

BURMA BULLETIN



A month-in-review of events in Burma



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

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- Despite much-publicized peace talks, the Tatmadaw launches unrelenting attacks on Kachin Independence Army positions in Mansi Township, Kachin State. The Tatmadaw inflicts violence on civilians. More than 2,000 villagers and IDPs flee.
- Nationwide ceasefire talks stall over the regime's push for ethnic armed groups to disarm and Naypyidaw's rejection of the ethnic armed groups' demand for a federal army.
- President Thein Sein releases 69 political prisoners. However, at least 60 political prisoners remain behind bars and 265 people still face criminal charges over their political activities.
- The regime jails seven activists under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law and four Kachin civilians under the Unlawful Association Act.
- UN General Assembly's Third Committee adopts a resolution that expresses concern over human rights violations in Burma and calls on the regime to give Rohingya "equal access" to full citizenship.
- Threats and intimidation from some Rakhine community members force at least three INGOs to suspend or scale back their humanitarian activities in Arakan State.
- The regime continues its violent attacks on anti-Monywa copper mine protestors, injuring seven and detaining three.
- UNODC report says that Burma remains the primary source of methamphetamine in Southeast Asia.
- Street protests and opposition from Parliament force the regime to delay a planned electricity price hike until the 2014-15 fiscal year.

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KEY STORY

Tatmadaw offensives continue, civilians still targeted

Despite ongoing talks between the regime and ethnic armed groups over a nationwide ceasefire [See below, *Talks end without agreement on nationwide ceasefire*], Tatmadaw attacks on Kachin Independence Army (KIA) positions in Mansi Township, Southern Kachin State, continued unabated. The attacks occurred almost daily between 6 and 23 November. Fighting was reported in seven villages in Mansi Township.¹ On 16 November, Tatmadaw troops occupied Nam Lim Pa Village in Mansi

¹ Free Burma Rangers (19 Nov 13) Burma Army Captures, Kills and Tortures Villagers in Kachin State, Forcing Over 2,000 to Flee; DVB (19 Nov 13) More than 2,000 flee as hostilities reignite in Kachin state; Kachinland News (07 Nov 13) Fierce Battle Rages Near Namlim Pa Village; Kachinland News (08 Nov 13) Battles Rage in KIA's 12th Battalion Territory; Irrawaddy (07 Nov

Township and prevented around 300 students from leaving their school.² On 16-17 November, more than 2,000 residents and IDPs in Nam Lim Pa fled to escape fighting in and around their village.³

Tatmadaw troops continued to target civilians in Southern Kachin State and Northern Shan State:

- **7 November:** Tatmadaw artillery fire killed a 10-year-old child in Gawng Run Village, Mansi Township, Kachin State.⁴
- **8 November:** Tatmadaw soldiers detained and tortured a 54-year-old Kachin man in Nam Gau Village, Mansi Township, Kachin State.⁵
- **11 November:** A Tatmadaw soldier raped an eight-year-old Kachin girl in Hka Lum Village, Hsenwi Township, Northern Shan State.⁶
- **14 November:** Tatmadaw troops shot and killed a 40-year-old Kachin man in Mung Ding Pa, Mansi Township, Kachin State.⁷

Talks end without agreement on nationwide ceasefire

In November, talks between the regime and ethnic armed groups on a nationwide ceasefire ended without an agreement. On 4-5 November, a regime delegation led by President's Office Minister Aung Min met with representatives from 17 ethnic armed groups in Myitkyina, Kachin State.⁸ The UN Sec-Gen's Special Advisor on Burma Vijay Nambiar and China's Special Envoy on Asian Affairs Wang Yingfan were among those present as observers.⁹ Talks stalled over the regime's push for ethnic armed groups to disarm and Naypyidaw's rejection of the ethnic armed groups' demand for a federal army in Burma.¹⁰ The two sides exchanged nationwide ceasefire draft proposals and agreed to hold further discussions in Hpa-an, Karen State, in December.¹¹

On 19 November, New Mon State Party (NMSP) said that it rejected the regime's nationwide ceasefire draft, including points which required ethnic armed groups to disarm.¹²

INSIDE BURMA

Parliamentary session concludes

On 15 November, Parliament concluded its eighth regular session.¹³ Important developments for the month of November included:

- **4 November:** The People's Assembly approved the Media Bill.¹⁴ The legislation, drafted by the Myanmar Interim Press Council, prescribes the rights and obligations of media persons.¹⁵ The bill will now go to the National Parliament for discussion.¹⁶

13) Fresh Fighting Between KIA, Govt Troops in Kachin State; Kachinland News (11 Nov 13) One Civilian Killed and Another Injured as Mortar Shells Hit Gawng Run Village; Kachinland News (18 Nov 13) Kachin Civilians Flee as Battles Blaze in Namlim Pa and Surrounding Area; EMG (20 Nov 13) Military tensions arise between army, KIA in Kachin State; Kachinland News (22 Nov 13) IDPs Arrive in Man Win Area; Battles Rage in Mansi and Northern Shan State; Kachinland News (23 Nov 13) One KIA Captain and Another Soldier Killed in a Skirmish with Burmese Army Troops

² Free Burma Rangers (19 Nov 13) Burma Army Captures, Kills and Tortures Villagers in Kachin State, Forcing Over 2,000 to Flee

³ Free Burma Rangers (19 Nov 13) Burma Army Captures, Kills and Tortures Villagers in Kachin State, Forcing Over 2,000 to Flee; DVB (19 Nov 13) More than 2,000 flee as hostilities reignite in Kachin state

