

# BURMA BULLETIN

XXXXXXXX A month-in-review of events in Burma XXXXXXXX

ALTERNATIVE A SEAN NETWORK ON BURMA  
campaigns, advocacy & capacity-building for human rights & democracy

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- **Pinheiro releases report: SPDC arrested 3,000 to 4,000; killed at least 31; and used excessive and lethal force during the crackdown. At least 14 protesters died in harsh detention conditions.**
- **Despite ongoing SPDC repression, monks continue to boycott the junta. Monks refuse alms, refuse to grant blessings, and deny SPDC officials entry to monasteries.**
- **NLD expresses dissatisfaction over the slow progress of talks with the regime. Meanwhile, SPDC rejects any role for the NLD in the constitution-drafting process and continues to harass party members.**
- **The regime faces growing dissatisfaction among its own ranks. Over 100 policemen desert since the crackdown. Forced recruitment and military training of civilians continue.**
- **Report of first human case of bird flu in Shan State. The virus spreads to birds close the Thai-Burma border.**
- **Fresh exodus of Rohingya boat people from Bangladesh with 6,000 Rohingya fleeing to Malaysia and Thailand in 2007.**
- **International pressure on the regime toughens. US Congress passes new sanctions on the junta. UN Human Rights Council urges SPDC to speed up dialogue and asks Pinheiro to return to Burma.**
- **SPDC's mismanagement of the economy leads to soaring inflation. Inflation has grown by 35% to 50% over the past year.**
- **Ethnics: SPDC offensive intensifies in Eastern Burma while pressure on KIO continues.**

## IN THIS ISSUE

### KEY STORY

- 1 SPDC ends year with new repression

### INSIDE BURMA

- 3 SPDC's roadmap
- 3 NLD frustrated
- 3 Daw Suu's honors
- 3 Pro-democracy activities
- 4 Monks strike back
- 4 Military offensive intensifies
- 5 Tension in Kachin State
- 5 SPDC: Dissent from within
- 5 Bird flu

### HUMAN RIGHTS

- 6 Releases

### DISPLACEMENT

- 6 Boat people
- 7 Monks flee
- 7 Refugee shot in camp

### INTERNATIONAL

- 7 UN initiatives on Burma
- 8 US: More sanctions

### ECONOMY

- 8 Nothing to harvest
- 9 Inflation rises

### 9 CHRONOLOGY

### 10 REPORTS

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## KEY STORY

### SPDC ENDS YEAR WITH MORE REPRESSION

#### UN: The truth about the crackdown

On 7 December, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Burma, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, presented a report<sup>1</sup> to the UN Human Rights Council that noted his findings as a result of his November visit to Burma [See *November 2007 Burma Bulletin*].<sup>2</sup> The 77-page report, which is incomplete due to SPDC restrictions

<sup>1</sup> <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/6session/A.HRC.6.14.doc>

<sup>2</sup> Reuters (07 Dec 07) UN expert cites reports of burned bodies in Myanmar; AP (07 Dec 07) Reports: Myanmar Crackdown Deaths Higher; AP (07 Dec 07) Reports: Far More Dead in Myanmar Crackdown Than Junta Has Acknowledged; AP (07 Dec 07) UN Says 31 Killed in Myanmar Crackdown; AP (07 Dec 07) Junta killed 31 people identifiable by name, says UN expert who visited Myanmar; Reuters (07 Dec 07) U.N. report raises death toll in Myanmar crackdown; Reuters (08 Dec 07) Protesters' bodies may have been burned: UN

placed on Pinheiro, represents the first attempt to unveil the truth behind the regime's September crackdown. Findings include:

- The regime suppressed the demonstrations using “excessive force against civilians, including unnecessary and disproportionate lethal force.”
- The SPDC arrested 3,000 to 4,000 people in September and October. Between 500 and 1,000 people remained in detention in November. This number does not include the 1,150 political prisoners imprisoned prior to the September crackdown.
- The regime killed at least 31 people.
- During the nights of 27-30 September, a large number of bodies were burned at the Ye Way crematorium in Rangoon. The operation of the crematorium at night was unusual and SPDC security officials instructed regular staff to stay away from the premises.
- Security forces seized relatives of people in hiding as hostages during night raids.
- Inmates in Rangoon's Insein prison were held in “degrading conditions.” Cells lacked ventilation or toilets. Detainees, mostly political prisoners, slept on thin mats on concrete floors and were only allowed to bathe with cold water once every three days for five minutes. Monks were disrobed and intentionally fed in the afternoon when religious tenets forbid them to eat.
- At least 14 individuals died in custody due to poor detention conditions. On 9 October, NLD member, Win Shwe, died while being interrogated at Plate Myot Police Center, near Mandalay. On 26 September U Thilavantha, the deputy abbot of the Yuzana Kyaungthai monastery in Myitkyina, Kachin State, was allegedly beaten to death in detention.

