCUK (20 Apr 15)] Burma/Myanmar’s Prisoners of Conscience Affairs Committee needs urgent reform
\(^{61}\) [Irrawaddy (22 Apr 15)] Burma 9th Most Censored Country Globally: Media Freedom Index
\(^{62}\) [CPJ (22 Apr 15)] 10 Most Censored Countries
\(^{63}\) [DVB (07 Apr 15)] Rescued fishermen receive consular assistance in Jakarta; [DVB (05 Apr 15)] Enslaved migrants rescued in Indonesia; [AP (25 Mar 15)] AP Investigation: Are slaves catching the fish you buy?
company Pusaka Benjina Resources (PBR) Operational Chief Herman Wir Martino admitted that the company subjected their Burmese migrant employees to harsh and inhumane treatment and that a number of them had died in PBR’s employ, but denied allegations of slavery.64

Authorities abroad target Burmese migrants, children

In April, authorities in Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Thailand targeted Burmese migrants, including their children.

- 4 April: Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) arrested and pushed back 39 Rohingya who were trying to enter Bangladesh near Chittagong, and sent another eight to prison.65
- 4 April: Police in Bangladesh detained eight trafficked Burmese migrants who had crossed into Chittagong over the Naf River on 2 April.66
- 10 April: Malaysian immigration authorities detained 173 undocumented Burmese migrants, including 47 children, during a raid in Sungai Pasir, Kedah.67
- 17 April: Thai authorities at the Mae Sot border deported dozens of Burmese migrant families back to Burma. Officials had initially told the migrant families that their children had to be brought to Mae Sot for registration.68
- 20 April: Malaysian police in Penang discovered 78 undocumented Burmese migrants, believed to be Rohingya, crammed into a small wooden boat, which left Burma on 8 April.69
- 29 April: Thai police detained and then deported 26 Burmese migrants, including nine women, found in the back of a truck in Muang District, Kanchanaburi Province.70

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Former ASEAN leaders urge action on Burma

On 22 April, former ASEAN leaders took the unprecedented move of publicly sending a letter to ASEAN leaders ahead of the 26th ASEAN Summit, expressing concern that rising religious and ethnic intolerance in Burma would undermine the country’s reform process and affect regional community-building. The letter, signed by immediate past Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, immediate past ASEAN Sec-Gen Surin Pitsuwan, former Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar and former Thai Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya, called on ASEAN to actively work with Burma to implement relevant UN General Assembly and UN Human Rights Council resolutions that were adopted by consensus, including by ASEAN states.71

On 24 April, Malaysian Foreign Minister Anifah Aman stated that the Rohingya issue could no longer be considered an internal issue and should be addressed by ASEAN.72 During 2014, when Burma chaired ASEAN, ASEAN leaders were gagged from raising the Rohingya crisis and other domestic human rights issues at meetings in Naypyidaw (see January 2014, May 2014 Burma Bulletin).

ASEAN non-interference policy takes a hit

On 22-24 April, ahead of the 26th ASEAN Summit, the ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN Peoples’ Forum (ACSC/APF) took place in Kuala Lumpur. The Rohingya crisis, escalating armed conflicts, and the crackdown on student activists and land rights defenders in Burma were highlighted at

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64 Jakarta Globe (15 Apr 15) Fishing Company Admits to Abuse — Just Not Slavery; Mizzima News (20 Apr 15) Indonesian firm denies using Myanmar fishermen as slaves
65 Kaladan News (05 Apr 15) 39 Rohingyas pushed back to Burma. 8 others sent to jail
66 bdnews24 (04 Apr 15) Eight Myanmar nationals held in Chittagong; Dhaka Tribune (04 Apr 15) 8 Myanmar nationals held in Chittagong
67 Bernama (10 Apr 15) 173 Myanmar Illegal Immigrants Held In Sungai Petani
68 Myanmar Times (28 Apr 15) Thailand deportst dozens of children over the holidays; DVB (22 Apr 15) Hundreds of Burmese migrants arrested in Thai raids
69 Star Online (21 Apr 15) 78 Rohingyas found on vessel
70 Bangkok Post (29 Apr 15) Illegal migrants packed inside truck
71 HUMANiTi Malaysia (22 Apr 15) Former ASEAN Leaders Issue Letter on Myanmar Intolerance.
72 APHR (30 Apr 15) Parliamentarians welcome Malaysian FM’s comments on Rohingya crisis, but urge concrete action; The Star (25 Apr 15) Rohingya refugee issue now for ASEan to solve, says Anifah
the event. On the first day, ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) released a report, “The Rohingya Crisis and the Risk of Atrocities in Myanmar: An ASEAN Challenge and Call to Action,” which declared the Rohingya crisis in Burma “an ASEAN problem,” and called on ASEAN countries to take action to prevent further escalation of the anti-Muslim human rights abuses in the country. In addition, several Malaysian politicians criticized ASEAN’s non-interference policy at the ACSC/APF and called for it to be limited.