⁴ Kachinland News (11 Nov 13) One Civilian Killed and Another Injured as Mortar Shells Hit Gawng Run Village

⁵ Free Burma Rangers (19 Nov 13) Burma Army Captures, Kills and Tortures Villagers in Kachin State, Forcing Over 2,000 to Flee

⁶ Kachinland News (12 Nov 13) An 8-Year-Old Girl Raped By a Burmese Army Private

⁷ Free Burma Rangers (19 Nov 13) Burma Army Captures, Kills and Tortures Villagers in Kachin State, Forcing Over 2,000 to Flee

⁸ NLM (06 Nov 13) Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Press Release Team, Press Release No. 17/2013, 3rd Waxing of Tazaungmon, 1375 ME (5th November, 2013)

⁹ NLM (06 Nov 13) Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Press Release Team, Press Release No. 17/2013, 3rd Waxing of Tazaungmon, 1375 ME (5th November, 2013)

¹⁰ RFA (05 Nov 13) Myanmar Peace Talks Fail to Nail Down Cease-Fire Agreement

¹¹ NLM (06 Nov 13) Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Press Release Team, Press Release No. 17/2013, 3rd Waxing of Tazaungmon, 1375 ME (5th November, 2013)

¹² Irrawaddy (19 Nov 13) Mon Group Rejects 'Unacceptable' Govt Ceasefire Proposal

¹³ NLM (16 Nov 13) Taking foreign loans to help develop the nation in long run

- **5 November:** The People's Assembly Public Affairs Management Committee introduced a new draft Association Bill.¹⁷ The new draft, which replaced a previous version drafted by the regime Home Affairs Ministry, incorporated many recommendations that civil society organizations made during various rounds of talks with MPs [See *October 2013 Burma Bulletin*].
- **11 November:** The People's Assembly approved several amendments to the Printing and Publishing Bill.¹⁸ MPs agreed to abolish prison sentences and reduce financial penalties for those found to be publishing without registration.¹⁹ Fines will now range from 100,000 to 300,000 kyat (US\$102-306).²⁰ MPs also removed the clause that prohibited criticism of the 2008 constitution.²¹ However, the amended law still bans the publication of material that "insults" religion, undermines the rule of law, or harms ethnic unity.²² The bill will now go to the National Parliament for discussion.²³
- **13 November:** People's Assembly USDP MP Aung Ko introduced a bill to amend the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law.²⁴ The bill, if adopted, would abolish Article 18 of the law, which prescribes up to one year in prison for those who demonstrate without obtaining the authorities' prior permission.²⁵ During parliamentary debate, regime Home Affairs Deputy Minister Maj Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun maintained that MPs should not amend the law, which he claimed did not violate the 2008 constitution.²⁶

Constitutional reform process delayed

On 7 November, the constitutional review committee extended the deadline for the publication of its final report from 31 December to 31 January.²⁷ The 109-member parliamentary committee also extended the deadline for receiving suggestions on charter amendments from 15 November to 31 December.²⁸ On 24 November, it was reported that the committee had received 322 recommendations for constitutional amendments from the public.²⁹

Meanwhile, the regime imposed restrictions on some of the NLD-organized public consultation meetings on constitutional reform.

- **7 November:** It was reported that regime authorities and Election Commission officials denied the NLD's requests to conduct public consultation meetings in several townships in Mon State.³⁰
- **14 November:** Police in Naypyidaw's Zabuthiri Township initially refused to grant permission for an NLD-organized constitutional reform rally scheduled for 18 November because the proposed venue was close to public offices and schools.³¹ However, following negotiations with the NLD, local regime authorities allowed the event to go ahead.³²

On 23 November, the NLD issued a press release that called for talks between the NLD, the executive, Parliament, and the Tatmadaw concerning amendments to the 2008 constitution.³³ However, on 27

¹⁴ NLM (05 Nov 13) Pyithu Hluttaw approves Media Bill; Xinhua (05 Nov 13) Myanmar's lower house approves media bill; DVB (05 Nov 13) Burma's lower house passes media bill

¹⁵ Xinhua (05 Nov 13) Myanmar's lower house approves media bill; DVB (05 Nov 13) Burma's lower house passes media bill

¹⁶ DVB (05 Nov 13) Burma's lower house passes media bill

¹⁷ Myanmar Times (18 Nov 13) Civil society leaders say registration too restrictive

¹⁸ DVB (13 Nov 13) Burma amends controversial publishing law

¹⁹ DVB (13 Nov 13) Burma amends controversial publishing law

²⁰ DVB (13 Nov 13) Burma amends controversial publishing law

²¹ DVB (13 Nov 13) Burma amends controversial publishing law

²² DVB (13 Nov 13) Burma amends controversial publishing law

²³ DVB (13 Nov 13) Burma amends controversial publishing law

²⁴ EMG (14 Nov 13) Parliament discusses bill on peaceful assembly and procession law; NLM (14 Nov 13) Bank notes bearing the images of country's prominent leaders to be issued

²⁵ Myanmar Times (10 Nov 13) MPs seek to take sting out of protest law

²⁶ EMG (14 Nov 13) Parliament discusses bill on peaceful assembly and procession law

²⁷ RFA (07 Nov 13) Myanmar Delays Constitution Review by One Month; Myanmar Times (10 Nov 13) Constitution review body to get extra month

²⁸ RFA (07 Nov 13) Myanmar Delays Constitution Review by One Month; DVB (11 Nov 13) Over 99 percent of Rangoonites support amending the constitution, says NLD

