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8888 SPIRIT STILL STRONG AS JUNTA WEAKENS

- **Even 19 years after Burma's national uprising, the spirit and goals of the 8888 movement remain relevant and alive through the peaceful resistance of diverse people.**
- **It is essential to realise that while the Burma junta wants to present an image of being totally in control, in reality it is much weaker and vulnerable. It has not been able to control the economy, let alone gain political legitimacy or credibility. The citizens, and indeed, many sections of the army and public service, are resentful and have lost all trust in the junta's capacity to govern.**
- **The latest wave of resistance centres on the junta's economic mismanagement that is affecting their lives at a very fundamental level. The worsening economic conditions that are causing widespread human suffering in Burma have inspired citizens to protest in public, despite arrests and harassment.**
- **Pro-democracy activists continued to carry out campaigns and initiatives in support of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, defying threats, attacks, and arrests.**
- **Despite mass detentions, harassment and persecution by the SPDC, the National League for Democracy (NLD) continued to carry out its activities and prevails as a genuine political force.**
- **The 88 Generation Students group promoted a series of highly successful campaigns. The group peacefully gathered activists and ordinary citizens across Burma, showing that a vibrant civil society still exists.**
- **Political prisoners remained politically active while incarcerated, and inspire fellow activists.**
- **Activists inside Burma continued to disseminate information to the public about human rights and HIV/AIDS, despite SPDC retaliations.**
- **The SPDC Army's rank and file is plagued by widespread desertion and serious drops in morale. Discontent also continues to grow among SPDC army's high-ranking officers.**

Economic protests

Over the last year, worsening economic conditions have inspired a series of peaceful protests. Despite arrests and harassment, citizens have publicly protested against the junta's economic mismanagement that is affecting their lives at a very fundamental level.

- **22 February:** about 25 people took part in a 30-minute demonstration in downtown Rangoon, calling for improved health care and education, better pension benefits, and lower prices for food staples.¹

¹ Mizzima News (26 Feb 07) Junta arrests seven more demonstrators; Mizzima News (27 Feb 07) Junta releases nine demonstrators; AP (07 Mar 07) Myanmar detains 8 who took part in rare protest last month; Mizzima News (07

- **8 March:** 71-year-old veteran politician Win Naing and activist Htin Kyaw held a press conference to brief journalists about the deteriorating socio-economic situation in Burma.²
- **Early March:** 65-year-old amateur satirist Thein Zan from Thingangyun Township, Rangoon Division, posted on his fence an anti-junta satirical piece that criticized state-run newspapers for not informing the public about the deteriorating state of the economy in Burma.³
- **4 April:** 400 residents of Chauk Township, Magwe Division, demonstrated in front of the Township Development Committee office, protesting the SPDC authorities' decision to double the municipal sales tax. On the next day, shop owners in Chauk Township submitted a petition of 500 signatures against the tax increase to the municipal office.⁴
- **4 April:** Tin Ko, a 33-year-old HIV patient from Kanma Township, Magwe Division, staged a protest in Rangoon calling for easier access to antiretroviral treatment for people living outside the former capital.⁵
- **22 April:** a group of protesters demonstrated in front of Rangoon's Thingangyun Sanpyat market, calling for lower commodity prices, better healthcare, and improved utility services.⁶
- **Early June:** three youths from Akyab, Arakan State, displayed anti-Shwe Gas Project posters.⁷
- **19 June:** 25-year-old Maung Kyaw Naing staged a protest on high inflation in Taunggoat Township, Arakan State.⁸
- **24 June:** Maung Oo, a resident of Rangoon's New Dagon Township, publicly protested against the junta's economic policies and called for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release.⁹
- **15 July:** more than 100 activists called for an end to corruption during a ceremony at the Tharthanagonye temple in Rangoon. Saffron robes were donated to monks as activists called for people to follow Buddha's precepts against "stealing and lying."¹⁰

NLD

Despite criticism, harassment, forced resignation, physical attacks, and arrests of its members, the NLD continued to carry out its activities, including:

- Holding regular meetings, passing resolutions, and launching recruitment campaigns.¹¹
- Meeting with international observers, agencies and their representatives, such as holding a meeting with UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari in November 2006.¹²
- Observing important anniversaries with gatherings and prayers. Anniversaries observed during this year include: the anniversary of 8888, the anniversary of the 1990 election,