- **22 April**: In his keynote speech delivered to ACSC/APF, former Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar stated that ASEAN’s non-interference policy should be reviewed, especially “when the serious impacts of a problem goes beyond national boundaries, or when it involves serious international crimes or the rise of intolerance.”

- **23 April**: Malaysia’s Selangor State Chief Minister Mohamed Azmin Ali delivered a speech at APF criticizing the bloc’s non-interference principle for aggravating human rights violations in the region, using the example of the “systematic expulsion of the Rohingya.”

- **24 April**: In a press release, APHR Chair Charles Santiago said years of ridicule of ASEAN as a “toothless tiger” would be affirmed if ASEAN glossed over the Rohingya issue. He warned that ASEAN’s non-interference policy could no longer be used to avoid addressing gross human rights violations and “state-sponsored genocide” against the Rohingya.

### ECONOMY

**Regime approves large-scale coal, gas projects**

In April, the regime moved ahead with a large-scale coal-based power project in Mon State’s Ye Township that was proposed in April 2014. On 25 April 2014, Thai construction firm Toyo-Thai held a consultation meeting with local residents at the project site, where residents stated they would oppose the project, citing concerns over environmental and social impacts. However, on 9 April, the regime signed a memorandum with Toyo-Thai for a 1,280-megawatt coal-based power plant. Toyo-Thai estimated the construction contract to be worth US$2.3 billion.

In addition, on 20 April, Singapore’s United Overseas Bank (UOB) announced an agreement with Singapore-based engineering procurement and construction firm Royal GK, to finance the construction of a gas-fired power plant in Rangoon’s Mingaladon Township. On 24 April, Singapore-based firm Sembcorp Utilities announced that state-owned Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise (MEPE) had given Sembcorp a Notice of Award for a US$300 million 225-megawatt gas-fired power plant project in Mandalay’s Myingyan Township.

### World Bank, IMF warn of Burma's rising deficit, inflation

In April, global financial institutions found poor financial indicators for Burma.

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73 AP (22 Apr 15) Southeast Asian Leaders Urged to Act on Rohingya Crisis; DVB (23 Apr 15) ASEAN must Rohingya, says panel protect; Myanmar Times (23 Apr 15) Regional MPs warn of Rohingya ‘crisis’ ahead of ASEAN meeting
74 ACSC/APF 2015 (22 Apr 15) Text of Keynote Speech at Welcome Dinner
75 ACSC/APF 2015 (23 Apr 15) On ASEAN, Civil Society Organisations and Power to the People
76 APHR (24 Apr 15) Resolving Rohingya statelessness issues central to Malaysia’s leadership of ASEAN
77 DVB (14 May 2014) Coal-fie plant fuels concern in Mon State; Irrawaddy (11 Apr 15) The Irrawaddy Business Roundup (Apr. 11, 2015)
78 Reuters (09 Apr 15) Toyo-Thai signs $2.8 bln deal to build power plant in Myanmar; Nikkei Asian Review (10 Apr 15) Myanmar set to raise generating capacity fivefold
79 Reuters (09 Apr 15) Toyo-Thai signs $2.8 bln deal to build power plant in Myanmar; Nikkei Asian Review (10 Apr 15) Myanmar set to raise generating capacity fivefold
80 CNA (20 Apr 15) UOB to finance new power plant in Myanmar; Straits Times (21 Apr 15) UOB to finance power plant project in Yangon, Myanmar; Star Online (20 Apr 15) UOB finances Yangon power plant; Mizzima News (21 Apr 15) Singapore bank to finance Myanmar power plant
81 CNA (24 Apr 15) Sembcorp to develop largest gas-fired independent power plant in Myanmar; Mizzima News (25 Apr 15) Singapore firm to run Myanmar’s largest gas-fired independent power plant; Xinhua (27 Apr 15) Singapore-based firm to develop gas-fired power plant in Myanmar
**13 April**: The World Bank published its 2015 East Asia Pacific Economic Update titled “Adjusting to a Changing World”, which found that Burma’s deficit and inflation were on the rise, and Burma’s current account deficit in the 2014-15 fiscal year was expected to reach 5.3% of the country’s GDP.82