### **New arrests and imprisonments**

- **2 December:** Police arrested Hajee Amir Hakim, a 52-year-old man from Tha Yet Pyin village in Buthidaung Township, Arakan State, for writing a letter to the BBC detailing SPDC human rights abuses against Rohingya. He was released the following day after his relatives bribed a police officer.<sup>3</sup>
- **5 December:** Win Maung, an SPDC village secretary from Manaung, Arakan State, was sentenced to two and a half years in prison for his involvement in the monk-led anti-junta protests. Win Maung was arrested on 27 November.<sup>4</sup>
- **21 December:** It was reported that three residents of Monywa, Sagaing Division, were sentenced to prison on charges of giving water to protesting monks in September. Shwe Thway was sentenced to two and a half years' imprisonment, while Ko Zaw Gyi and Ko Yazay were both given a two-year jail terms.<sup>5</sup>

### **Detention conditions**

- Family members were prevented from visiting NLD members detained in Thandwe prison, Arakan State, and Ohnbo prison in Mandalay<sup>6</sup>
- 88 Generation Student members, Min Ko Naing and Mya Aye, were incarcerated with criminals inside Rangoon's Insein Prison.<sup>7</sup>
- The health of detained Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) secretary, Khun Htun Oo and ethnic student leader, Sai Nyi Moe are reportedly deteriorating due to poor prison conditions that include lack of proper nutrition and medicine.<sup>8</sup>
- On 30 November, detained activist Htin Kyaw, began a hunger strike to protests poor prison conditions in Rangoon's Insein prison.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Kaladan News (17 Dec 07) Burmese police arrest man for writing to BBC

<sup>4</sup> Narinjara News (09 Dec 07) Village Secretary Given Two and Half Years in Prison

<sup>5</sup> DVB (21 Dec 07) Three jailed for giving water to monks

<sup>6</sup> Mizzima News (14 Dec 07) Detained opposition members barred from meeting families

<sup>7</sup> Irrawaddy (17 Dec 07) Detained student leaders sharing cells with criminals

<sup>8</sup> DVB (11 Dec 07) Health fears for detained Shan leaders

<sup>9</sup> DVB (06 Dec 07) Htin Kyaw on hunger strike; DVB (12 Dec 07) Htin Kyaw continues hunger strike; Reuters (13 Dec 07) Myanmar charges activist with “public mischief”; Mizzima News (13 Dec 07) Detained political activist missing

- In early December, two university students, Nay Lin and Zin Lin Aung, and Human Rights Defenders and Promoters member, Myo Thant, joined Htin Kyaw in the hunger strike.<sup>10</sup> The three were put in solitary confinement as punishment for the hunger strike.<sup>11</sup>

## INSIDE BURMA

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### SPDC rejects inclusive constitution

On 3 December, the regime ruled out any role for the NLD in the constitution-drafting process.<sup>12</sup> SPDC Information Minister, Kyaw Hsan, made it clear that the junta-appointed 54-member State Constitution Drafting Commission is the only body responsible for drafting the new constitution.<sup>13</sup> On the same day, the Constitution Drafting Commission convened for the first time.<sup>14</sup>

### NLD: dialogue stops, harassment continues

The National League for Democracy (NLD) expressed dissatisfaction with the slow progress of talks with the regime.<sup>15</sup> It said that there had been no dialogue with the SPDC for the past month and there was no news of upcoming meetings between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the junta's Liaison Minister, Maj Gen Aung Kyi.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, harassment of NLD members continued in December:

- **18 December:** A Hlaing Tharyar Township court in Rangoon sentenced NLD member Win Myint to three years in prison for the alleged possession of a nine-inch knife. Win Myint had previously resisted the SPDC's request to resign from the NLD.<sup>17</sup>
- **17-18 December:** SPDC authorities detained and interrogated five NLD members in Taunggoat, Arakan State. Authorities accused the activists of organizing anti-junta poster and graffiti campaigns.<sup>18</sup>

### Daw Aung San Suu Kyi: two more honors

- **17 December:** The US House of Representatives voted to bestow on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi the Congressional Gold Medal, Congress' highest civilian honor.<sup>19</sup>
- **20 December:** The City of Rome, Italy, awarded Daw Aung San Suu Kyi the "Rome for Peace and Humanitarian Action" prize for her relentless commitment and struggle for democracy and human rights in Burma.<sup>20</sup>

### Pro-democracy activities

- **4 December:** About 200 veteran politicians, pro-democracy leaders, and activists gathered at the NLD headquarters in Rangoon to celebrate the 87<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Burma's National Day. The NLD released a statement calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her deputy, Tin Oo, as well as all other political prisoners. The NLD also urged the SPDC to stop forcing members to resign from the party and to allow the party to reopen its branch offices.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Irrawaddy (13 Dec 07) Three more Insein prisoners stage a hunger strike over conditions

