The regime pressures ethnic armed groups to sign the nationwide ceasefire agreement by 12 February, while Tatmadaw troops escalate attacks in Kachin and Shan States and block aid to trapped civilians.

Soldiers rape and murder two Kachin teachers, provoking widespread condemnation.

President Thein Sein hosts political talks, criticized as a “waste of time,” and rejects proposal for six-party talks on constitutional amendments.

The National Assembly begins debating ‘National Race and Religion Protection’ package bills. US and European officials criticize the package and urge the regime to end Rohingya discrimination.

Students demanding changes to the National Education Law secure negotiations with regime officials after they begin a protest march from Mandalay to Rangoon.

During a visit to the country, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma highlights signs of further “backtracking” on freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

Hundreds of Buddhists protest against the UN Special Rapporteur; the UN condemns extremist monk U Wirathu’s “whore” comment about her.


The Tatmadaw releases 42 child soldiers, while Child Soldiers International finds that recruitment of child soldiers continued through 2014.

Thai immigration authorities continue to arrest and detain Rohingya, including children. Malaysian authorities rescue trafficked Rohingya.

KEY STORY

On 5 January in Naypyidaw, President Thein Sein and Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Sr Gen Min Aung Hlaing each held a meeting with the leaders of 12 ethnic armed groups to urge them to sign the nationwide ceasefire agreement by 12 February, the anniversary of the 1947 Panglong Agreement. Throughout the month, Tatmadaw offensives and civilian abuse continued in Kachin and Shan States.
Clashes intensify in Kachin and Shan States

Tatmadaw troops clashed with Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), Shan State Army-North (SSA-N), Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), and Kachin Independence Army (KIA) forces.

- **4 January**: It was reported that Tatmadaw troops from LID 602 had attacked a KIA post close to Laiza, Momauk Township, Kachin State, killing two KIA soldiers and capturing another.2
- **12 January**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA forces in Muse Township, Shan State.3
- **13 January**: Tatmadaw troops seized a KIA post at Ying La Bum, near Mungpaw Village, Kunlong Township, Shan State.4
- **14 January**: KIA forces detained Kachin State Transport Minister Kamann Du Naw and three policemen escorting him near Hwaylone Village, Hpakant Township, Kachin State. The KIA released the minister shortly afterwards, but held the policemen till 19 January.5
- **14 January**: Tatmadaw troops from MOCs 1 and 16 clashed with KIA, MNDAA, and SSA-N forces in Ying La Bum, near Mungpaw Village, Kunlong Township, Shan State.6
- **14 January**: Tatmadaw troops from LID 22 clashed with KIA Battalion 6 forces in Hpakant Township, Kachin State.7
- **15 January**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA forces in Hpakant Township, Kachin State.8
- **15 January**: Tatmadaw troops from LIBs 46 and 137 and Tatmadaw-backed militia seized a KIA post in Putao Township, Kachin State.9
- **15 January**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA Battalion 26 forces near Indawgyi Lake, Mohnyin Township, Kachin State.10
- **16 January**: Tatmadaw troops from LIBs 1 and 35 seized a KIA post in Hpakant Township, Kachin State.11
- **16 January**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA forces in Myitsone, Myitkyina Township, Kachin State.12
- **16 January**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA forces in three villages in Waingmaw Township, Kachin State.13
- **18 January**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA forces in Hpakant Township, Kachin State, for the fourth consecutive day.14
- **22 January**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA forces in Hpakant Township, Kachin State.15
- **25 January**: Tatmadaw troops from LIB 77 clashed with TNLA forces in Namkham Township, Shan State.16
- **25 January**: Tatmadaw troops from MOC-1 seized a KIA Battalion 9 post between Muse and Kutkai Townships, Shan State.17

---

2 Kachinland News (04 Jan 14) 602nd LIR Troops Parade a Captured Kachin Volunteer
3 IHS (14 Jan 15) Fighting likely to escalate between Myanmar army and KIA in Shan and Kachin states over coming months; Mizzima News (14 Jan 15) Myanmar’s military and KIA exchange brief gunfire; Kachin News Group (16 Jan 15) Fighting resumes between KIO and Burma Army in Kachin and Shan states
4 Kachinland News (18 Jan 15) Residents Trapped in Kachin State as Fighting Intensifies
5 Xinhua (15 Jan 15) Myanmar armed group ambushes official’s convoy; Mizzima News (17 Jan 15) Negotiations for kidnapped policemen continue, says Kachin State Minister; RFA (15 Jan 15) Thousands Displaced as Fighting Flares in Myanmar’s Kachin State; DVB (15 Jan 15) Clashes in Hpakant after KIA arrests state minister; AFP (15 Jan 15) Hundreds flee fresh clashes in Myanmar's Kachin state; activist; Xinhua (19 Jan 15) Three abducted Myanmar police officers freed by armed group
6 Kachinland News (15 Jan 15) Ethnic Allied Forces Fought Burmese Army’s 1st and 16th MOC Troops; Kachinland News (15 Jan 15) 77th LID Troops Killed 80-year-old Civilian in Hu Sa Village
7 Irrawaddy (15 Jan 15) Civilians Flee Fresh Fighting Between KIA, Govt Troops; AFP (15 Jan 15) Hundreds flee fresh clashes in Myanmar's Kachin state; activist; RFA (15 Jan 15) Thousands Displaced as Fighting Flares in Myanmar’s Kachin State
8 DVB (15 Jan 15) Clashes in Hpakant after KIA arrests state minister; Myanmar Times (19 Jan 15) Tatmadaw, KIA clash in Hpakant
9 Kachinland News (18 Jan 15) Residents Trapped in Kachin State as Fighting Intensifies
10 EMG (17 Jan 15) Five dead in Hpakant, says army
11 Kachinland News (18 Jan 15) Residents Trapped in Kachin State as Fighting Intensifies
12 EMG (17 Jan 15) Five dead in Hpakant, says army
13 Myawady (18 Jan 15) KIA opens fire on military camps
14 Xinhua (18 Jan 15) Sporadic armed clashes continue in Myanmar's northernmost state
15 Kachin News Group (23 Jan 15) Clashes between KIO and Burma army continue after police released
16 Irrawaddy (26 Jan 15) Police Accused in Vigilante Drug Bust in Northern Shan State; SHAN (27 Jan 15) Outbreak of intense fighting between government forces and TNLA
17 Kachin News Group (31 Jan 15) KIA loses Shan post following Burma army attack
• 26 January: Tatmadaw troops from LIB 77 clashed with TNLA forces in Namkham Township, Shan State.18