²⁹ EMG (24 Nov 13) Suu Kyi calls for meeting with President, Parliament, military to discuss constitutional amendment

³⁰ IMNA (07 Nov 13) NLD face restrictions to polling public opinion on constitutional amendment

³¹ Irrawaddy (15 Nov 13) Naypyidaw Authorities Block NLD Poll on Constitutional Reform; DVB (16 Nov 13) NLD refused permit to stage 'constitution rally' in Naypyidaw; EMG (17 Nov 13) NLD to hold 'constitutional rally' in Nay Pyi Taw

³² DVB (18 Nov 13) NLD's 'constitution rally' goes ahead in Naypyidaw

³³ Xinhua (23 Nov 13) Myanmar opposition party proposes talks for 2008 constitution amendment; EMG (24 Nov 13) Suu Kyi calls for meeting with President, Parliament, military to discuss constitutional amendment

November President Thein Sein's spokesperson Ye Htut said that Thein Sein and Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Sr Gen Min Aung Hlaing had turned down the NLD's call for four-party talks.³⁴

Police crack down on anti-mine protestors - again

In November, demonstrations continued against the Monywa copper mine in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division. Once again, the regime violently attacked the protestors.

- **2 November:** About 150 people, including residents, activists, and Buddhist monks, set up a protest camp near the Monywa copper mine.³⁵ Protestors demanded that authorities allow them to inspect a historic Buddhist temple on the Letpadaung mountain range. The protestors believed that mining operations had damaged the temple on 31 October.³⁶
- **12 November:** Regime authorities dispatched about 100 riot police officers to the protest site near the Monywa copper mine and ordered protestors to disperse.³⁷ Police also set up roadblocks on the road to the protest site in an effort to cut supplies to demonstrators.³⁸
- **14 November:** Police in Mogyopyin Village, Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division, fired rubber bullets on local residents in order to prevent them from joining protestors camped near the Monywa copper mine.³⁹ At least seven villagers were injured in the crackdown.⁴⁰ Police also detained three villagers and forced two reporters to delete photos of the crackdown from their cameras.⁴¹
- **15 November:** Hundreds of residents from Sete and Mogyopyin Village, Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division, demonstrated to demand the removal of police roadblocks in the area.⁴²
- **17 November:** A group of activists, local villagers, and Buddhist monks in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division, demanded that police stop violent crackdowns on anti-mine protestors and leave the area.⁴³

INGOs suspend operations due to ongoing hostility

In November, threats and intimidation from some members of the Rakhine community forced at least three international aid agencies operating in Arakan State to suspend or scale back their humanitarian activities.

- **7 November:** It was reported that Save the Children and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had temporarily left Pauktaw Township, Arakan State, due to protests in the township on 3 November against the perceived bias of INGOs operating in the state.⁴⁴
- **12 November:** It was reported that Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) had cut down operations involving its mobile boat clinic in Pauktaw Township after the 3 November protests.⁴⁵

On 23 November, at the conclusion of a five-day visit to Burma, European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Director-General Claus Sorensen voiced concern over threats directed at aid

³⁴ Mizzima News (28 Nov 13) President, military chief decline talks proposal from NLD leader

³⁵ DVB (04 Nov 13) Locals, monks resume sit-in protest at Latpadaung; Irrawaddy (05 Nov 13) Fear of Pagoda Damage Draws Protests at Letpadaung Mine

³⁶ DVB (04 Nov 13) Locals, monks resume sit-in protest at Latpadaung; Irrawaddy (05 Nov 13) Fear of Pagoda Damage Draws Protests at Letpadaung Mine

³⁷ Irrawaddy (12 Nov 13) Tensions High at Letpadaung Mine as Police Gather at Protest Camps

³⁸ DVB (15 Nov 13) Seven villagers shot with rubber bullets in Latpadaung clash

³⁹ AP (15 Nov 13) Myanmar police crack down on protesters near copper mine; 7 villagers injured; DVB (15 Nov 13) Seven villagers shot with rubber bullets in Latpadaung clash

⁴⁰ AP (15 Nov 13) Myanmar police crack down on protesters near copper mine; 7 villagers injured; Irrawaddy (15 Nov 13) Police Open Fire, Injure 7 Protesters at Burma's Letpadaung Mine; RFA (15 Nov 13) Authorities Open Fire on Myanmar Copper Mine Protesters

⁴¹ Irrawaddy (15 Nov 13) Police Open Fire, Injure 7 Protesters at Burma's Letpadaung Mine; DVB (15 Nov 13) Seven villagers shot with rubber bullets in Latpadaung clash; DVB (19 Nov 13) Police remove guard posts to appease Latpadaung villagers; Mizzima News (20 Nov 13) Journalists' group sends complaint letter to Police Chief over alleged intimidation

⁴² RFA (15 Nov 13) Authorities Open Fire on Myanmar Copper Mine Protesters

⁴³ DVB (18 Nov 13) Latpadaung villagers mark anniversary of firebombing

⁴⁴ VOA (07 Nov 13) Burma Protesters Force NGOs to Leave Town; Mizzima News (06 Nov 13) MSF denies allegations of aid discrimination

⁴⁵ DVB (12 Nov 13) MSF suspends Pauktaw operations after 'misunderstandings'

workers from “extremist elements” in Arakan State.⁴⁶ He also decried the “dramatic deprivation” evident in IDP camps in Arakan State and said such conditions had no place in a “modern society.”⁴⁷