<sup>11</sup> DVB (24 Dec 07) Detainees put in isolation for hunger strike

<sup>12</sup> AFP (03 Dec 07) Myanmar rejects calls to include Suu Kyi in reforms; BBC (03 Dec 07) Burma rules out NLD reform role; CNA (03 Dec 07) Myanmar rejects calls to include Suu Kyi in reforms

<sup>13</sup> AFP (03 Dec 07) Myanmar rejects calls to include Suu Kyi in reforms; BBC (03 Dec 07) Burma rules out NLD reform role; CNA (03 Dec 07) Myanmar rejects calls to include Suu Kyi in reforms

<sup>14</sup> Xinhua (03 Dec 07) Myanmar reiterates drafting of new state constitution

<sup>15</sup> Mizzima News (19 Dec 07) Opposition upset over stalled dialogue

<sup>16</sup> BBC (18 Dec 07) 'No progress' in Burma says NLD; Mizzima News (19 Dec 07) Opposition upset over stalled dialogue

<sup>17</sup> DVB (20 Dec 07) NLD member jailed after refusing official order

<sup>18</sup> DVB (19 Dec 07) Taunggoat NLD members harassed by authorities

<sup>19</sup> AP (18 Dec 07) House Honors Suu Kyi; Nation (18 Dec 07) U.S. House pass bill to honor Suu Kyi with highest honour

<sup>20</sup> Mizzima News (20 Dec 07) Aung San Suu Kyi awarded "Rome for Peace and Humanitarian Action" prize

<sup>21</sup> AP (04 Dec 07) Pro-democracy party says Myanmar's national prestige at its lowest; Irrawaddy (04 Dec 07) Burma's National Day celebrated in Rangoon; VOA (05 Dec 07) Burmese Opposition Marks National Day, Calls for Leader's Release

- **4 December:** The 88 Generation Students group issued a statement urging the SPDC to accelerate political dialogue with pro-democracy forces. The group also demanded that the unconditional release of all political prisoners.<sup>22</sup>
- **10 December:** The Human Rights Defenders and Promoters held a ceremony to mark international human rights day at the home of the group's leader, Myint Aye, in Rangoon's Kyi Myint Taing Township. About 100 people attended the event, including diplomats from the US Embassy, human rights activists, and ordinary citizens with an interest in human rights issues.<sup>23</sup>
- **18 December:** Students, family members of political prisoners, and about 50 other people donated blood at Rangoon General Hospital in memory of those killed during the September protests.<sup>24</sup>

## Monks strike back

Despite the SPDC's violent crackdown, monks continue to defy the regime.

- Following the All-Burmese Monks Alliance's (ABMA's) call for a boycott on the annual religious exams, [See *November 2007 Burma Bulletin*] about 90 percent of monks did not enroll.<sup>25</sup> According to one monk, the SPDC will pass all monks who sit for the exams in an effort to undermine the boycott.<sup>26</sup>
- Some monasteries continued the religious boycott of the junta by refusing alms, refusing to grant blessings, and refusing entry to SPDC officials:
  - In early December, head monks of four monasteries in Pakokku, Magwe Division, refused to give blessings to a group of visiting SPDC officials.<sup>27</sup>
  - On 4 December, monks at Seittabala monastery in Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay Division, refused a food donation from SPDC Minister of Industry-1, Aung Thaung.<sup>28</sup>
  - On 9 December, posters appeared on the walls of monasteries in Pakokku, urging monks to renew the boycott. Posters also appeared in the streets of Pakokku, urging monks to stage a new wave of protests on 4 January, Burma's Independence Day.<sup>29</sup>
- On 18 December, 900 of 1,000 monks at Maha Gandhayon monastery in Mandalay refused to accept a food offering from SPDC Minister of Industry-1, Aung Thaung.<sup>30</sup>
- From 11-15 December, a series of sermons were held in Rangoon's South Okkalapa Township. Traditionally the domain of the elderly, 1,000 people, including many young people and some former soldiers, attended the *dhamma* sermons, now regarded as an act of defying the junta.<sup>31</sup>

## SPDC offensive intensifies in Eastern Burma

Since the end of November, the SPDC Army has been stepping up its military offensive against civilians and armed opposition groups in Eastern Burma. In a 10 December statement, the Karen National Union (KNU) accused the SPDC of waging a "genocidal war" against ethnic Karen villagers.<sup>32</sup>

- The SPDC Army launched attacks on Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) bases in Pegu Division and Karen State.<sup>33</sup>
- The SPDC destroyed villagers' farms and paddy fields in a bid to cut off the villagers' food supplies and to force villagers to move into junta-designated relocation sites.<sup>34</sup> The regime also used villagers as porters and mine sweepers.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Irrawaddy (04 Dec 07) Burma's National Day celebrated in Rangoon

<sup>23</sup> DVB (10 Dec 07) Activists celebrate international human rights day

<sup>24</sup> Mizzima News (18 Dec 07) Blood donation in memory of September protesters

<sup>25</sup> Narinjara News (07 Dec 07) Monks boycott examinations; Irrawaddy (11 Dec 07) Junta tells USDA to prepare for more demonstrations