The clashes forced about 2,000 residents to flee to monasteries and churches in Aung Bar Lay and Hka Si Villages, Hpakant Township, Kachin State.19 On 16 January, it was reported that Tatmadaw troops had blocked two roads into Hpakant, preventing relief groups from reaching the 2,000 trapped civilians in need of food, medicine, and other supplies.20 On 18 January, a Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC) convoy carrying food and medical supplies from Myitkyina, Kachin State, attempted to reach the trapped villagers but was blocked by the Tatmadaw.21

Civilian abuse in Shan State continues

In January, Tatmadaw troops continued to commit serious human rights violations against civilians in Shan State.

• 7 January: Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF) reported that Tatmadaw troops from LIB 573 fatally shot a mentally challenged 32-year-old in his home in front of his parents in Wan Htin Village, Mongyaw Township, Shan State.22
• 11 January: Tatmadaw troops from LIB 77 shelled Hway Tawng Village, Tangyan Township, Shan State, fatally wounding an 80-year-old civilian.23
• 19 January: A Tatmadaw soldier from LIB 514 shot a district administrator in the head, injuring him, in Laikha Township, Shan State.24
• 20 January: A Tatmadaw soldier from LIB 77 beat and attempted to sexually assault a 30-year-old woman in Hku Maw Village, Namtu Township, Shan State.25
• 22 January: Tatmadaw troops from LIB 68 abducted a 15-year-old boy and a 21-year-old man who were working in a field near Man Jum Village, Kutkai Township, Shan State. On 24 January, Man Jum villagers found the body of the man with bruises and other signs of torture.26
• 24 January: Tatmadaw troops fired artillery shells on Bang Hkyen Village, Muse Township, Shan State, injuring two 60-year-old Kachin civilians.27
• 25 January: Tatmadaw troops near Malun Banka Village, Muse Township, Shan State, stopped four Kachin men on their way to work. Soldiers shot and injured one man who ran away, while the other three were reported missing by their families.28

Tatmadaw troops rape and murder two Kachin schoolteachers

On 19 January, Tatmadaw troops from LIB 503 raped and murdered two female Kachin volunteer schoolteachers in Kawng Hkar Village, Muse Township, Shan State.29

18 Irrawaddy (26 Jan 15) Police Accused in Vigilante Drug Bust in Northern Shan State; SHAN (27 Jan 15) Outbreak of intense fighting between government forces and TNLA
19 Irrawaddy (15 Jan 15) Civilians Flee Fresh Fighting Between KIA, Govt Troops; AFP (15 Jan 15) Hundreds flee fresh clashes in Myanmar's Kachin state: activist; RFA (15 Jan 15) Thousands Displaced as Fighting Flares in Myanmar's Kachin State
20 EMG (17 Jan 15) Five dead in Hpakant, says army; AP (17 Jan 15) 1,000 Villagers trapped by fighting in eastern Myanmar; Kachinland News (18 Jan 15) Residents Trapped in Kachin State as Fighting Intensifies; EMG (16 Jan 15) Govt troops clash with KIA in Hpakant; Mizzima News (16 Jan 15) Clashes leave a thousand civilians stranded in Kachin State; Reuters (19 Jan 15) Fighting traps hundreds of Chinese nationals in Myanmar: Global Times; Irrawaddy (20 Jan 15) KIA Frees Hostages, Displaced Civilians Still Out of Reach
21 Irrawaddy (23 Jan 15) Supplies Dwindling for Trapped Hpakant Villagers
22 SHRF (07 Jan 15) Burma Army kill villager in front of his parents, then force over 1,200 villagers to demonstrate against “insurgents” for killing civilians in Mungyawng; KIC (10 Jan 15) Shan Human Rights Foundation alleged Burma Army killed villager in front of his parents, then force 1,200 villagers to demonstrate against “insurgents” for killing civilians in MungYWng region; Mizzima News (08 Jan 15) NGO claims army murdered villager in Shan State
23 Kachinland News (15 Jan 15) 77th LIB Troops Killed 80-year-old Civilian in Hu Sa Village
24 SHAN (22 Jan 15) Army Officer Shoots District Administrator after Girl; Myanmar Times (23 Jan 15) Soldier accused of shooting official
25 Kachinland News (21 Jan 15) 77th LIB Soldiers Attempted to Rape 30-year-old Woman
26 Kachinland News (24 Jan 15) One Hostage Body Found Dead With Marks of Tortures; Kachinland News (24 Jan 15) 1 Teenage Hostage Killed, Another Boy Still Held by Burmese Army Column; Kachinland News (25 Jan 15) 68th LIB Troops Killed LashamTu Nan; Kachinland News (25 Jan 15) Funeral Held for Lasham Tu Nan killed near Man Jum Village
27 Kachinland News (24 Jan 15) Two Kachin Elders Injured by Shrapnel in Mung Baw Win Seng
28 Irrawaddy (29 Jan 15) Kachin Trio Missing After Burmese Army Encounter
29 Kachinland News (20 Jan 15) Burmese Soldiers Raped and Killed Two KBC Teachers; BCUK (20 Jan 15) Two Kachin teachers brutally raped and killed by Burmese Army; Irrawaddy (20 Jan 15) 2 Kachin Teachers Found Dead in Shan State; Mizzima News
The UN, as well as international rights groups, including Amnesty International, Burma Campaign UK (BCUK), and Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), condemned the deaths. Along with the US and UK, they also called for an impartial investigation into the incident. Women’s League of Burma (WLB) said it was further evidence that the Tatmadaw was still using sexual violence as a “weapon of war” against the country’s ethnic communities.