Burma still the top source of methamphetamine in Southeast Asia

On 8 November, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released “Patterns and Trends of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants and Other Drugs: Challenges for Asia and the Pacific.”⁴⁸ With regard to Burma, the report found that in 2012:⁴⁹

- Burma remained the primary source of methamphetamine in Southeast Asia.
- Methamphetamine use in Burma increased for the eighth consecutive year.
- Significant quantities of methamphetamine manufactured in Burma continued to be trafficked to regional neighbors including China, Thailand, Bangladesh, Laos, and Vietnam.
- More than 90% of methamphetamine seized in China and around 80-90% of crystal methamphetamine seized in Thailand originated from Burma

Tatmadaw, ethnic armed groups still using landmines

On 28 November, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) released its “Landmine Monitor 2013.” With regard to Burma, the report found that:⁵⁰

- The Tatmadaw and ethnic armed groups continued to use antipersonnel mines in 2012 and 2013.
- In 2012, there were 106 reported landmine casualties – a 72% decrease from the 381 recorded in 2011, but still the eighth-highest globally.

HUMAN RIGHTS

More arbitrary imprisonments

In November, the regime jailed seven activists under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law and four Kachin civilians under the Unlawful Association Act.

- **15 November:** A court in Myitkyina, Kachin State, sentenced four Kachin men to two years in prison under the Unlawful Association Act.⁵¹ The four were among a group of six IDPs that regime authorities arrested in June 2012 on charges of having ties to the Kachin Independence Army (KIA).⁵²
- **19 November:** Courts in Rangoon’s Kyauktada and Pabedan Townships sentenced activist Htin Kyaw to a total of nine months in prison under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law.⁵³ Both courts sentenced him to three months in jail for his participation in a demonstration against the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law in Rangoon in December 2012.⁵⁴ In addition, the Pabedan Township Court sentenced Htin Kyaw to an additional three-month jail term for his participation in a protest against the Monywa copper mine.⁵⁵
- **21 November:** A court in Rangoon’s Kyimyindine Township sentenced activists Moe Thway, D Nyein Linn, Aung Myo Oo, Myint Kyaw Oo, Soe Moe Htun, and Thandar to one-month prison terms under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law.⁵⁶ The court jailed the six in connection with

⁴⁶ AFP (23 Nov 13) EU aid envoy decries Myanmar camp conditions

⁴⁷ Myanmar Times (25 Nov 13) ECHO pledges more aid and condemns treatment of Rohingya; AFP (23 Nov 13) EU aid envoy decries Myanmar camp conditions

⁴⁸ AP (08 Nov 13) UN says seizures of crystal meth and meth pills in Asia reach record highs in 2012

⁴⁹ UNODC (Nov 13) Patterns and Trends of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants and Other Drugs: Challenges for Asia and the Pacific

⁵⁰ International Campaign to Ban Landmines (28 Nov 13) Landmine Monitor 2013

⁵¹ Irrawaddy (15 Nov 13) Myitkyina Court Sends Four to Prison for Being KIA Members; DVB (16 Nov 13) Four Kachin IDPs sentenced for ‘unlawful association’

⁵² Irrawaddy (15 Nov 13) Myitkyina Court Sends Four to Prison for Being KIA Members; DVB (16 Nov 13) Four Kachin IDPs sentenced for ‘unlawful association’

⁵³ RFA (20 Nov 13) Nine More Months in Jail for Unrelenting Myanmar Activist

⁵⁴ RFA (20 Nov 13) Nine More Months in Jail for Unrelenting Myanmar Activist

⁵⁵ RFA (20 Nov 13) Nine More Months in Jail for Unrelenting Myanmar Activist

⁵⁶ DVB (21 Nov 13) Copper mine protestors given one-month sentences in Rangoon; Irrawaddy (21 Nov 13) Rangoon Court Sentences 6 More Activists Under Peaceful Assembly Law

their December 2012 protest in Rangoon against the crackdown on peaceful Monywa copper mine protesters.⁵⁷

In addition, peaceful protestors continued to face criminal charges under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law for holding demonstrations without obtaining the authorities' prior permission. On 19 November, it was reported that regime authorities in Rangoon filed charges against eight activists who demonstrated against electricity price hikes in Rangoon on 6 November [See below, *Electricity price hike delayed*].⁵⁸

Political prisoners: 69 released, at least 60 still behind bars

In November, the regime continued its strategically-timed release of political prisoners. The latest release of dissidents coincided with the visit of a high-profile EU delegation to Burma [See below *EU and Burma eye closer economic ties*].⁵⁹

On 15 November, President Thein Sein ordered the release of 69 political prisoners in an amnesty.⁶⁰ Among those freed were: numerous members of ethnic armed groups; about two dozen activists imprisoned under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law; 15 prisoners from Shan and Kachin States jailed under the Unlawful Association Act; and human rights defender Naw Ohn Hla.⁶¹ However, at least 60 political prisoners remained behind bars, including Rohingya human rights defenders Kyaw Hla Aung and Tun Aung.⁶² In addition, 265 people still faced criminal charges over their political activities.⁶³

Thein Sein's prisoner releases		
Date	Total prisoners	Political prisoners
16 May 11	14,578	58
12 Oct 11	6,359	240
4 Jan 12	6,656	36
13 Jan 12	651	302
3 Jul 12	80	25
17 Sep 12	514	88
15 Nov 12	452	0
16 Nov 12	66	51
23 Apr 13	93	59
17 May 13	23	19
23 Jul 13	73	73
8 Oct 13	56	56
15 Nov 13	69	69
Total	29,670	1,076
Sources: NLM; AAPP		

DISPLACEMENT

Rohingya exodus continues

In November, Rohingya continued to flee to Burma's regional neighbors.