<sup>26</sup> IMNA (19 Dec 07) Military junta strict with monks

<sup>27</sup> DVB (07 Dec 07) Monasteries pass junta offerings to poor

<sup>28</sup> DVB (19 Dec 07) Mandalay monks decline junta offering

<sup>29</sup> Mizzima News (21 Dec 07) Posters exhorting monks' to protest on Independence Day in Pakokku

<sup>30</sup> DVB (19 Dec 07) Mandalay monks decline junta offering

<sup>31</sup> Irrawaddy (14 Dec 07) The role of Buddhism in the wake of the crackdown

<sup>32</sup> AFP (10 Dec 07) Myanmar stepping up attacks on insurgents: rebel group

<sup>33</sup> IMNA (03 Dec 07) Military offensive force relocation of villagers; Mizzima News (10 Dec 07) Junta intensifies attacks on Karen rebels

<sup>34</sup> Irrawaddy (11 Dec 07) Military offensive targeting villagers' food supplies

<sup>35</sup> IMNA (03 Dec 07) Military offensive force relocation of villagers; Mizzima News (10 Dec 07) Junta intensifies attacks on Karen rebels

- The SPDC Army deployed 83 new battalions in the KNU areas. There are now 187 SPDC Army battalions ready to step up offensive operations.<sup>36</sup>
- Since 2006, the SPDC Army troops have killed more than 370 villagers, including women and children.<sup>37</sup> More than 40,000 people have been displaced in Karen State since 2006.<sup>38</sup> Over 3,900 villagers sought refuge in Ei Tu Hta camp on the Burmese side of the Salween River from January to November 2007.<sup>39</sup>

## Tension in Kachin State

SPDC pressure on Kachin ceasefire groups continued. In December, SPDC security officials reportedly monitored the homes of the officers of two Kachin ceasefire groups—the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and the New Democratic Army-Kachin (NDA-K) in Myitkyina Township, Kachin State.<sup>40</sup>

### SPDC: discontent from within

The regime continues to face growing dissatisfaction among its own ranks. According to some estimates, over 100 policemen from 16 police brigades have deserted since the crackdown.<sup>41</sup>

- On 9 December, SPDC police chief, Brig Gen Khin Yi, ordered police forces around the country to put an end to the flow of officers deserting their positions.<sup>42</sup>
- Police officers assigned to Rangoon's Shwedagon pagoda were given a 60% salary increase. They had complained about having gained a bad reputation for their role in the crackdown.<sup>43</sup>
- SPDC Army troops have been forcing villagers from rural areas in Pegu Division and Northern Shan State to provide new recruits to the army or pay money to the military.<sup>44</sup>

In anticipation of more demonstrations, the SPDC is conducting riot control trainings across Burma.<sup>45</sup> Local SPDC authorities, members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), Swan Arr Shin, and Fire Brigade have been ordered to attend the trainings.<sup>46</sup> Training sessions to riot policemen were reportedly given in Rangoon, Pakokku in Magwe Division, and Maungdaw Township in Arakan State.<sup>47</sup>

## Bird flu

On 14 December, the World Health Organization confirmed the first human case of bird flu in Burma. The report came two weeks after a seven-year-old girl was treated for bird flu and quarantined at Kengtung hospital, Shan State. She was discharged from on 12 December.<sup>48</sup> On 23 December, new cases of bird flu were reported in Mongphyat Township, 58 km south of Kengtung. The virus is believed to have spread from the 18 November outbreak.<sup>49</sup> [See *November 2007 Burma Bulletin*]

<sup>36</sup> Irrawaddy (11 Dec 07) Military offensive targeting villagers' food supplies

<sup>37</sup> Irrawaddy (11 Dec 07) Military offensive targeting villagers' food supplies

<sup>38</sup> TBBC (Oct 07) Internal displacement in Eastern Burma – Survey 2007

<sup>39</sup> Irrawaddy (11 Dec 07) Military offensive targeting villagers' food supplies

<sup>40</sup> Kachin News Group (11 Dec 07) KIA secure house of KIO vice-president

<sup>41</sup> DVB (12 Dec 07) Police chief orders clampdown on desertions

<sup>42</sup> DVB (12 Dec 07) Police chief orders clampdown on desertions

<sup>43</sup> DVB (07 Dec 07) Pay rise for Shwedagon police

<sup>44</sup> DVB (24 Dec 07) Forced military recruitment in Bago and Shan state; Mizzima News (21 Dec 07) Anti-riot training in Rangoon and Pakokku

<sup>45</sup> Irrawaddy (11 Dec 07) Junta tells USDA to prepare for more demonstrations;

<sup>46</sup> Irrawaddy (14 Dec 07) State Militias given riot control training

<sup>47</sup> Kaladan News (06 Dec 07) Training for riot police in Maungdaw; Mizzima News (21 Dec 07) Anti-riot training in Rangoon and Pakokku