On 23 January, thousands of mourners joined the funeral procession in Myitkyina, Kachin State, which started in Lashio, Shan State, the day before. On 25 January, during a memorial service, Tatmadaw officials from 503 offered the victims’ families money as compensation.

### INSIDE BURMA

#### President hosts political meeting, rebuffs demand for six-party talks

On 12 January, President Thein Sein hosted a meeting in Naypyidaw with 47 other officials to discuss major domestic issues, including political reforms, nationwide ceasefire negotiations, and the 2015 general election. Attendees included representatives from the regime, the National Parliament, the Tatmadaw, and political parties, as well as state- and division-level ethnic affairs ministers.

Several political parties, including the NLD, criticized the meeting following its conclusion. Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) leader Khun Htun Oo said the meeting was a “waste of time” due to the large number of participants. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said the meeting should not be used as an excuse to avoid demands for four- or six-party talks on constitutional reform.

On 17 January, President Thein Sein formally responded to the National Parliament’s 25 November proposal for six-party talks in a letter addressed to National Parliament Speaker Shwe Mann. [See November 2014 Burma Bulletin] In the letter, Thein Sein rejected the talks as proposed, claiming that such a meeting could be against the 2008 constitution.

WLB (22 Jan 15) Ongoing sexual violence highlights urgent need for Burma Army to stop offensives and pull back troops from Kachin areas

EMG (24 Jan 15) Thousands join funeral for slain teachers; EMG (23 Jan 15) Remains of 2 Kachin teachers brought back to Myitkyina; DVB (23 Jan 15) Thousands turn out for Kachin schoolteachers’ funeral; BBC (23 Jan 15) Funerals for two Kachin women found dead in Myanmar

Irrawaddy (27 Jan 15) Army Reportedly Offers Money to Families of Murdered Teachers

GNLM (13 Jan 15) President U Thein Sein meets political leaders, ethnic affairs ministers and ethnic representative leaders; RFA (12 Jan 15) Myanmar’s Thein Sein Pushes Politicians to Sign Cease-Fire Deal; Irrawaddy (12 Jan 15) Burma’s Political Stakeholders Converge in Capital; Mizzima News (14 Jan 15) President’s spokesman defends ‘unfocused’ 48-leader meeting


32 WLB (22 Jan 15) Ongoing sexual violence highlights urgent need for Burma Army to stop offensives and pull back troops from Kachin areas

33 EMG (24 Jan 15) Thousands join funeral for slain teachers; EMG (23 Jan 15) Remains of 2 Kachin teachers brought back to Myitkyina; DVB (23 Jan 15) Thousands turn out for Kachin schoolteachers’ funeral; BBC (23 Jan 15) Funerals for two Kachin women found dead in Myanmar

34 Irrawaddy (27 Jan 15) Army Reportedly Offers Money to Families of Murdered Teachers

35 GNLM (13 Jan 15) President U Thein Sein meets political leaders, ethnic affairs ministers and ethnic representative leaders; RFA (12 Jan 15) Myanmar’s Thein Sein Pushes Politicians to Sign Cease-Fire Deal; Irrawaddy (12 Jan 15) Burma’s Political Stakeholders Converge in Capital; Mizzima News (14 Jan 15) President’s spokesman defends ‘unfocused’ 48-leader meeting

36 Irrawaddy (13 Jan 15) After Meeting of 48, Suu Kyi Urges Narrowed Dialogue; Mizzima News (13 Jan 15) President’s Jan 12 meeting ‘a waste of time’; opposition

37 Irrawaddy (13 Jan 15) After Meeting of 48, Suu Kyi Urges Narrowed Dialogue; Myanmar Times (13 Jan 15) President’s Jan 12 meeting ‘a waste of time’; opposition

38 Irrawaddy (13 Jan 15) After Meeting of 48, Suu Kyi Urges Narrowed Dialogue; EMG (14 Jan 15) Suu Kyi speaks to media following president’s meeting

39 GNLM (20 Jan 15) Press release on response of the president to the important motion of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on six-party talks