Mar 07) Junta's second crackdown on protestors; Irrawaddy (07 Mar 07) More Rangoon protestors arrested; Irrawaddy (14 Mar 07) Seven protestors released in Rangoon; Mizzima News (14 Mar 07) Seven demonstrators released; AP (07 Mar 07) Myanmar detains 8 who took part in rare protest last month; Mizzima News (07 Mar 07) Junta's second crackdown on protestors; Irrawaddy (07 Mar 07) More Rangoon protestors arrested

² Mizzima News (08 Mar 07) Special Branch picks up U Win Naing and Htin Kyaw

³ Mizzima News (08 Mar 07) Burmese elder arrested for satires on SPDC newspapers

⁴ Irrawaddy (05 Apr 07) Burma Township Residents Protest New Tax Rate

⁵ Irrawaddy (04 Apr 07) Solo Protest Staged by HIV Patient in Rangoon; DVB (05 Apr 07) Rangoon man protests lack of HIV treatment in Burma; DVB (11 Apr 07) Supporters call for the release of HIV protestor

⁶ Irrawaddy (23 Apr 07) Burma's junta vows to crack down on human rights activists; DVB (23 Apr 07) Rangoon protestors bashed, detained by police; ABC (22 Apr 07) Burma arrests seven over rare protest; Mizzima News (23 Apr 07) Junta detains seven protestors in Rangoon

⁷ Kaladan News (08 Jun 07) Arakan State under military control

⁸ Mizzima News (20 Jun 07) Mother and sister of solo protestor also arrested

⁹ DVB (27 Jun 07) Solo demonstrators take to Rangoon streets

¹⁰ DPA (15 Jul 07) Rare protest skews Burma inflation

¹¹ DVB (30 Aug 06) Rangoon Division NLD hold annual meeting; DVB (16 Oct 06) Mid-month NLD meetings support freedom campaign in Burma; DVB (31 Oct 06) Madaya Township NLD leaders meet; DVB (01 Nov 06) Meikhtila District NLD demand the release of prisoners; DVB (13 Dec 06) NLD starts nation-wide search for new members

¹² Mizzima News (11 Nov 06) Gambari meets Aung San Suu Kyi

World AIDS Day, Independence Day, Union Day, Children's Day/Birthday of General Aung San, Resistance Day, and Martyr's Day.¹³

- Releasing political statements and issuing policies on ongoing themes and emerging issues.¹⁴
- Organizing campaigns and participating in regular Tuesday prayers for the release of political prisoners, including their party leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.¹⁵

Support for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

On 25 May 2007, the SPDC extended Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest by a year. Pro-democracy activists made vocal demands for her release leading up to the day her detention was set to expire. Defying threats, attacks, and arrests, pro-democracy activists carried out various campaigns and initiatives in support of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi:

- **1 May:** NLD members held a prayer for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at the Tuesday corner of the Sule pagoda in Rangoon, launching a month long campaign for the release of their leader.¹⁶ The NLD was joined by a variety of political and rights activists including the 88 Generation Students group and activist Su Su Nway.¹⁷
- **2 May:** the NLD released a statement asking the UN to launch an investigation into the Depayin massacre that led to the house arrest of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.¹⁸
- **14 May:** The NLD called on the SPDC to immediately release its leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.¹⁹ The call was reiterated on 18 and 27 May.²⁰
- **21 May:** NLD youth members launched a t-shirt campaign in support of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The groups distributed t-shirts bearing her image and the slogan "Free Aung San Suu Kyi".²¹

Political Prisoners

Political prisoners remain politically active while incarcerated, and inspire fellow activists.