<sup>48</sup> Xinhua (15 Dec 07) Human bird flu infection under control in Myanmar border area

<sup>49</sup> AP (29 Dec 07) Myanmar reports bird flu outbreak in chickens near Myanmar-Thai border town

## HUMAN RIGHTS

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### Releases

- **2 December:** SPDC authorities released ten activists arrested during the crackdown on anti-junta demonstrations.<sup>50</sup>
- **3 December:** SPDC announced the release of 8,585 prisoners since 16 November as part of an amnesty.<sup>51</sup> Of those released only 10 political prisoners were freed.<sup>52</sup>
- **3 December:** SPDC authorities released Min Lwin, the father of U Gambira, the leader of the All-Burmese Monks Alliance. Min Lwin was arrested in Sintgaing Township, Mandalay Division on 4 November. Ko Mondine, Pyone Cho, and Khin Maung Soe, arrested for allegedly giving money to U Gambira, were also released on 3 December.<sup>53</sup>
- **14 December:** SPDC authorities released 96 monks from Rangoon's Kaba Aye detention center, including abbot U Yevada who participated in the September anti-junta protests. About 50 monks were permitted to return to the Ngwekyaryan monastery in Rangoon but others were reportedly ordered to leave the city.<sup>54</sup>
- **18 December:** SPDC authorities released U Tayzawhbartha, the abbot of Kaliani Thein monastery in Pegu.<sup>55</sup>

## DISPLACEMENT

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### Boat people

In December there were new reports of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh attempting to leave on un-seaworthy and over-crowded boats. In 2007, an estimated 6,000 Burmese Muslims from Arakan State left for Malaysia and Thailand from Bangladesh.<sup>56</sup> Since the beginning of December, Bangladesh authorities have arrested an increasing number of people from Burma in the Bangladesh-Burma border areas.<sup>57</sup>

- **1 December:** One hundred fifty people left for Malaysia from Teknaf.<sup>58</sup>
- **8 December:** More than 85 Rohingya and Bangladeshis left by boat for Malaysia from an area near Cox's Bazaar district.<sup>59</sup>
- **9 December:** Cox's Bazaar police arrested 35 Burma nationals who entered Bangladesh in an attempt to travel to Malaysia.<sup>60</sup>
- **10 December:** Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) arrested 11 men from Burma in Teknaf, Bangladesh. The men were attempting to travel to Malaysia.<sup>61</sup>
- **14 December:** Sixty-seven men, who were arrested by the SPDC in November after they swam to shore when their boat sank, were transferred from Manaung Island to Akyab prison in Arakan State. Fifty-four are Rohingya from Maungdaw and Buthidaung Townships. Thirteen are from Bangladesh. Two people died at sea.<sup>62</sup>
- **20 December:** A boat carrying 99 Chin people headed for Malaysia sank after colliding with a fishing boat. Fifty-four managed to climb aboard the fishing boat. The other 45 are missing and presumed drowned.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> BBC Burmese Service (02 Dec 07) Burma releases ten activists

<sup>51</sup> NLM (04 Dec 07) Govt grants amnesty for 8,552 prisoners including 33 foreigners to mark commencement of functions of Commission for Drafting the State Constitution, completion of National Convention; AP (04 Dec 07) Burma: 8,500 Prisoners Released

<sup>52</sup> Reuters (04 Dec 07) Ten political prisoners among 8,500 freed in Myanmar; CNA (04 Dec 07) Myanmar frees 8,500 prisoners: report

<sup>53</sup> DVB (05 Dec 07) Monk leader U Gambira's father released

<sup>54</sup> DPA (17 Dec 07) Burma quietly releases 96 monks

<sup>55</sup> Mizzima News (21 Dec 07) Abbot of Kaliani Thein released

<sup>56</sup> Narinjara News (12 Dec 07) 32 Burmese Arrested for Illegally Entering Bangladesh

<sup>57</sup> Kaladan News (13 Dec 07) Burmese Buddhist monk arrested in Bandarban

<sup>58</sup> Kaladan News (05 Dec 07) Over 230 boat-people on way to Malaysia

<sup>59</sup> Kaladan News (10 Dec 07) Thirty five Burmese Nationals arrested in Cox's Bazar

<sup>60</sup> Kaladan News (10 Dec 07) Thirty five Burmese Nationals arrested in Cox's Bazar

<sup>61</sup> Kaladan News (12 Dec 07) Eleven more Burmese national arrested in Teknaf

<sup>62</sup> Narinjara News (18 Dec 07) 67 Migrants Shifted to Sittwe Prison

<sup>63</sup> Khonumthung News (21 Dec 07) Ferry hits fishing boat; 45 Chins missing

- **22 December:** Thai police retrieved the bodies of 22 Burma nationals off the coast of Ranong, Thailand. Thai police believe that the dead were migrant workers who were on an overloaded boat that sank.<sup>64</sup>
- **26 December:** Bangladeshi security forces deport 14 Muslims from Arakan State back to Burma when they attempt to cross the Naff River.<sup>65</sup>

## Monks flee

Monks continued to cross the border into Bangladesh. Some are fleeing crackdowns, while SPDC border security (Na Sa Ka) are handing others over to Bangladeshi authorities.