- **3 November:** A boat carrying at least 70 Rohingya en route to Bangladesh sank in the Bay of Bengal off the coast of Arakan State leaving scores feared drowned and only eight reported survivors.⁶⁴
- **10 November:** Three boats carrying an estimated 200 Rohingya left Pauktaw, Arakan State, for Bangladesh.⁶⁵
- **17 November:** Indonesian authorities in West Java Province detained 106 Rohingya who were in the process of attempting to journey by boat to Australia.⁶⁶

On 1 November, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) voiced concern for thousands of Rohingya who risk their lives leaving Arakan State on rickety boats during the October-November to March-April 'sailing season.'⁶⁷

⁵⁷ DVB (21 Nov 13) Copper mine protestors given one-month sentences in Rangoon; Irrawaddy (21 Nov 13) Rangoon Court Sentences 6 More Activists Under Peaceful Assembly Law

⁵⁸ Irrawaddy (19 Nov 13) Candle Protestors on Trial in Rangoon

⁵⁹ Reuters (15 Nov 13) With 'loving kindness', Myanmar frees 69 political prisoners; BBC (15 Nov 13) Burma announces release of 69 political prisoners; NLM (24 Nov 13) Committee for scrutinizing remaining political prisoners meets

⁶⁰ AP (15 Nov 13) Myanmar's president pardons 69 political prisoners; Reuters (15 Nov 13) With 'loving kindness', Myanmar frees 69 political prisoners; AFP (15 Nov 13) Myanmar frees 69 political prisoners: officials

⁶¹ AP (15 Nov 13) Myanmar's president pardons 69 political prisoners; Reuters (15 Nov 13) With 'loving kindness', Myanmar frees 69 political prisoners; BBC (15 Nov 13) Burma announces release of 69 political prisoners; DVB (15 Nov 13) Nearly 70 political prisoners freed in Burma; Irrawaddy (15 Nov 13) Ne Win's Grandsons Among 69 Released Political Prisoners

⁶² AP (15 Nov 13) Myanmar's president pardons 69 political prisoners; Irrawaddy (15 Nov 13) Ne Win's Grandsons Among 69 Released Political Prisoners; DVB (15 Nov 13) Nearly 70 political prisoners freed in Burma; AI (15 Nov 13) Myanmar: Release of prisoners of conscience positive but many still locked up

⁶³ Irrawaddy (15 Nov 13) Ne Win's Grandsons Among 69 Released Political Prisoners; DVB (15 Nov 13) Nearly 70 political prisoners freed in Burma

⁶⁴ AP (05 Nov 13) No Sign of More Survivors in Rohingya Boat Sinking

⁶⁵ Kaladan News (15 Nov 13) Hundreds of Rohingyas flee from Pauktaw township

⁶⁶ Bernama (19 Nov 13) 106 Illegal Rohingya Migrants On Their Way To Australia Detained By Indonesian Police

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

UNGA adopts Burma resolution

On 19 November, the UN General Assembly's Third Committee adopted by consensus a resolution on the situation of human rights in Burma.⁶⁸ The resolution expressed concern over human rights violations in the country, including arbitrary arrests of activists and human rights defenders; forced displacement; land confiscation; rape and other forms of sexual violence; and torture.⁶⁹ In addition, the resolution expressed "serious concern" over the situation of Rohingya in Arakan State and called on the regime to give Rohingya "equal access" to full citizenship.⁷⁰ The Third Committee also urged the regime to end violence against Rohingya and other Muslims in Burma.⁷¹

On 21 November, the regime rejected the UN resolution's call to grant citizenship to Rohingya.⁷² President Thein Sein's spokesperson Ye Htut reiterated the regime's rejection of the term 'Rohingya' and said that Naypyidaw would grant citizenship only to 'Bengalis' who meet the 1982 Citizenship Law's criteria.⁷³

EU and Burma eye closer economic ties

From 13 to 15 November, an EU delegation led by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton, and including EU Commissioners, MEPs, and representatives from more than 100 European companies, visited Burma to attend EU-Burma Task Force meetings in Rangoon and Naypyidaw.

On 14 November, members of the EU delegation held talks with political, business, and civil society representatives from Burma in Rangoon.⁷⁴ On 15 November, representatives from the EU and Burma participated in three separate meetings focused on political, economic, and parliamentary dialogue in Naypyidaw.⁷⁵ President Thein Sein, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and Catherine Ashton were among the attendees.⁷⁶ According to a joint-statement issued by co-chairs Catherine Ashton and President's Office Minister Soe Thane following the meetings on 15 November, the regime and the EU agreed to launch a human rights dialogue in 2014, establish an EU-Burma Business Council to facilitate business links, and hold further policy dialogue on SMEs, tourism, agricultural development, and the mining sector.⁷⁷

OIC delegation visits Burma amid protests

From 13-17 November, an Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) high-level delegation led by OIC Sec-Gen Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu visited Burma. During the visit, the delegation met with regime

⁶⁷ UNHCR (01 Nov 13) UNHCR fears sea tragedies as sailing season starts in Bay of Bengal

⁶⁸ AP (19 Nov 13) UN to Myanmar: Make Rohingya Muslims citizens; Reuters (20 Nov 13) U.N. committee slaps Syria, Iran, N.Korea, Myanmar for rights abuses