- **12 December 2006:** Burma's longest-serving political prisoner, U Win Tin, was awarded Reporters Sans Frontières' Journalist of the Year award.
- During the last week of December 2006, political prisoner Kyaw San ended his hunger strike to protest poor prison conditions in Insein prison.²²

¹³ DVB (08 Aug 06) Burmese activists vow to continue to fight for freedom and democracy; DPA (14 Nov 06) Myanmar veterans mark National Day with renewed call for democracy; AFP (01 Dec 06) Aung San Suu Kyi's party throws feast for people with HIV; Mizzima News (04 Jan 07) Burma's opposition groups honor Independence Day in Rangoon; Irrawaddy (12 Feb 07) Burma's "Union Day" marked at NLD headquarter; Irrawaddy (13 Feb 07) Aung San Commemorated at Children's Day Events in Rangoon; Irrawaddy (27 Mar 07) Burmese Mark Resistance Day; DVB (20 Jul 07) NLD marks Martyr's Day with calls for inclusive dialogue; AFP (27 May 07) Myanmar pro-democracy activists rally in Yangon; Reuters (27 May 07) Police Block Suu Kyi Prayers at Famed Myanmar Pagoda; IHT (27 May 07) Myanmar pro-democracy activists demand release of Aung San Suu Kyi; Philippine Star (27 May 07) Myanmar pro-democracy activists rally in Yangon; AAP (27 May 07) Clashes in Burma with Suu Kyi Supporters

¹⁴ Irrawaddy (14 Nov 06) Burma Celebrates National Day; DVB (15 Jan 07) NLD urges China, Russia to consider UN action; AFP (05 Dec 06) Myanmar democracy party urges junta to re-open Red Cross offices; Irrawaddy (16 Mar 07) Burmese junta blasts NLD, US and Britain; AFP (27 Mar 07) Myanmar opposition urges junta to focus on economy; Irrawaddy (08 May 07) Burma's Opposition Unhappy about Resumption of Ties with N. Korea; AFP (06 Jun 07) Suu Kyi's party to boycott final round of Myanmar charter talks

¹⁵ DVB (01 Nov 06) Meikhtila District NLD demand the release of prisoners; DVB (15 Feb 07) NLD slams military for extending deputy leader's detention; AFP (27 May 07) Myanmar pro-democracy activists rally in Yangon; Reuters (27 May 07) Police Block Suu Kyi Prayers at Famed Myanmar Pagoda

¹⁶ NMG (01 May 07) Burmese activists pray for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release

¹⁷ DVB (03 May 07) Free Daw Suu campaign gathers support

¹⁸ Reuters (02 May 01) Myanmar opposition urges U.N. probe of 2003 clash

¹⁹ DPA (14 May 07) Burma opposition pleads for Suu Kyi

²⁰ AFP (18 May 07) Myanmar opposition demands release of Suu Kyi, supporters; AFP (27 May 07) Myanmar pro-democracy activists rally in Yangon

²¹ Irrawaddy (21 May 07) Young Activists Launch New 'Free Suu Kyi' Campaign; DVB (21 May 07) NLD youth members launch t-shirt campaign

²² DVB (27 Dec 06) Insein prisoner ends hunger strike

- Former political prisoners marked the 18th anniversary of U Win Tin's detention with editorials in his support.²³
- **June 2007:** imprisoned leader of the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, Hkun Htun Oo, expressed his strong opposition to the National Convention.²⁴
- On **19 June**, imprisoned HIV activist Phyu Phyu Thin began a week-long hunger strike demanding a fair trial or be freed.²⁵ After her release on 2 July, Phyu Phyu Thin resumed her work, visiting HIV/AIDS awareness centers set up by the NLD throughout Rangoon.²⁶ She also called on the SPDC to work with the NLD in the fight to control the disease and help its victims.²⁷

88 Generation Students group

Over the last year, the 88 Generation Students group promoted a series of highly successful campaigns. Despite continuous harassment and intimidation by the SPDC, the group managed to peacefully gather activists and ordinary citizens across Burma, showing that a vibrant civil society still exists. Campaigns included:

- **Signature campaign**, running from 2 to 23 October 2006, collected signatures on a petition demanding the release of all political prisoners. 535,580 signatures from across the country were collected despite harassment by SPDC authorities. The activists' petition was submitted to SPDC authorities and the United Nations.²⁸
- **"Multi religious prayer"** campaign: a week-long prayer campaign conducted from 29 October to 4 November 2006. Candlelight vigils were held in Buddhist monasteries, Christian churches, Muslim mosques, and Hindu temples throughout the country. Prayers were offered for a peaceful resolution of the country's political crisis and the release of all political prisoners.²⁹
- **"Open Heart"** campaign, launched on 4 January, invited Burmese people to directly address letters to the SPDC leader Senior General Than Shwe to describe the country's deteriorating economic, political, and social situation.³⁰ The campaign, initially scheduled to run until 4 February, was extended until 4 March as a result of growing interest across Burma.³¹ The group received more than 20,000 letters.³²
- **"White Sunday"** campaign, conducted from 11 March to 20 May, to express support to family members of imprisoned political prisoners. Large numbers of activists have since then visited the families of political prisoners in Rangoon every Sunday.³³