- **5 December:** Monk Ashin Panyathami from Rangoon's Zathilaryama monastery reached Cox's Bazar after fleeing crackdowns.<sup>66</sup>
- **11 December:** Na Sa Ka handed over 12 monks to Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) after holding a flag meeting in Teknaf.<sup>67</sup>
- **11 December:** Na Sa Ka handed over 11 Bangladeshi young monks who had been studying Buddhism in Burma to Bangladeshi authorities.<sup>68</sup>
- **12 December:** Bangladeshi authorities detained and interrogated 12 Buddhist monks (aged 13-25) who crossed into Bangladesh through Teknaf.<sup>69</sup>
- **12 December:** Bangladeshi security forces arrested a Burmese Buddhist monk from Bandarban District of Bangladesh on charges of migration law violations.<sup>70</sup>

## Refugee shot by Thai camp security

In mid-December, a Thai security official shot and killed a young Karenni refugee and wounded another in Karenni Camp 1, Mae Hong Son Province. Tensions had been running high in the camp for some time. The refugee was killed during a protest over the arrest of a refugee during a camp sports day.<sup>71</sup> Refugees continued to protest in the days following the killing. The protestors called on Thai authorities to respect refugee rights and to refrain from using lethal force to settle problems.<sup>72</sup> As a result of the incident, camp security personnel were replaced by Thai soldiers and border police. In addition, the camp administrative officer submitted his resignation.<sup>73</sup>

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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### UN initiatives on Burma

- **14 December:** The UN Human Rights Council concluded its 6th session in Geneva. The Council adopted a resolution by consensus concerning the situation in Burma. The resolution:
  - Called on the SPDC to immediately release those arrested and detained in the crackdown and to release all political detainees, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi;
  - Demanded the junta Engaged urgently in dialogue with all pro-democracy forces.
  - Requested UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Burma, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, to conduct a follow-up mission to Burma before March 2008 in order to assess in greater detail the human rights violations committed by the regime during and after the September crackdown;

<sup>64</sup> AP (22 Dec 07) Thai police retrieve 22 bodies of Myanmar migrants in Andaman Sea

<sup>65</sup> Narinjara News (29 Dec 07) Fourteen migrants pushed back to Burma

<sup>66</sup> Mizzima News (11 Dec 07) Monks flee to Bangladesh to evade arrest

<sup>67</sup> Kaladan News (19 Dec 07) 12 more Buddhist monks flee to Bangladesh

<sup>68</sup> Narinjara News (13 Dec 07) Burma Hands Eleven Monks to Bangladesh

<sup>69</sup> Kaladan News (19 Dec 07) 12 more Buddhist monks flee to Bangladesh

<sup>70</sup> Kaladan News (13 Dec 07) Burmese Buddhist monk arrested in Bandarban

<sup>71</sup> DVB (17 Dec 07) Burmese refugee killed by Thai border guards

<sup>72</sup> Irrawaddy (17 Dec 07) Karenni refugees clash with Thai authorities, one dies

<sup>73</sup> Irrawaddy (19 Dec 07) Legal action to follow Karenni refugee camp clash

- **18 December:** UN Special Advisor on Burma, Ibrahim Gambari, addressed the UN General Assembly members on his recent missions to Burma in a closed-door session.<sup>74</sup> After the briefing, Gambari said that he is “very concerned” that demands he made to Burma’s junta had not been heeded.<sup>75</sup>
- **19 December:** UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-moon convened the first meeting of a group of 14 nations to assist him in his efforts to spur democratic reform in Burma. The group consists of Australia, Indonesia, Russia, US, China, Japan, Singapore, Vietnam, France, Norway, Thailand, India, Portugal and the UK.<sup>76</sup>

## US Congress passes sanctions; Senators urge arms embargo

- **11 December:** US House of Representatives approved a bill on new sanctions on Burma. The sanctions:
  - Prohibits Burma's rubies and high-quality jade from entering the US.
  - Addresses attempts by gem traders to dodge US sanctions by laundering gemstones in third countries before selling them in the US.
  - Freezes assets of Burma’s SPDC leaders and cut off tax deductions for US companies working in Burma.
  - Stops Burma's military leaders from using US financial institutions in third countries to launder their money.<sup>77</sup>
- **19 December:** US Senate unanimously approved a bill with similar sanctions. The two bills must be reconciled in a conference committee and then sent to President Bush for signature.<sup>78</sup>
- **18 December:** 48 US Senators from both the Republican and Democrat parties urged US President George W. Bush to push the UN Security Council to impose an international arms embargo against Burma’s military junta.<sup>79</sup>

## ECONOMY

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### Nothing to harvest

Burma’s largely rural population was busy with the annual rice harvest in December. Many farmers in Burma were also harvesting the unsuitable crops that the SPDC forced them to grow. After the harvest, farmers will be deeper in debt and facing more difficult times in 2008.