**27 April**: In an interview, IMF Asia and Pacific Department Deputy Director Hoe Ee Khor said Burma’s fiscal deficit may rise in the run-up to the 2015 general election, and that controlling inflation would be difficult as Burma still lacked some central banking monetary instruments.83

**Ongoing tensions over sanctions, minimum wage**

Important developments relating to business and investment during April included:

**16 April**: Amnesty International called on the UK to investigate the British-Australian mining company Rio Tinto for possibly making assets available to military-owned Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings (UMEH), in breach of EU economic sanctions on Burma.84

**19 April**: People’s Assembly MP Aung Thaung, recently blacklisted by the US Treasury Department for “perpetuating violence, oppression and corruption,” announced he would oversee the Banks and Financial Development Committee that flew to Germany to study financial institutions.85

**23 April**: Burma’s EITI implementation board announced plans to start a pilot project in May covering Magwe and Mandalay Divisions and Arakan and Shan States.86

**25 April**: Regime Labor, Employment and Social Security Minister Aye Myint met with garments factory owners in Rangoon, who told him they want a minimum wage of 1,500 kyat (US$1.39) for an eight-hour workday. The following day, Aye Myint met with factory workers’ representatives, who demanded a minimum wage of 4,000 kyat (US$4) for an eight-hour workday, not including welfare benefits, overtime and bonuses.87

**OTHER BURMA NEWS IN APRIL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In Naypyidaw, a ten-member US Congressional delegation led by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi meets separately with President Thein Sein, National Parliament Speaker Shwe Mann, and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The US Embassy says that failure to amend the 2008 constitution “will raise serious questions about the credibility of democratic reform” in Burma.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>More than 100 students and family members of detained activists stage a protest in Pegu, Pegu Division, to mark the one-month anniversary of the police crackdown on student demonstrators in Letpadan, Pegu Division. A similar demonstration calling for the release of detained students was also held in Mandalay.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Two policemen rape a 15-year-old girl in Tonzag Township, Chin State and later offer her parents 3 million kyat as compensation, which they refuse.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>A bomb explosion kills two police officers and wounds three others, in Muse Township, Shan State.</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>In Bahan Township, Rangoon, hundreds of colleagues, activists and admirers, including Aung San Suu Kyi, attend a commemoration ceremony marking the first death anniversary of NLD founding member Win Tin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Daw Aung San Suu Kyi questions the regime’s decision to hire Washington lobby firm Podesta Group to provide strategic counsel on strengthening the country’s ties to the US government.</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>In New York, India Permanent Representative Ambassador Asoke Kumar Mukerji urges UN members not to pass a resolution on Burma’s human rights situation at a meeting of the Partnership Group on Burma.</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>The US Embassy expresses concern over recent clashes between the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army that have displaced hundreds of civilians in Kyauktaw township, Arakan State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Regime Election Commission approves the registration of the Danu Nationals League Party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Regime Election Commission approves the registration of the Public Service Students Democracy Party.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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82 World Bank (13 April 15) East Asia Pacific Economic Update: Adjusting to a Changing World
83 Myanmar Times (27 Apr 15) Election year fuels deficit and inflation
84 AI (16 Apr 15) UK: Investigate Rio Tinto's role in potential Burma sanctions busting
85 Irrawaddy (20 Apr 15) Germany Receives US Blacklisted MP for Financial Tour
86 Myanmar Times (24 Apr 15) Delayed regional rollout of EITI expected in May: activist
87 Irrawaddy (28 Apr 15) Employers, Workers Far Apart in Minimum Wage Negotiations
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“Monthly Chronology of Burma’s Political Prisoners for March 2015”, Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) http://goo.gl/pqraia

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