⁶⁹ AP (19 Nov 13) UN to Myanmar: Make Rohingya Muslims citizens; AFP (20 Nov 13) UN calls for govt to follow through on amnesty

⁷⁰ AP (19 Nov 13) UN to Myanmar: Make Rohingya Muslims citizens; AFP (20 Nov 13) UN calls for govt to follow through on amnesty; Reuters (20 Nov 13) U.N. committee slaps Syria, Iran, N.Korea, Myanmar for rights abuses;

⁷¹ AP (19 Nov 13) UN to Myanmar: Make Rohingya Muslims citizens; AFP (20 Nov 13) UN calls for govt to follow through on amnesty

⁷² AP (21 Nov 13) Government says Myanmar won't bend to UN pressure over ethnic Rohingya citizenship; AFP (21 Nov 13) Myanmar rejects UN Rohingya citizenship appeal; Myanmar Times (21 Nov 13) Govt responds on Rohingya citizenship issue; Irrawaddy (21 Nov 13) Govt Rejects UN Calls for Rohingya Citizenship; DVB (21 Nov 13) Burma calls on UN to respect its sovereignty

⁷³ AP (21 Nov 13) Government says Myanmar won't bend to UN pressure over ethnic Rohingya citizenship; AFP (21 Nov 13) Myanmar rejects UN Rohingya citizenship appeal; Myanmar Times (21 Nov 13) Govt responds on Rohingya citizenship issue; Irrawaddy (21 Nov 13) Govt Rejects UN Calls for Rohingya Citizenship; DVB (21 Nov 13) Burma calls on UN to respect its sovereignty

⁷⁴ Xinhua (18 Nov 13) EU, Myanmar vow to build strong partnership

⁷⁵ NLM (16 Nov 13) EU-Myanmar Task Force holds economic, political and inter-parliamentarian dialogues; NLM (16 Nov 13) All national races and political forces in country to live in peace and harmony and join hands to build a more united and more prosperous Myanmar: President

⁷⁶ NLM (16 Nov 13) All national races and political forces in country to live in peace and harmony and join hands to build a more united and more prosperous Myanmar: President

⁷⁷ Xinhua (18 Nov 13) EU, Myanmar vow to build strong partnership; NLM (16 Nov 13) All national races and political forces in country to live in peace and harmony and join hands to build a more united and more prosperous Myanmar: President

officials, including Vice-President Mauk Kham, MPs, and civil society representatives.⁷⁸ Discussions primarily focused on the situation in Arakan State. On 15 November, the delegation visited IDP camps in Akyab [Sittwe] and Maungdaw in Arakan State and met with Buddhist Rakhine and Muslim communities, including Rohingya.⁷⁹ According to a 17 November Joint-Communiqué with the regime, the OIC delegation called on the regime to continue legal reforms, including repealing laws restricting fundamental freedoms.⁸⁰

Widespread protests across Burma marked the OIC's visit to the country. From 12 to 16 November, anti-OIC protests were reported in Rangoon, Mandalay, Pegu, Magwe, Irrawaddy, and Sagaing Divisions and in Arakan and Shan States.⁸¹ Regime authorities authorized most of the demonstrations, which saw the active participation of Buddhist monks.⁸²

ECONOMY

Electricity price hike delayed

In November, street protests and opposition from Parliament forced the regime to delay a planned electricity price hike.

On 29 October, the regime Electric Power Ministry announced that starting on 1 November the price of electricity would increase by 43% from 35 to 50 kyat (US\$0.03-0.05) per unit for households using over 100 units a month.⁸³ The price of electricity for commercial entities using over 5,000 units a month would double from 75 to 150 kyat per unit.⁸⁴ The regime justified the price hike by saying it needed to “cover the producing and purchasing costs of electricity.”⁸⁵ Many factory owners in Rangoon said the electricity price hike would adversely affect their business operations.⁸⁶ Industry leaders in Mandalay urged the regime to either delay the introduction of higher rates until early next year or scrap the plan altogether.⁸⁷ Households also expressed concern over the electricity price increase.⁸⁸

From 6 to 8 November, activists and residents in Rangoon and Mandalay held peaceful candlelight protests over the regime's planned electricity price hike.⁸⁹ On 8 November, the National Parliament approved a proposal introduced by USDP MP Aye Mauk that urged authorities to delay electricity price

⁷⁸ RFA (14 Nov 13) OIC in New Push to Set Up an Office in Myanmar; NLM (15 Nov 13) OIC Secretary General calls on Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham; NLM (15 Nov 13) Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker meets OIC delegation

⁷⁹ NLM (16 Nov 13) OIC Secretary-General and party visits relief camps in Rakhine State

⁸⁰ NLM (17 Nov 13) Joint Communiqué between the Central Committee for Implementation of Stability and Development in the Rakhine State of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and OIC