40 GNLM (20 Jan 15) Press release on response of the president to the important motion of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on six-party talks; DVB (20 Jan 15) President rejects constitutional reform dialogue; Irrawaddy (21 Jan 15) President Defers Decision on Six-Party Talks; EMG (20 Jan 15) All should be represented at meeting on charter change, says Thein Sein

41 DVB (23 Jan 15) Shwe Mann weighs in on constitutional reform; EMG (23 Jan 15) Parliament speaker urges president to hold six-party talk; Irrawaddy (23 Jan 15) Parliament Presses President on Six-Party Talks, Agrees to Revisit Education Law
Parliament’s 12th session begins

On 19 January, Parliament convened for its 12th regular session in Naypyidaw. Important developments included:

- **19 January**: The National Assembly approved proposals to debate the Religious Conversion Bill and the Population Control Bill, two bills in the ‘National Race and Religion Protection’ package, which President Thein Sein submitted to Parliament in late November. [See December 2014 Burma Bulletin]

- **22 January**: The National Parliament approved, by a vote of 323 to 175 with 15 abstentions, a salary increase from 300,000 kyat (US$300) to 1 million kyat (US$1,000) per month for national MPs and 200,000 kyat (US$200) to 500,000 kyat (US$500) per month for state and division MPs.

Students march to protest National Education Law, secure talks with regime officials

On 20 January, more than 100 students began a march from Mandalay to Rangoon to demand changes to the National Education Law. The march commenced after the regime failed to meet a 60-day ultimatum put forward by students in November demanding negotiations over amendments to the law. [See November 2014 Burma Bulletin] On the same day, students in Tavoy (Dawei) Township, Tenasserim Division, also began a separate march to Rangoon.

On 27 January, the group of students marching from Mandalay, which had grown to several hundred participants, encountered around 100 police blocking the road into Thaungtha, Mandalay Division. After brief negotiations between the students and local authorities, the police cleared their blockade. The following day, regime officials met with student representatives in Naypyidaw, where they agreed to hold four-party talks with students, the National Network for Education Reform (NNER), and MPs, to discuss changes to the law. The talks are scheduled for 1 February.

Letpadaung protests continue, regime Human Rights Commission releases statement

In January, hundreds across Burma continued demonstrations in response to the 22 December killing of a protester by police at the Letpadaung (Monywa) copper mine site in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division. During the demonstrations, which took place in Rangoon, Mandalay, and Sagaing Divisions, protesters voiced opposition to land confiscation and police violence. Several CSOs also issued statements condemning the 22 December killing and calling on the regime to halt the implementation of development projects without proper public consultation.

---

42 GNLM (20 Jan 15) 12th regular session of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw commences
43 Irrawaddy (19 Jan 15) Upper House to Debate ‘Protection Bills’
44 GNLM (23 Jan 15) Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discusses messages of president on national education law; Irrawaddy (22 Jan 15) Parliament Votes in Favor of Tripling Lawmakers’ Salaries; DVB (23 Jan 15) Parliament passes bill to raise MPs’ salaries
45 DVB (20 Jan 15) National Education Bill: student marches begin; RFA (20 Jan 15) Myanmar Students Launch Protest March Against Education Bill; Irrawaddy (20 Jan 15) Students Resume Protests Against National Education Law; AFP (21 Jan 15) Myanmar students march begins in Mandalay
46 DVB (20 Jan 15) National Education Bill: student marches begin; RFA (20 Jan 15) Myanmar Students Launch Protest March Against Education Bill; Irrawaddy (20 Jan 15) Students Resume Protests Against National Education Law; AFP (21 Jan 15) Myanmar students march begins in Mandalay
47 Irrawaddy (26 Jan 15) Student Protest March Continues Despite Opposition from Local Officials; EMG (26 Jan 15) Students win support on march to Yangon; DVB (20 Jan 15) National Education Bill: student marches begin; RFA (20 Jan 15) Myanmar Students Launch Protest March Against Education Bill
48 DVB (27 Jan 15) Confrontation looms as students approach Taungtha; EMG (27 Jan 15) Latest news from the students’ protest march
49 DVB (27 Jan 15) Students negotiate safe passage into Taungtha; Irrawaddy (27 Jan 15) After Tense Standoff, Student Protesters Allowed Passage Through Taung Tha
50 RFA (28 Jan 15) Myanmar Government to Hold Talks with Students on Education Reform; DVB (28 Jan 15) Ministers agree to dialogue with students on Education Law; Irrawaddy (28 Jan 15) Student Leaders to Meet President, Lawmakers; EMG (28 Jan 15) Govt accepts students’ demand for four-party talks
51 Irrawaddy (02 Jan 15) Protests Against Letpadaung Mine Staged in Burma’s Biggest Cities; EMG (02 Jan 15) Protests against Letpadaungtaung project continue in Mandalay; EMG (02 Jan 15) Activists protest against Letpadaungtaung conflict in Yangon; DVB (06 Jan 15) 300 protestors march from Monywa to Letpadaung mine; EMG (08 Jan 15) MATA protests in Monywa over Letpadaungtaung clash; Myanmar Times (12 Jan 15) Activists travel to Monywa for protest; GNLM (08 Jan 15) Locals call for end of violence at Letpadaungtaung copper mine project; Irrawaddy (19 Jan 15) Protests Continue Against Letpadaung Copper Mine
52 EMG (11 Jan 15) Whistle blowers report Myanmar to global mining body; Mizzima News (11 Jan 15) Women’s groups call for justice over slain copper mine protestor; EMG (11 Jan 15) Whistle blowers report Myanmar to global mining body; The Nation (13 Jan 15) Groups criticise gov’t for breaching EITI Standard
On 14 January, the regime Human Rights Commission issued its statement on the December protests at the mine site. The commission stated that the killing of a protester was the result of mistakes made by police while trying to suppress the demonstration and recommended taking action against police responsible.53 Protests continued after the statement’s release.54