- In July, SPDC officials ordered farmers to grow rice paddy in unsuitable areas in Ma Hlaing Township, Mandalay Division. The SPDC arrested those who refused to obey the order. Those who obeyed the order are now facing harvest time with a failed crop, leaving them with no income. Some farmers will be forced to sell their land and cattle to pay their debts.<sup>80</sup>
- SPDC authorities forced farmers in villages around Taung Twin Gyi Township, Magwe Division, to grow sugar cane to sell to the SPDC, or face punishment. However, once harvest time arrived, local authorities advised the villagers that they would no longer buy the sugar cane due to fuel shortages at the local sugar refinery.
- SPDC authorities in Pegu Division and Arakan State ordered farmers to plant sunflowers. Farmers had to pay for the seed. The authorities made no commitment to buy the sunflower crop. Villagers speculate that the order is based on the belief that the flowers symbolize long life for the regime.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>74</sup> DPA (17 Dec 07) UN envoy for Myanmar to report to UN General Assembly

<sup>75</sup> Irrawaddy (19 Dec 07) Gambari faces tough questions on his Burma missions

<sup>76</sup> UN News Center (19 Dec 07) Secretary-General convenes meeting of ‘Group of Friends’ on Myanmar

<sup>77</sup> AP (11 Dec 07) US Bill boosts sanctions against Myanmar

<sup>78</sup> Reuters (20 Dec 07) Senate OKs bill ending US import of Myanmar gems

<sup>79</sup> Irrawaddy (19 Dec 07) US Senators call for arms embargo against Burma

<sup>80</sup> DVB (03 Dec 07) Farmers suffer losses after forced crop growing

<sup>81</sup> Kaladan News (17 Dec 07) Farmers ordered to grow sun flowers, extra crops in Maungdaw; Irrawaddy (06 Dec 07) Sunflowers—Than Shwe’s latest Yadaya



On 10 December, the SPDC Northern Command in Bhamo Township, Kachin State began their seasonal forced rice procurement. Under threat of having their land confiscated, farmers were forced to sell two baskets per acre for 5,000 kyat. The market price for the two baskets is 8,000 kyat.<sup>82</sup>

### Implausible growth and crippling inflation

A recent report from the International Monetary Fund said that the SPDC's claim of 12.7 % growth for 2006-2007 "appears implausible".<sup>83</sup>

The same report said that inflation had soared to 35% in the year. However, the Economist Intelligence Unit says that inflation has been even higher at 50% in 2007. This is up from an already staggering 20% in 2006.<sup>84</sup>

### DECEMBER CHRONOLOGY

1	150 people, mostly Rohingya from Arakan State, leave Bangladesh for Malaysia.
1	Shan State Army unit ambushes an SPDC Army patrol killing 13 soldiers.
3	SPDC Information Minister, Kyaw Hsan, says there is no role for the NLD in the drafting of Burma's new constitution.
3	SPDC's Constitution Drafting Commission convenes.
3	Bangladesh police in Teknaf arrest a Burmese national and confiscate 300 amphetamine tablets during the arrest.
3	Soldiers from the United Wa State Army clash with SPDC Army troops in near Mai Sat in Eastern Shan State.
3	SPDC police chief, Brig Gen Khin Yi, says that 21 monks and 59 laymen remain in detention on charges related to the anti-junta protests.
3	SPDC Information Minister, Brig Gen Kyaw Hsan, dismisses mass protests led by Buddhist monks as "trivial".
4	About 200 veteran politicians, pro-democracy leaders, and activists gather at the NLD headquarters in Rangoon to celebrate the 87 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of Burma's National Day.
4	88 Generation Students issue a statement urging the SPDC to accelerate political dialogue with pro-democracy forces.
4	Monks at Seittabala monastery in Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay Division, refuse a food donation from SPDC Minister of Industry-1, Aung Thuang.
4	US accuses SPDC of impeding democratic reforms by denying Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other opposition leaders the right to help draft a national constitution.
5	Arakan Liberation Army and SPDC Army forces clash at Sami Village in Paletwa Township on the Indo-Burma border.
6	UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy, presents the report on the situation of children and armed conflict in Burma to the Security Council Working Group.
6	ECHO commits to providing 3.9 million Euros in 07-09 to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.
7	EU Special Envoy to Burma, Piero Fassino, says that the international community must continue to press for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and allow her to participate in Burma's political reform.
8	More than 85 Rohingya and Bangladeshis leave for Malaysia by two boats from Teknaf.
9	Cox's Bazar police arrest 35 Burmese nationals of Burma for entering Bangladesh without documents.
9	SPDC police chief, Brig Gen Khin Yi, orders police forces to stop officers from deserting their positions.
10	Human Rights Defenders and Promoters hold a ceremony to mark international human rights day in Rangoon's Kyi Myint Taing Township.
10	Bangladesh Rifles in Shapuri Dip, Teknaf, Bangladesh arrest 11 men from Burma.
10	SPDC army begins annual forced rice procurement in Bahmo Township, Kachin State.
11	UNHCR spokesperson, Jennifer Pagonis, announces that 20,000 refugees from Burma have been resettled since January 2005.
11	US House of Representatives passes a bill blocking imports of Burma rubies and removing tax credits for US firms investing in Burma.
12	Bangladesh Army arrests a Burmese Buddhist monk from Bandarban district of Bangladesh, on migration law violations.