The 88 Generation Students group also continued to carry out their regular political activities, including:

- Seeking political solutions through calls for dialogue to the SPDC.³⁴

²³ Irrawaddy (01 Jul 07) Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright - Kay Latt; Asian Tribune (04 Jul 07) Journalist U Win Tin Spends 18 years in Burmese Prison - Zin Linn

²⁴ Irrawaddy (22 Jun 07) Detained Shan leader to ceasefire leaders: Say no to Convention

²⁵ Reuters (03 Jul 07) Myanmar frees prominent AIDS activist

²⁶ Irrawaddy (02 Jul 07) A brave, caring woman now also needs help

²⁷ Irrawaddy (03 Jul 07) Freed HIV/AIDS activist calls for government cooperation

²⁸ AP (24 Oct 06) Democracy activists collect more than half a million signatures in Myanmar; DVB (23 Oct 06) 88 Generation Students insist signature campaign a success

²⁹ DVB (25 Oct 06) Burma's 88 Generation Students launch another freedom campaign

³⁰ Mizzima News (03 Jan 07) 88 to start "open Heart" campaign tomorrow; Irrawaddy (03 Jan 07) Activists in Burma start new campaign; IHT (10 Jan 07) Myanmar student activist says he and four comrades freed after more than 3 months' detention

³¹ DVB (05 Feb 07) 88 Generation Students extend Open Heart campaign

³² DVB (05 Mar 07) 88 students' Open Heart campaign ends

³³ AFP (12 Mar 07) Another activist arrested in Myanmar; Mizzima News (12 Mar 07) 88 generation launches 'White Sunday'; DVB (23 Apr 07) Family interrogated after 88 students' visit; AFP (20 May 07) Myanmar activists visit Suu Kyi's family as more supporters held; AP (20 May 07) Myanmar political activists visit relatives of detained pro-democracy leader Suu Kyi; DPA (20 May 07) Myanmar activists visit Aung San Suu Kyi's cousins; DVB (21 May 07) 88 Generation Students to step up peaceful protests

- Producing statements, and issuing proposals on significant political developments.³⁵
- Observing important anniversaries and commemorations.³⁶
- Organizing and attending meetings and demonstrations.³⁷

Students

New generations of students also came forward with political initiatives:

- **15 September 2006:** students at Myingyan Degree College in central Burma staged a demonstration protesting new rules imposed on them by the authorities, including the forced recruitment of students by the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA). A similar demonstration had occurred earlier at Shwepyithar Computer College in Rangoon.³⁸
- **December 2006:** 30 law students from Rangoon formed a group to raise public awareness of legal procedures and basic human rights.³⁹

Solo protesters

- **2 January:** Activist Tun Tun shouted political slogans while wearing a General Aung San t-shirt at Rangoon's Shwedagon pagoda.⁴⁰ On 12 February, he was prevented by SPDC authorities from displaying a picture of General Aung San at the same Pagoda.⁴¹
- **12 February:** 60-year-old former political prisoner Ohn Than demonstrated outside the NLD headquarters in Rangoon. He called for the 1990 election to be honored and for the convening of a parliament with elected lawmakers.⁴² On 25 April, Ohn Than repeated his protest again in downtown Rangoon.⁴³
- **16 May:** 62-year-old NLD member Tin Tin Maw staged a protest in front of Rangoon's City Hall calling for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.⁴⁴
- **24 May:** Former political prisoner Htun Lwin staged a protest calling for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.⁴⁵
- **1 July:** Buddhist monk Dhamma Tharmi publicly criticized the National Convention and protested against the detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.⁴⁶

³⁴ Irrawaddy (08 Aug 06) Rangoon Marks Anniversary of Democracy Movement; DVB (19 Apr 07) 88 students call for military commitment to development; IHT (27 May 07) Myanmar pro-democracy activists demand release of Aung San Suu Kyi; Mizzima News (28 Jun 07) 88 students urge junta to create democratic political environment