Burma still “Not Free,” ranks bottom of transparency table

On 28 January, in its global survey “Freedom in the World 2015,” Freedom House rated Burma as “Not Free” with regard to political rights and civil liberties.55 The report said that Burma had only partly abandoned military rule and began to veer from the path to democracy.56 It also said: journalists and demonstrators faced greater restrictions; Rohingya continued to suffer from violence and official discrimination; and proposed laws, which would ban religious conversions and interfaith marriages, threatened to legitimize anti-Muslim extremism.57

In addition, on 19 January, the World Wide Web Foundation published its “Open Data Barometer,” which studied 86 countries for openness of public information available from government, state agencies and private businesses. The study included Burma for the first time and ranked it last.58

HUMAN RIGHTS

UNSR Yanghee Lee’s visit highlights human rights challenges

On 7 January, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Yanghee Lee arrived in Rangoon for a 10-day visit to the country.59 In Rangoon, the Special Rapporteur met with six political prisoners in Insein prison, members of the regime Human Rights Commission, activists, and CSOs. In Naypyidaw, the Special Rapporteur met with regime officials and MPs, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. She also traveled to Arakan and northern Shan States, where she visited IDP camps and met with local officials and civil society groups.60

On 16 January, Lee issued a statement in Rangoon before her departure. She expressed concerns about signs of further “backtracking” since her last visit to Burma. Her report highlighted the following issues:61

- Inter-communal violence continued to be a significant barrier to peace and prosperity.
- Fighting intensified in Kachin State in recent months ahead of the nationwide ceasefire agreement.
- The regime continued to use Article 18 of the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law.
- Backtracking in the area of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly increased.
- The regime continued to restrict basic rights and access to health services and education in Myebon IDP camp, Arakan State, where the ‘citizenship assessment’ had been conducted from June to September 2014.
- The situation in Arakan State remained “in crisis,” and humanitarian access remained restricted.
- Four draft laws on race and religion continued to be of concern.
- An increasing number of political prisoners remained behind bars.
- Development projects lacked adequate consultation with affected communities, and land confiscation and forced evictions continued.

53 GNLM (15 Jan 15) MNHRC makes a statement on Letpadaungtaung riot; Irrawaddy (15 Jan 15) Human Rights Commission Faults Police Over Copper Mine Shooting; DVB (15 Jan 15) Latpadaung killing: Police slammed for conduct
54 Irrawaddy (19 Jan 15) Protests Continue Against Letpadaung Copper Mine
56 Freedom House (28 Jan 15) Freedom in the World 2015
57 Freedom House (28 Jan 15) Freedom in the World 2015
58 World Wide Foundation (19 Jan 15) Open Data Barometer highlights the need for governments to increase open data efforts
59 GNLM (08 Jan 15) UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar visits MNHRC, Insein Prison
60 UNIC Yangon (16 Jan 15) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar
61 UNIC Yangon (16 Jan 15) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar
Lee faces protests during visit, UN condemns U Wirathu’s remarks

During her visit, Buddhists protested against UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Yanghee Lee’s alleged bias toward Muslim Rohingya.

- **8 January**: Hundreds of Buddhist Rakhine residents, including 100 Buddhist monks, demonstrated in Akyab [Sittwe], Arakan State, against Lee’s alleged bias toward Muslim Rohingya.62
- **16 January**: A group of about 500 protesters and Buddhist monks, led by extremist Buddhist monks U Wirathu and U Parmaukkha, held a protest in central Rangoon against Lee’s visit.63 At the protest, U Wirathu delivered a speech in which he called the Special Rapporteur a “whore.”64

On 21 January, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein condemned the derogatory remarks against Lee made by U Wirathu at the 16 January protest and called on religious and political leaders in Burma to “unequivocally condemn all forms of incitement to hatred.”65 On 22 January, President’s Office Spokesman Zaw Htay responded, saying that despite requests for the regime Religious Affairs Ministry to look into U Wirathu’s comments, the regime would not deal with the issue directly.66

Arbitrary arrests and imprisonments continue in 2015

In January, authorities continued to arbitrarily arrest and imprison people.

- **7 January**: Chan Mya Thazi Township Court, Mandalay Division, sentenced activist Tin Mar Ni to one month in prison with hard labor under Article 18 of the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law for participating in a September 2014 prayer ceremony for the release of All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU) activist Phyu Hnin Htwe.67
- **10 January**: A district court in Taunggyi, Shan State, sentenced 20 Muslims, including a 15-year-old boy, to prison terms of seven to 14 years under Articles 5(j) and 5(l) of Burma’s 1950 Emergency Provisions Act for alleged links to terrorism. The court also sentenced one man from the group to an additional five years in prison for an immigration offense.68
- **18 January**: Authorities in Sandoway [Thandwe] Township, Arakan State, detained and later arrested solo protestor Saw Wae for a demonstration against land confiscation.69
- **21 January**: Naypyidaw’s Pobbhathiri Township Court sentenced 19 residents of Webyan Village, Zeyathiri Township, Naypyidaw, to prison terms ranging from four to seven years with hard labor for a plow protest against the regime’s confiscation of their land.70

More child soldiers released, but recruitment continues

On 23 January, the same day that the Tatmadaw released 42 child soldiers at a ceremony in Rangoon, UK-based NGO Child Soldiers International published a report highlighting the continued recruitment of child soldiers through tactics of coercion and misrepresentation.