⁸¹ AP (12 Nov 13) Buddhists in Myanmar protest OIC's upcoming visit; Irrawaddy (12 Nov 13) Buddhists Protest Impending OIC Visit to Burma; AFP (13 Nov 13) OIC met with protest in Yangon; RFA (13 Nov 13) OIC Delegation Arrives in Myanmar After Protests; DVB (12 Nov 13) Burmese Buddhists protest OIC visit; EMG (13 Nov 13) Myanmar people protest OIC's visit; AP (13 Nov 13) Buddhist monks protest Organization of Islamic Cooperation's visit to Myanmar; VOA (13 Nov 13) OIC Delegation Greeted by Protests in Burma; DPA (14 Nov 13) OIC team to Myanmar sparks protest; Irrawaddy (14 Nov 13) Buddhist Protests Continue as OIC Prepares for Arakan Visit; Irrawaddy (15 Nov 13) OIC Delegation Met By Angry Protesters in Sittwe; DVB (15 Nov 13) Buddhists take to the streets of Sittwe to protest OIC visit; AFP (15 Nov 13) Protests greet pan-Muslim body in unrest-hit Myanmar; EMG (16 Nov 13) Protests against OIC visit spread across many cities including Rakhine towns; EMG (17 Nov 13) Mass rally in protest against OIC's visit to Myanmar;

⁸² EMG (13 Nov 13) Myanmar people protest OIC's visit; DVB (12 Nov 13) Burmese Buddhists protest OIC visit; DVB (15 Nov 13) Buddhists take to the streets of Sittwe to protest OIC visit; EMG (17 Nov 13) Mass rally in protest against OIC's visit to Myanmar; Irrawaddy (15 Nov 13) OIC Delegation Met By Angry Protesters in Sittwe

⁸³ Xinhua (29 Oct 13) Myanmar revises electricity prices to cover production cost; EMG (30 Oct 13) Gov't criticised for double hike in electricity bills

⁸⁴ Xinhua (29 Oct 13) Myanmar revises electricity prices to cover production cost; EMG (30 Oct 13) Gov't criticised for double hike in electricity bills

⁸⁵ Xinhua (29 Oct 13) Myanmar revises electricity prices to cover production cost

⁸⁶ Irrawaddy (01 Nov 13) Planned Electricity Price Increase Sparks Concern Among Businesses; DVB (11 Nov 13) Electric Power Minister promises to review price hike

⁸⁷ Myanmar Times (03 Nov 13) Govt fear backlash over power price rise

⁸⁸ Irrawaddy (01 Nov 13) Planned Electricity Price Increase Sparks Concern Among Businesses; EMG (01 Nov 13) Surging electricity bills won't hurt the people, says YCSB chairman

⁸⁹ EMG (07 Nov 13) Citizens' demonstration calls on gov't to reduce electricity fees; Irrawaddy (07 Nov 13) Police Charge 4 People for Illegal Candle Protest; RFA (08 Nov 13) Myanmar's Parliament Calls for Freeze on Higher Electricity Rates; EMG (08 Nov 13) Myanmar's parliament to discuss electricity fees issue in urgent; EMG (08 Nov 13) Protests against electricity fee hikes continue; Myanmar Times (10 Nov 13) Power protesters vow to fight on; Myanmar Times (10 Nov 13) Power protesters vow to fight on; Power protesters vow to fight on

⁸⁹ EMG (10 Nov 13) Third day of protests continue against electricity fee hikes

hikes and review the new rates.⁹⁰ MPs raised concerns that the new rates would have a negative impact on factories and households.⁹¹ On 12 November, regime Electric Power Minister Khin Maung Soe told the National Parliament that Naypyidaw would delay the introduction of new electricity rates until the 2014-15 fiscal year.⁹²

Regime, Thai gov't take control of Tavoy SEZ

In an effort to revive the stalled Tavoy Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Tenasserim Division, in November the regime and the Thai government took control of the project from its main developer, the Thai company Italian-Thai Development (ITD). On 21 November, regime and Thai officials signed three MoUs that: 1) stripped ITD of its 75-year concession to develop the Tavoy SEZ;⁹³ 2) transferred the concession to a company jointly owned by the regime and the Thai government;⁹⁴ 3) prescribed that new investors in the SEZ would reimburse ITD for the work that the company had already done.⁹⁵

OTHER BURMA NEWS IN NOVEMBER

1	Farmers from eight villages in Maymyo Township, Mandalay Division, send a letter to President Thein Sein and the National Parliament commission tasked with investigating land confiscation complaints to demand the return of 10,000 acres of land that the Tatmadaw confiscated from them 12 years earlier.
1	In his monthly radio address to the nation, President Thein Sein says that Burma should avoid taking "extreme measures" when considering constitutional amendments.
2	Police fire on Rohingya IDPs from Sin Thet Maw camp killing one and injuring three during a clash in Pauktaw Township, Arakan State.
3	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrives back in Rangoon following a 15-day trip to Europe.
4	UN spokesperson in Rangoon Aye Win says that the unstable security situation in Mansi Township, Kachin State, has prevented the UN from delivering humanitarian aid to affected communities in the township.
4	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi says she has accepted China Association for International Friendly Contact's invitation to visit China.
4	A team from the EU begins an 18-month crowd control training for law enforcement personnel at the Police Battalion No. 8 headquarters in Rangoon.
5	In a report to Parliament, the Auditor General's Office says that 15 regime ministries have an estimated US\$1.1 billion debt accrued during years of military rule.
6	World Bank says that Burma's economy will grow an estimated 6.8% in 2014 but expresses concern over inflation, which the bank estimates rose to 7.3% in August.
7	National Parliament approves a US\$60 million loan from the ADB to the regime so that the Ministry of Electric Power can upgrade the electrical grid in the country.
7	Bangladeshi FM Dipu Moni says that the Bangladeshi government has adopted measures to immediately seal off the country's border with Burma in order to stop the "infiltration" of "Myanmar nationals."
11	Over 100 farmers in Tavoy, Tenasserim Division, demonstrate to demand the return of about 300 acres of land that the Tatmadaw confiscated from them in 1990.
12	A delegation of US, UK, and Swiss diplomats, led by US Ambassador to Burma Derek Mitchell meets with Arakan State regime officials in Akyab, Arakan State, to discuss the situation in the state.
14	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi voices support for a federal system in Burma.
15	At the conclusion of the Chin National Conference, participants release a 10-point statement calling for a federal-style union, the protection of ethnic rights, multi-party democracy, gender equality, and the protection of human rights.