³⁵ Irrawaddy (03 Nov 06) Junta warns of action against student group; AFP (13 Mar 07) UN urged to probe rights abuses in Myanmar; Irrawaddy (19 Mar 07) Junta urged to honor the right to education; DVB (06 Apr 07) 88 students slam government over discrimination; DVB (19 Apr 07) 88 students call for military commitment to development; BurmaNet News (17 May 07) The 88 Generation Students: Statement; DVB (17 May 07) Opposition groups condemn 'civilian' arrests; Daily Times (05 Jun 07) Rights activists deplore Russian, Chinese support to Myanmar junta; Irrawaddy (08 May 07) Burma's Opposition Unhappy about Resumption of Ties with N. Korea

³⁶ DVB (09 Aug 06) Weekly prayer meeting for political prisoners barred in Rangoon; DVB (19 Sep 06) Student Win Maw Oo's death marked in Rangoon; Mizzima News (18 Oct 06) Burmese students celebrate 'silent birthday' of detained leader; Mizzima News (31 Oct 06) 88 generation students welcome Gambari's visit to Burma; Mizzima News (18 Dec 06) Activists celebrate detained leader Ko Ko Gyi's birthday; Irrawaddy (04 Jan 07) Burma's opposition groups honor Independence Day in Rangoon; Irrawaddy (12 Feb 07) Burma's "Union Day" marked at NLD headquarters; Irrawaddy (19 Apr 07) Rangoon's New Year wishes

³⁷ Mizzima News (11 Jan 07) Released 88 leaders meet press in Min Ko Naing's home; DPA (15 Jul 07) Rare protest skews Burma inflation

³⁸ DVB (20 Sep 06) Students demonstrate at Myingyan Degree College in central Burma

³⁹ DVB (19 Dec 06) Rangoon law students form justice group

⁴⁰ DVB (08 Jan 07) Man snatched from prayer meeting released

⁴¹ Irrawaddy (13 Feb 07) Aung San Commemorated at Children's Day Events in Rangoon

⁴² IHT (12 Feb 07) Myanmar junta chief accuses foreigners of trying to stir up racial conflict

⁴³ Mizzima News (25 Apr 07) Solo protester arrested in Rangoon

⁴⁴ Irrawaddy (18 May 07) Old Woman Stages Solo Protest in Rangoon; DVB (18 May 07) Elderly woman arrested after solo protest

⁴⁵ DVB (24 May 07) Solo protestor arrested in Myitkyina

⁴⁶ DVB (03 Jul 07) Military throws monk in prison over protests

Htin Kyaw: “Gold card” candidate?

Activist Htin Kyaw appears to be eligible for the SPDC jail equivalent of a frequent flyer card, having been arrested five times in two months on 22 February, 6 March, 8 March, 22 March, and 22 April.

- **22 February:** Htin Kyaw was arrested in Rangoon for taking part in a demonstration calling for improved health care and education, better pension benefits, and lower prices for food staples.⁴⁷ He was released on 27 February.⁴⁸
- **6 March:** Htin Kyaw was rearrested in connection with the 22 February protest. He was released the next day.⁴⁹
- **8 March:** Htin Kyaw was arrested soon after holding a press conference at the residence of Win Naing. U Win Naing and Htin Kyaw had called the press conference to brief journalists about the deteriorating situation in Burma.⁵⁰
- **22 March:** Htin Kyaw was arrested for staging a protest calling for religious freedom in front of a Rangoon. Authorities earlier prevented him from serving as a monk at a monastery in Rangoon.⁵¹ He was released on 23 March.⁵²
- **22 April:** Htin Kyaw was arrested for protesting high commodity prices in front of a market in Rangoon’s Thingangyun Township.⁵³ He was released on 27 July.⁵⁴

Human Rights Education

Activists from several groups continued their attempts to disseminate information to the public about human rights, despite SPDC restrictions and brutality.