The report, titled “Under the radar: Ongoing recruitment and use of children by the Myanmar army,” called on the regime to address gaps in age verification protocols, recruitment procedures, and

---

62 Mizzima News (09 Jan 15) Rakhine residents protest UN envoy’s arrival in Sittwe; RFA (09 Jan 15) UN Envoy Tells Myanmar’s Rakhine State Not to Ignore Rohingya Plight
63 DVB (16 Jan 15) “In some areas I have not observed progress since my last visit”: Yanghee Lee
64 DVB (19 Jan 15) Wirathu calls UN envoy a ‘whore’
65 Reuters (21 Jan 15) UN rights chief slams Myanmar monk for ‘sexist’ remarks
66 AFP (22 Jan 15) Myanmar to look into monk ‘whore’ slur after UN reproach
67 DVB (08 Jan 15) Phyu Hnin Htwe supporter jailed; Irrawaddy (08 Jan 15) Mandalay Woman Sent to Prison After Public Prayer Service; EMG (08 Jan 15) Female activist sent to jail in Myanmar
68 Irrawaddy (12 Jan 15) 20 Muslims Jailed on Terrorism Charges; DVB (13 Jan 15) Taunggyi wedding party sentenced on terrorism charges
69 Narinjara News (22 Jan 15) Solo protestor arrested
70 EMG (22 Jan 15) 19 jailed for protest against land seizures
71 GNLM (24 Jan 15) Tatmadaw hands over 42 child soldiers to parents, guardians; EMG (26 Jan 15) Army moves to end underage recruitment; Irrawaddy (23 Jan 15) Child Soldiers: An Ongoing Battle in Burma; DVB (25 Jan 15) Child soldiers and Burma’s long road to reform; Child Soldiers International (23 Jan 15) Under the radar: Ongoing recruitment and use of children by the Myanmar army
accountability mechanisms to ensure that children are not recruited. The report, based on research done in 2014, also found that: 72

- In many cases, the Tatmadaw systematically falsified official documents to recruit underage soldiers and forced parents to sign blank forms, which were later presented as formal consent.
- Conditions in training camps were “extremely poor.” Barracks were overcrowded and offered nutritionally inadequate food, and senior personnel routinely beat child soldiers.

DISPLACEMENT

Rohingya detained in Thailand

In January, Thai authorities continued to detain and arrest Rohingya in Thailand.

- **5 January**: Thai police detained 53 people, including 37 Rohingya, who had arrived in Phang Nga Province, Thailand, on smuggling boats. 73
- **11 January**: Thai authorities arrested 98 trafficked Rohingya, including dozens of children, in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Of the 98 Rohingya arrested, three died shortly after. 74

Rohingya trafficked, killed in Malaysia

On 13 January, Malaysian police found the body of a Rohingya refugee in Bukit Mertajam, Penang, Malaysia. 75 This was believed to be the 19th murder of a Burmese victim in Penang, with earlier incidents taking place from July 2014 onward. 76 The same day, Malaysian police found and rescued 17 trafficked Rohingya at the house of the suspected killers in Kulim, Kedah, Malaysia. 77

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

US delegation visits Burma, criticizes human rights situation

A US delegation led by Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Tom Malinowski participated in the second US-Burma Human Rights Dialogue in Naypyidaw on 14-15 January. 78 The US delegation criticized the ‘National Race and Religion Protection’ package for its non-adherence to international human rights standards. It also urged the regime to end the indefinite detention of Rohingya and establish non-discriminatory pathways for them to obtain citizenship. 79

Prior to the meeting, the delegation traveled to Myitkyina, Kachin State, where it visited IDPs and met with local officials, CSOs, and ethnic leaders. 80 During his 16 January press conference in Rangoon, Malinowski expressed concerns about the ongoing conflict in Kachin State, including the limited

---

72 Child Soldiers International (23 Jan 15) Under the radar: Ongoing recruitment and use of children by the Myanmar army; Mizzima News (23 Jan 15) NGO raps Myanmar govt as more child soldiers are released; DVB (25 Jan 15) Child soldiers and Burma’s long road to reform 73 AFP (05 Jan 15) Dozens of Rohingya migrants held in southern Thailand 74 Xinhua (12 Jan 15) 98 Rohingya migrants from Myanmar rounded up in southern Thailand; Reuters (12 Jan 15) Dozens of children among 98 Rohingya smuggling victims found in Thailand; Bangkok Post (12 Jan 15) Rohingya dies of suffocation in Thai smuggling truck; DPA (14 Jan 15) Two Rohingya refugees die in Thai detention 75 Reuters (29 Jan 15) Rohingya refugees say traffickers in Malaysia abuse and kill 76 Star Online (12 Dec 14) Migrant murders continue; Sun Daily (12 Jan 15) Nine Myanmar men to be charged over killing of countrymen; Irrawaddy (18 Sep 14) 17 human trafficking victims rescued 77 Reuters (29 Jan 15) Rohingya refugees say traffickers in Malaysia abuse and kill; Star Online (15 Jan 15) 17 human trafficking victims rescued 78 US Department of State (12 Jan 15) Assistant Secretary of State Malinowski’s Travel to Burma; GNLM (17 Jan 15) Myanmar and the United States conclude successful second human rights dialogue; US Embassy Rangoon (16 Jan 15) Press Release: Myanmar and the United States Conclude Successful Second Human Rights Dialogue 79 DVB (16 Jan 15) Using religion to divide people is ‘playing with fire’: US official; AFP (16 Jan 15) US decries Myanmar intolerance; WSJ (16 Jan 15) U.S. Warns Myanmar About Religious Intolerance 80 EMG (14 Jan 15) Tom Malinowski ends trip to Kachin State; DVB (14 Jan 15) Political prisoners, Arakan violence hold US attention; US Department of State (12 Jan 15) Assistant Secretary of State Malinowski’s Travel to Burma
humanitarian access to IDPs. He also called growing religious intolerance “incredibly dangerous” and voiced additional concerns about the right to free assembly in Burma.81