⁹⁰ RFA (08 Nov 13) Myanmar's Parliament Calls for Freeze on Higher Electricity Rates; Myanmar Times (10 Nov 13) Govt to consider review of power pricing; EMG (09 Nov 13) Parliament approves of urgent proposal to reduce electricity fee hikes; NLM (09 Nov 13) Electric Power Ministry to review household electricity rates

⁹¹ RFA (08 Nov 13) Myanmar's Parliament Calls for Freeze on Higher Electricity Rates; Myanmar Times (10 Nov 13) Govt to consider review of power pricing; EMG (08 Nov 13) Myanmar's parliament to discuss electricity fees issue in urgent; NLM (09 Nov 13) Electric Power Ministry to review household electricity rates

⁹² RFA (12 Nov 13) Myanmar Puts Off Plans to Raise Electricity Rates; Irrawaddy (12 Nov 13) Electricity Rate Hike Delayed Amid Parliamentary, Public Pressure; Myanmar Times (18 Nov 13) Electricity price rise delayed; NLM (13 Nov 13) More power stations are required to meet public consumption

⁹³ Reuters (22 Nov 13) Japan on stand-by as ITD dumped from Dawei project

⁹⁴ Bangkok Post (21 Nov 13) ITD remains committed to Dawei; Bangkok Post (20 Nov 13) Dawei deal to undergo amendments; Nation (20 Nov 13) New deals reduce ITD's Dawei role

⁹⁵ Reuters (22 Nov 13) Japan on stand-by as ITD dumped from Dawei project; Bangkok Post (20 Nov 13) Dawei deal to undergo amendments; Nation (20 Nov 13) New deals reduce ITD's Dawei role; Bangkok Post (21 Nov 13) ITD remains committed to Dawei

18	US Embassy in Rangoon issues a press release saying that Washington will provide an additional US\$25 million to assist IDPs in Eastern Burma, and in Arakan and Kachin States.
18	A Buddhist mob damages a mosque in Kyaukpuru, Arakan State.
21	President Thein Sein appoints Maw Tha Htwe as regime Electric Power Deputy Minister.
22	Regime Election Commission Chairman Tin Aye says the commission is planning to reduce the 500,000 kyat (US\$518) registration fee for candidates who want to contest the 2015 elections.
22	A regime Foreign Ministry official says that the President's Office has allocated a budget of 33.4 billion kyat (US\$34 million) to host the ASEAN Summit in 2014.
22	Representatives from ethnic armed groups, including UNFC members, meet with Burmese political party representatives in Chiang Mai, Thailand, for the first day of two-day talks to discuss a proposed nationwide ceasefire.
23	European Commission pledges to provide additional humanitarian aid in an amount of €3 million (US\$4.06 million) to assist those affected by violence in Arakan and Kachin States.
24	88 Generation Students and Generation Wave say that 52 civil society groups have signed a letter that calls on Parliament to amend the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law.
26	State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar reports that the regime has leveled criminal charges against 93 individuals in connection with the latest wave of sectarian violence in Sandoway Township, Arakan State.
26	Courts in Rangoon's Sanchaung and Dagon Township fine Kachin activists Maran Jaw Gun and May Sabe Phyu 20,000 kyat (US\$20) each under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law for participating in a peaceful march on International Day of Peace in September 2012 in Rangoon.
26	About 300 residents of Rangoon's Thingangyun Township demonstrate in Rangoon to demand the return of land that the military confiscated from them in the 1990s.
27	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrives in Sydney on a five-day visit to Australia.
27	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi says that the 2008 constitution is "totally undemocratic" because its amendment depends on MPs appointed by an unelected Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief.
28	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Australian PM Tony Abbott hold talks on human rights, aid, and democracy during a meeting in Canberra.

REPORTS ON BURMA RELEASED IN NOVEMBER

"Poverty, displacement and local governance in South East Burma / Myanmar", The Border Consortium (TBC) <http://bit.ly/1aNzL5q>

"Endemic Land Confiscation in Burma: A Major Challenge to the Reform Process", Burma Partnership <http://bit.ly/18iCPbM>

"Patterns and Trends of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants and Other Drugs: Challenges for Asia and the Pacific", United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) <http://bit.ly/179sCbw>

"Children For Hire: a portrait of child labor in Mon areas", Woman and Child Rights Project <http://bit.ly/17WVcIY>

"From Natural Resources to Human Capital: practical, feasible, immediate resourcing solutions for Myanmar's children", United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) <http://uni.cf/1aTSTil>

"Modern Slavery: A Study of Labour Conditions in Yangon's Industrial Zones", Labour Rights Clinic, Cooperation Program of Independent Laborers, Construction-based Labor Union. and Workers Support Group <http://bit.ly/1ivjCFA>

"Landmine Monitor 2013", International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) <http://bit.ly/1igw91M>

"Rehabilitating Health in the Myanmar Transition", Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) <http://bit.ly/17Ce3AQ>

"Timber Trade Flows and Actors in Myanmar: The Political Economy of Myanmar's Timber Trade", Forest Trends <http://bit.ly/18tcUOM>