- **10 December 2006:** Myint Aye and two other members of the 88 Generation Students group were arrested by the SPDC authorities for attempting to organize a ceremony marking International Human Rights' Day.⁵⁵
- **8 February 2007:** SPDC military intelligence authorities detained eight people who organized a public literacy seminar in a Buddhist monastery in Paungtalei Township, Pegu Division.⁵⁶
- **27 February:** U Thu Ganda, a monk from Taunggoat Township, Arakan State, was confined to his monastery after he was found distributing booklets of the UN Declaration of Human Rights to local villagers.⁵⁷
- **20 March:** Kyaw Oo and Kyaw Swe, two activists with the Human Rights Defenders and Promoters (HRDP), were arrested in Prome, Pegu Division, for distributing copies of the UN Declaration of Human Rights.⁵⁸
- **18 April:** Maung Maung Lay and Myint Naing, two activists from the Rangoon-based HRDP, conducted a human rights training in Oakpon village, Hintada Township,

⁴⁷ DVB (23 Feb 07) Burmese military threatens action against protestors

⁴⁸ Mizzima News (27 Feb 07) Junta releases nine demonstrators; DVB (27 Feb 07) Burmese authorities release protestors

⁴⁹ AP (07 Mar 07) Myanmar detains 8 who took part in rare protest last month; Mizzima News (07 Mar 07) Junta's second crackdown on protestors; Irrawaddy (07 Mar 07) More Rangoon protestors arrested

⁵⁰ Mizzima News (08 Mar 07) Special Branch picks up U Win Naing and Htin Kyaw

⁵¹ IHT (22 Mar 07) Persistent protester detained for 4th time in month in Myanmar

⁵² Irrawaddy (23 Mar 07) Solo Protester Released in Rangoon

⁵³ DVB (30 Jul 07) Burmese authorities release five more activists

⁵⁴ AFP (28 Jul 07) Myanmar frees five activists; IHT (28 Jul 07) Myanmar frees 5 activists held without charges for 2 months; Irrawaddy (30 Jul 07) Five Activists Released in Burma; DVB (30 Jul 07) Burmese authorities release five more activists

⁵⁵ DPA (10 Dec 06) Myanmar Arrests Dissidents, Nixes Human Rights' Day Commemoration

⁵⁶ Mizzima News (23 Feb 07) MI detains eight for organising literacy seminar; Irrawaddy (22 Feb 07) Three People Reportedly Jailed for Organizing Literary Event

⁵⁷ Narinjara News (27 Feb 07) Monk's movement banned for distributing human rights booklets

⁵⁸ Irrawaddy (20 Mar 07) Burmese activists arrested for distributing UN rights document

Irrawaddy Division, after which they were attacked and severely beaten by USDA members and plain-clothed local SPDC officials.⁵⁹

- **10 July:** after giving a human rights workshop, former teacher Min Min was arrested by SPDC authorities in Prome, Pegu Division.⁶⁰

HIV/AIDS Awareness

Activists working to educate the people of Burma about HIV/AIDS have been particularly targeted by the SPDC.

- **13 August 2006:** 11 members of the “Friends with a Red Ribbon” group were arrested at Maggin Buddhist Monastery in Rangoon’s Thingyankyun Township where they were preparing for a merit-making ceremony for HIV/AIDS patients.⁶¹
- **August:** SPDC authorities in Yenangyaung, Magwe Division, began harassing a local monk for helping HIV/AIDS sufferers.⁶²
- **1 December:** on World AIDS Day, members of the 88 Generations Students group distributed over 40,000 HIV/AIDS leaflets around Rangoon, while the NLD held a feast for people afflicted with the disease.⁶³ However, the SPDC Health Ministry banned a slated performance by the famous and outspoken comedian Zarganar and fellow artists.⁶⁴
- **13 February 2007:** SPDC officials shut down a locally run HIV/AIDS awareness centre that distributed educational books, leaflets, and condoms in Pakhutku, Magwe Division.⁶⁵

Dissent from within

The SPDC Army’s rank and file is plagued by widespread desertion and serious drops in morale, despite the massive proportion of Burma’s budget allocated to military expenditure.