US, European officials slam regime on Rohingya persecution, religious discrimination

In January, several US and EU officials criticized the regime’s persecution of Rohingya and other religious minorities.

- 12 January: During a speech in Louisville, Kentucky, US Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power voiced concern about the regime’s failure to hold anyone accountable for attacks against Rohingya and noted that Burma was “still a long way from being a rights-respecting democracy.”82
- 12 January: EU and EU-member state ambassadors to Burma issued a joint statement expressing concern over the proposed ‘National Race and Religion Protection’ package, which they said appeared out of line with international human rights standards. The statement also voiced concern over reports of harassment of CSOs and human rights defenders who had criticized the laws.83
- 14 January: During a debate in the UK House of Commons, MPs criticized the ‘Rakhine State Action Plan’ and restrictions on humanitarian access in Arakan State and accused the regime of fanning the flames of anti-Rohingya sentiment.84
- 20 January: Following her 16-19 January trip to Arakan State, where she visited IDPs in Akyab [Sittwe] and Maungdaw Townships and met with state officials, US Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration Anne Richard said that regime policies “oppress” Rohingya.85

ECONOMY

Kyaukpyu-Kunming pipeline launch disrupts local fishing

On 28 January, the Kyaukpyu-Kunming oil and gas dual pipeline began operations, transporting crude oil from two Chinese tankers docked at Maday Island, Kyaukpyu Township, Arakan State, to Yunnan, China.86 The pipeline is jointly owned by China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and state-owned Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE).87

Prior to the official launch, Arakan State authorities restricted Maday Island residents’ fishing activities:

- 20 January: The Arakan State Fishing Department issued a notice banning all fishing in the area surrounding the Kyaukpyu deep sea port until 31 January.88 Locals, including many who had still not received compensation for land confiscated for the project, threatened they would use 2,000 fishing boats to block Chinese oil tankers’ arrival in Maday Island.89
- 26 January: It was reported that Arakan State Chief Minister Maung Maung Ohn and regime Energy Minister Zeya Aung had visited Maday Island and attempted to appease locals by distributing mobile phones and fishing nets and offering money.90

