



# Help End Crimes Against Humanity in Burma

For decades in the world's longest running armed conflict (1947-Present), Burma's military regime has carried out a widespread and systematic campaign of brutality, oppression and ethnic cleansing against the country's ethnic minorities. Employing their 'Four cuts' policy to cut off recruits, supplies, food and information from the armed ethnic resistance groups who are fighting for ethnic rights and equality among all ethnic nationalities, the Burmese army has perpetrated severe human rights violations against Karen, Karenni, Shan, Kachin, Mon, Chin, and Rakhine and other ethnic minority civilians including:

## FORCED DISPLACEMENT

- Burma's military regime has destroyed more than 3,500 ethnic minority villages.
- More than two million have fled Burma as refugees and an additional 600,000 villagers struggle to survive as internally displaced persons (IDPs).

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Ethnic minority women and girls are subjected to widespread and systematic sexual violence by Burmese soldiers, including rape, torture and sexual slavery as a means of terrorizing and subjugating the ethnic minorities. Many victims were brutally killed after being raped.

## EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS AND TORTURE

- As part of their deliberate strategy to end all resistance to their rule, the regime carries out a campaign of killing and terrorizing civilians.

## CHILD SOLDIERS

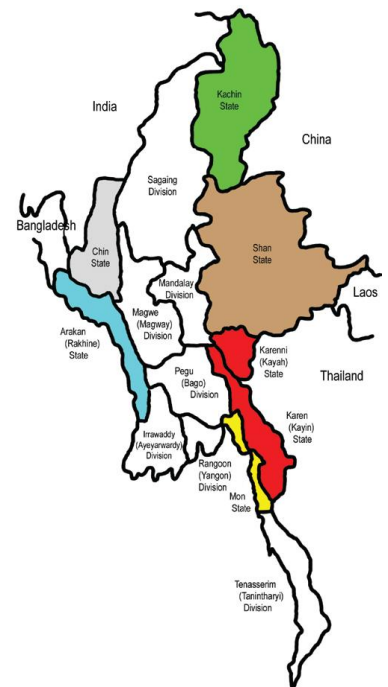
- With more than 90,000 child soldiers, Burma has more child soldiers than any other country in the world.

## FORCED LABOR

- The International Labor Organization (ILO) has found through its own investigation that Burma's military regime utilizes widespread and systematic forced labor. The ILO has estimated that the military regime compelled more than 800,000 civilians into forced labor.
- Burma is the only country the ILO has ever called upon its member countries to sanction, as a result of its flagrant disregard of its obligations under international law and pervasive use of forced labor, including sexual slavery, human landmine sweepers, and portering.

## IMPUNITY

- "These violations have been so numerous and consistent over the past few years as to suggest that they are not simply isolated or the acts of individual misbehavior by middle- and lower-rank officers but are rather the result of policy at the highest level, entailing political and legal responsibility." UN Special Rappateur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar (Burma)



## US POLICY ON BURMA

The Obama Administration recently unveiled its new policy on Burma, here are some of the important highlights:

The goals remain largely the same:

- Ensuring the unconditional release of Burma's democratic leader and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and all 2,200 political prisoners;
- Pressing for an end to conflicts with ethnic minority groups;
- Holding accountable those responsible for human rights violations;
- Securing a genuine tri-partite dialogue between the military regime, the democratic opposition (led by Aung San Suu Kyi), and the ethnic minorities towards a transition to democracy.

Implementation:

- Sanctions will remain in place which includes an arms embargo, import ban, investment ban, visa ban, and financial sanctions against regime leaders and their cronies.
- Pragmatic engagement will begin with direct, senior-level dialogue between the U.S. and the military regime.

Questions remain:

- The JADE Act required appointment of a Special Envoy on Burma but no one has yet been nominated;
- The JADE Act has also yet to be fully implemented, particularly banking sanctions, it is unknown if or when the Administration will increase banking sanctions;
- The military regime is known for using engagement as a diversion and stall tactic, as the U.S. pursues a policy of engagement, they must set timelines and benchmarks to avoid this pattern;
- The new policy calls for accountability of those responsible for human rights violations but does not outline how they will attempt to achieve this goal, the U.S. must call for a UN Commission of Inquiry, an investigation into the military regime's crimes against humanity and war crimes perpetrated under a climate of impunity as the first step towards ensuring justice and accountability for their victims.

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## UN COMMISSION OF INQUIRY CAMPAIGN

Over the past 15 years, as the military has stepped up attacks on Burma's ethnic groups, the international community has failed to act in any meaningful way. Since 1990, UN representatives have visited the country 37 times in an attempt to facilitate dialogue and promote human rights to no avail. In fact, UN reports state that the Burmese regime is committing crimes against humanity against ethnic groups in the country. Yet, the UN Security Council (UNSC) has never passed a binding resolution to address the Burmese military's attacks on civilians.

We want to change that. This year, we launched a campaign to demand the UNSC establish a Commission of Inquiry, an investigation into the military regime's war crimes, crimes against humanity and system of impunity, a first step towards taking the situation in Burma to the International Criminal Court. The current UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma has recently joined this call, urging the UN to "take stronger steps with regard to accountability" as the upcoming 2010 elections place Burma at a "critical moment in its history". We want to end the silence and inaction surrounding Burma's ethnic groups. We want the Burmese regime to finally be held accountable for their crimes. And we want to achieve justice for the ethnic civilians that have been subjected to so much terror. But we will need your help.

We are currently building support for this campaign in Congress, with the Obama administration, and at campuses and communities across the United States. So far, 55 members of the House of Representatives sent a letter to President Obama supporting this call, a call joined by 14 Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, and the former UN Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights in Burma. Currently, the Obama administration has yet to decide to prioritize an UN Commission of Inquiry as a policy objective for Burma. But his policy has only recently been unveiled and we believe with grassroots efforts and support from Congress we can successfully add this to his policy objectives.

The campaign to establish an UN Commission of Inquiry on Burma is a global effort. We are working with our international partners in France, Britain, Japan, Indonesia and elsewhere to push for a Commission of Inquiry at the UN Security Council. But it starts at home. The US must support this campaign and we need your help to make that happen. Throughout the weekend, we will be giving you more details about the campaign and how you can play a role in this historic effort.

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