- During the four-month period proceeding September 2006, 9,497 troops were lost from service. This is up 8% from the same period in 2005, when 8,760 troops were lost from service.⁶⁶
- During the same period, battalions were operating at less than 20% of their full strength, with some frontline units staffed by as few as 15 troops (less than 2% of the prescribed capacity).⁶⁷

The cause of desertions appears to be linked to harsh conditions, inadequate rations, and infrequent field inspections.⁶⁸

- **10 September 2006:** Two SPDC Army soldiers from the Light Infantry Battalion 550 stationed on the Indo-Burma border deserted their camp.⁶⁹
- **14 November:** Two soldiers from the Light Infantry Battalion 234 deserted.⁷⁰
- **20 November:** An SPDC Army soldier from the Light Infantry Battalion 344 based in Akyab, Arakan State, deserted from a frontline outpost near the Burma-Bangladesh.⁷¹

⁵⁹ Mizzima News (19 Apr 07) USDA orders attack on human rights activists: Activists; DVB (19 Apr 07) Two rights activists bashed in Irrawaddy Division; DVB (20 Apr 07) Activists slam government groups over attack

⁶⁰ DVB (12 Jul 07) Former teacher jailed for discussing human rights

⁶¹ DVB (13 Aug 06) Burmese authorities arrest volunteers helping AIDS sufferers

⁶² DVB (26 Aug 06) Monk pressured and intimidated for helping AIDS patients in Burma ; DVB (13 Sep 06) Monk still monitored and harassed for helping HIV/AIDS sufferers

⁶³ Mizzima News (01 Dec 06) 88 students into HIV/AIDS awareness drive; AFP (01 Dec 06) Aung San Suu Kyi's party throws feast for people with HIV

⁶⁴ Mizzima News (04 Dec 06) Junta cancels Zarganar's programme on HIV/AIDS

⁶⁵ DVB (14 Feb 07) Magwe AIDS awareness centre shut down by officials

⁶⁶ Jane's Defence Weekly (04 Apr 07) Myanmar army document spotlights low morale

⁶⁷ Jane's Defence Weekly (04 Apr 07) Myanmar army document spotlights low morale

⁶⁸ Jane's Defence Weekly (04 Apr 07) Myanmar army document spotlights low morale

⁶⁹ Narinjara (12 Sep 06) Two Burmese soldiers desert with weapons

⁷⁰ Narinjara News (07 Dec 06) Deserter killed in shootout

- **December:** An estimated 110 soldiers from 10 SPDC Army battalions stationed in Rathidaung, Buthidaung, and Akyab, Arakan State, deserted. A large number of soldiers also deserted from three Buthidaung-based SPDC Army battalions - LIB 233, 234, and 263.⁷²
- **2 February 2007:** An SPDC Army deserter was killed during a gunfight between three deserters from LIB 537 and SPDC Army troops near Ray Myat Village in Rathidaung Township.⁷³
- **27 March:** Hundreds of soldiers who participated in the Armed Forces Day parade in Naypyidaw reportedly deserted. Of 300 men from the Military Operations Command (MOC) #18 based in Eastern Shan State only 140 returned from Naypyidaw to their command post.⁷⁴

Underpaid and undersupplied soldiers depend on extortion, confiscation and forced labor to survive. Regiments are also ordered to raise funds through the sale of seized crops and goods. In September 2006, it was reported that an SPDC Army junior officer from Sagaing Division-based LIB 119 had lodged a complaint of corruption against his superiors.⁷⁵

Discontent grows also among SPDC army's high-ranking officers, as General Maung Aye and General Shwe Mann, the junta's number two and three respectively, continue their power struggle over Than Shwe's succession. In August 2006, more than 100 senior SPDC military officers with the rank of colonel and above were involved in a reshuffle, reportedly orchestrated by General Shwe Mann, the SPDC's #3, without consulting with General Maung Aye, the junta's #2. Military officers connected with Maung Aye were transferred to insignificant positions in the defense services and the civilian administration.⁷⁶ Maung Aye also reportedly criticized the replacement of SPDC Ambassadors to Russia and Laos with two generals loyal to Shwe Mann.⁷⁷

⁷¹ Narinjara News (07 Dec 06) Deserter killed in shootout

⁷² Narinjara News (01 Feb 07) Desertion from Burmese Army on the rise

⁷³ Narinjara News (06 Feb 07) Deserter killed in encounter with army in Arakan

⁷⁴ SHAN (05 Apr 07) Massive AWOLs on Armed Forces Day

⁷⁵ Narinjara News (05 Sep 06) Army brass examines Lieutenant's allegations of corruption

⁷⁶ DVB (02 Sep 06) Rift between top officials over Burmese military transfers; Irrawaddy (22 Aug 06) Military Reshuffle Sparks Rumors

⁷⁷ DVB (03 Sep 06) Burmese officials disagree over envoy's replacement