---

82 AP (13 Jan 15) US: Anti-Muslim Attackers in Burma Unpunished; Mizzima News (13 Jan 15) Obama’s UN ambassador raps Myanmar over ‘extremist monks’
83 Office of the EU in Myanmar (12 Jan 15) Local Statement of the European Union and European Union Member State Embassies Accredited to Myanmar
84 UK Parliament (14 Jan 15) Today’s House of Commons debates
85 AFP (20 Jan 15) Myanmar policies behind Rakhine ‘oppression’: US envoy; US Department of State (14 Jan 15) Assistant Secretary Anne C. Richard Travel to Burma and Bangladesh; Mizzima News (21 Jan 15) Rakhine situation ‘benefits no one’, says US official
86 Myanmar Times (26 Jan 15) Launch imminent for crude oil pipeline; Xinhua (28 Jan 15) Sino-Myanmar crude oil pipeline enters trial operation; Mizzima News (29 Jan 15) Myanmar-China oil pipeline opens; China Daily (29 Jan 15) Sino-Myanmar pipeline boosts energy security; EMG (28 Jan 15) Kyaukphyu residents to protest if not compensated
87 Myanmar Times (26 Jan 15) Launch imminent for crude oil pipeline; EMG (28 Jan 15) Kyaukphyu residents to protest if not compensated
88 Mizzima News (26 Jan 15) Chinese oil tanker arrival at seaport prompts fishing boat ban
89 Mizzima News (26 Jan 15) Chinese oil tanker arrival at seaport prompts fishing boat ban
90 Irrawaddy (26 Jan 15) Madae Islanders to Protest Inauguration of Kyaukphyu Pipeline; EMG (28 Jan 15) Kyaukphyu residents to protest if not compensated
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Over 3,700 people protest in Nyaungshwe Township, Shan State, calling for peace and ethnic inclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>At a mass meeting in Pegu, Pegu Division, to commemorate Aung San’s 100th birthday, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi says that a country cannot be considered sovereign if the people are oppressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Around 150 activists from 22 organizations protest at Maha Bandoola Park in Rangoon’s Kyauktada Township, to demand amendments to the 2008 constitution, the release of all political prisoners, and freedom of expression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>President’s Office renames the “committee for scrutinizing the remaining prisoners of conscience” to the “prisoners of conscience affairs committee.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The regime-appointed committee for the implementation of the Letpadaung (Monywa) copper mine report recommendations issues a statement criticizing ‘instigators’ for the recent violence at the project site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Farmers protest in Mandalay against the Myotha Industrial Zone in Mandalay Division, demanding fair compensation for land and the release of ten activists detained for previous demonstrations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Representatives from 53 political parties meet in Naypyidaw to discuss opportunities for public participation in efforts to achieve a nationwide ceasefire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Over 150 workers from Yess Candy factory in Rangoon’s Hlaing Tharyar Industrial Zone go on strike, demanding higher wages and fewer working hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ten local women’s groups issue a joint statement calling the 22 December 2014 police killing of a female protester at the Letpadaung (Monywa) copper mine in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division, a breach of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>President Thein Sein makes his second-ever trip to Kachin State to attend a regime-organized Kachin State Day and Manau festival in Myitkyina.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Rohingya living in refugee camps in Akyab [Sittwe] Township, Arakan State, stage a demonstration calling for the right to vote in the 2015 general election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Over 3,000 protesters demonstrate in Mogok Township, Mandalay Division, to demand action to protect a local lake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Rangoon’s Latha Township police charge the owner of a video store under the Television and Video Law after seizing over 180 copies of The Interview, a film about North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>PSLF and TNLA release a statement saying the regime backtracked on existing agreements for the nationwide ceasefire, and that Tatmadaw troops clashed over 200 times with TNLA forces throughout 2014.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>HRW sends an open letter to President Thein Sein urging the regime to accept the UN’s recommendation to amend the 1982 Citizenship Law in order to allow Rohingya access to full citizenship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Local CSOs submit to the regime Election Commission a list of suggested amendments to the draft rules for election observers published on 16 December.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Around 1,000 farmers, students, and Buddhist monks protest in Chan Aye Thazan Township, Mandalay Division, to demand political reforms, a new constitution, better protection of land rights, and an independent education system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and seven other NLD leaders meet with five UNA leaders in Naypyidaw to discuss efforts to start meaningful political dialogue, amend the constitution, and ensure a free and fair 2015 general election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Rohingya human rights defender Tun Aung is released from Rangoon’s Insein prison.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Burma Rivers Network submits a petition signed by over 61,000 people and 131 organizations to the Chinese and Thai embassies in Rangoon and the regime Electric Power Ministry, urging an immediate end to dam projects on the Salween River.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>In Naypyidaw, South Korean National Assembly Speaker Chung Ui-hwa meets separately with President Thein Sein, National Parliament Speaker Shwe Mann, and National Assembly Speaker Khin Aung Myint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>In a press release, MSF-Holland announces the resumption of its operations in Arakan State, which occurred on 17 December 2014, after its suspension by the regime in February 2014.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>UNOCHA reports that limits on access to Kachin and Shan States has led to gaps in the provision of shelter, food, water, and sanitation for nearly 60,000 IDPs, including 12,000 children, in KIO territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>National Parliament Bill Committee rejects President Thein Sein’s recommendation to allow white card holders to vote in the planned May 2015 referendum on constitutional amendments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>In New Delhi, India, Vice-President Mauk Kham meets separately with Indian PM Narendra Modi and Indian President Pranab Mukherjee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Amnesty International issues a statement calling on the regime to release NLD member Htin Lin Oo, who is currently detained for making a speech against religious extremism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>In Naypyidaw, South Korean Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Choi Yoon-hee meets separately with President Thein Sein and Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Sr Gen Min Aung Hlaing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>More than 1,000 people protest in Tavoy [Dawei] Township, Tenasserim Division, against high electricity prices in southeastern Burma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>A mobile anti-smuggling team in Nawngkio, Shan State, seizes over 10,000 bags of ammonium nitrate fertilizer and electronic goods worth over 2.5 billion kyat (US$ 2.43 million) smuggled into Burma from China by two Tatmadaw officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>UNFC submits a proposal to President Thein Sein for a ceasefire agreement establishing federalism, in response to a 2 December comment by Thein Sein.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>More than 600 people in Haka Township, Chin State, hold a prayer ceremony to prevent the removal of a Christian cross on a hilltop in the township.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Mon State officials summon 500 residents in Kamarwet Village, Mudon Township, Mon State, and give them posters and other materials to take part in a ‘protest’ calling for a nationwide ceasefire agreement signing on 12 February.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>One hundred eighty CSOs release a joint statement recommending that the regime drop the ‘National Race and Religion Protection’ package because they believe the legislation contravenes domestic and international frameworks and could threaten Burma’s stability by inciting discrimination and violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Chin Human Rights Organization issues a statement urging local authorities in Haka Township, Chin State, to overturn an order to remove a Christian cross in the area and drop trumped-up charges against a Chin elder involved in erecting the cross.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>In Bangkok, Thailand, Thai junta PM Prayuth Chan-ocha and Vice-President Nyan Tun discuss the Tavoy [Dawei] SEZ and efforts to combat drug trafficking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>In its World Report 2015, Human Rights Watch says that in 2014, Burma’s reform process experienced significant slowdowns and in some cases reversals of basic freedoms and democratic progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Local authorities demolish approximately 140 homes in Rangoon’s Dagon Seikkan Township, after local authorities ordered residents to vacate on the grounds that they were illegal squatters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REPORTS ON BURMA RELEASED IN JANUARY**

- “Monthly Chronology of Burma’s Political Prisoners for December 2014”, Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) [http://goo.gl/OC0OcB](http://goo.gl/OC0OcB)