<sup>82</sup> Mizzima News (20 Dec 07) Procuring rice for army rations in Kachin State

<sup>83</sup> FT (07 Dec 07) Burma's outlook 'poor' as inflation soars to 35%

<sup>84</sup> Irrawaddy (12 Dec 07) Influential magazine says next year more of same for Burma

12	Bangladeshi authorities detain and interrogate 12 young monks crossing into Bangladesh through Teknaf.
12	India and the SPDC sign a MoU on developing and sharing IT skills.
12	US House of Representatives approves legislation to tighten sanctions on gemstones from Burma.
13	UN Human Rights Council passes resolution that requests Special Rapporteur Paulo Sergio Pinheiro return to Burma for a follow-up mission.
14	WHO confirms first human case of bird flu in Burma.
16	SPDC Army troops from Light Infantry Battalion 203 reportedly kill five soldiers from the DKBA battalion 901.
17	US House of Representatives votes to bestow the Congressional Gold Medal, Congress' highest civilian honor, on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
17	An SPDC military plane crashes during a test flight near Mandalay.
18	Students, family members of political prisoners, and about 50 other people donate blood at Rangoon General Hospital in memory of those killed during the September protests.
18	900 of 1,000 monks at Maha Gandhayon monastery in Mandalay refuse to accept a food offering from SPDC Minister of Industry-1, Aung Thuang.
18	Karen National Liberation Army forces ambush a Democratic Karen Buddhist Army operated truck traveling between Kawkaiek and Myawaddy Towns in Karen State. Eight persons are reportedly killed.
18	UN Special Advisor on Burma, Ibrahim Gambari, addresses the UNGA on Burma.
18	48 US Senators urge US President George W Bush to push the UN Security Council to impose an international arms embargo on Burma's military junta.
18	SPDC Army troops arrest nine members of the Shan State Nationalities Liberation Organization in See Sai Township, Shan State.
19	US Senate passes legislation to tighten sanctions against Burma's ruling junta by banning the importation of that country's rubies and high-quality jade.
19	UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-moon convenes the first meeting of a group of 14 nations to assist him in his efforts to spur democratic reforms in Burma.
19	Philippines' Foreign Affairs Secretary, Alberto Romulo, says that the ratification of the ASEAN Charter hinges on proof that Burma is following its promised "roadmap to democracy."
20	The City of Rome, Italy, awards Daw Aung San Suu Kyi the "Rome for Peace and Humanitarian Action" prize.
20	Ferry carrying 99 Chins attempting to travel to Malaysia sinks after collision with fishing boat. 45 are missing while 54 others survive.
23	Bird flu cases are reported in Mongphyat Township, Shan State.
25	Malaysian police arrest seven refugees from Burma.
26	Bangladesh Rifles deport 14 Muslims to Burma when they attempt to cross the Naff river.
27	Three men from Burma are arrested attempting to swim to Singapore from Malaysia.
28	Yadana gas field suspends gas production for nine days to allow for repairs. Affected villagers are ordered to switch to rice husk bio-fuel.
29	Bangladesh police arrest a Burmese drug smuggler in Teknaf, Bangladesh and seize 800 yaba tablets.
31	SPDC Foreign Minister U Nyan Win starts a five-day visit to India.

## REPORTS ON BURMA RELEASED IN DECEMBER 2007

**"Under the Boot: the Burma army clears the way for Chinese dams on the Shweli river"**, Salween Watch  
<http://www.salweenwatch.org/downloads/UndertheBootEnglish.pdf>

**"Crackdown: Repression of the 2007 Popular Protests in Burma"**, Human Rights Watch (HRW)  
<http://hrw.org/reports/2007/burma1207/burma1207web.pdf>

**"Burma Army Kills Three Villagers, Hundreds Flee New Attacks"**, Free Burma Rangers (FBR)  
<http://www.freeburmarangers.org/Reports/2007/20071207.html>

**"Burma's 'Saffron revolution' is not over"**, International Trade Union Conference (ITUC)  
[http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Birmania\\_FIDH\\_ITUC\\_101107.pdf](http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Birmania_FIDH_ITUC_101107.pdf)

**"Caught between two hells"**, Burmese Women's Union (BWU)  
<http://www.womenofburma.org/Report/Caught%20between%20two%20hells.pdf>

**"Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar"**, Human Right Council (HRC)  
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/6session/A.HRC.6.14.doc>