

Texts adopted by Parliament

**Thursday, 6 September 2007 - Strasbourg**

**Provisional edition: Burma**

**European Parliament resolution of 6 September 2007 on Burma**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the first formal session of the United Nations Security Council on Burma, held on 29 September 2006,
- having regard to the statement of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of 18 July 2007 and to the letter addressed to him signed by 92 Burmese MPs-Elect, of 1 August 2007, which included a proposal for national reconciliation and democratisation in Burma,
- having regard to the unprecedented denunciation by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross Jakob Kellenberger, of 28 June 2007, of violations of international humanitarian law committed against civilians and detainees by the Government of Burma, and his demand that the Government of Burma take urgent action to end these violations and prevent them from recurring,
- having regard to Commission Regulation (EC) No 481/2007 of 27 April 2007(1) , renewing restrictive measures against Burma,
- having regard to the US Government's decision of 1 August 2007 to renew import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003,
- having regard to the public request of 23 August 2007 by the Head of the Inter-Parliamentary Caucus of the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN), Zaid Ibrahim, that China use its influence to resolve the crisis in Burma,
- having regard to the eighth Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) Foreign Ministers' meeting held in Germany on 28 to 29 May 2007,
- having regard to the 88 Generation Students' Announcement of 8 August 2007, to mark the 17th anniversary of the victory of the National League for Democracy (NLD) in the parliamentary elections of 27 May 1990, condemning the constitutional proposals being made by the National Convention, which entered its last phase on 18 July 2007,
- having regard to the earlier report of 18 July 2007 by Human Rights Watch that the proposed new constitution for Burma would maintain a repressive system of military rule,
- having regard to its resolutions of 12 May 2005(2) , 17 November 2005(3) , 14 December 2006(4) and 21 June 2007 on Burma(5) ,
- having regard to the Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union of 28 August 2007 on the arrests of democracy activists in Burma,

– having regard to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit of 8 and 9 September 2007,

– having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the NLD leader, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Sakharov Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi has spent 11 of the last 17 years under house arrest,

B. whereas on 15 August 2007 the Government of Burma withdrew fuel subsidies without warning, leading to an increase in fuel prices estimated at 500 %, doubling transport costs and inflating the cost of essential goods and services,

C. whereas the Burmese Assistance Association for Political Prisoners estimates that over 100 human rights activists and peaceful protesters were arrested in the immediate wake of the protests over the fuel price-increase of 15 August 2007,

D. whereas the so-called National Convention of Burma has concluded the drafting of the basic principles for a new constitution, which lacks credibility due to the absence of democratically elected representatives,

E. whereas the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) continues to subject the people of Burma to appalling human rights abuses, such as forced labour, persecution of dissidents, conscription of child soldiers, and forced relocation,

F. whereas about 90 % of the Burmese population are living below or near the poverty line of USD 1 a day, more than 30 % of children under five suffer from malnutrition, mortality rates for malaria and tuberculosis remain very high, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has spread across the general population and nearly half of school-age children never enrol,

G. whereas ASEAN has started to take a more robust stance against the abuses by the military regime in Burma insisting that Burma improve its human rights record and embrace democracy,

H. whereas, for the first time since 1988, Buddhist monks have recently participated in demonstrations against the regime, in spite of the night-time curfew which has been imposed in Thanlyin since 19 August 2007,

1. Deplores the SPDC's crackdown on peaceful protestors against the fuel price increase of 15 August 2007, the arrest of over 100 people and the violent attacks on civilians with particular brutality against women;

2. Demands the immediate and unconditional release of all those who have been arrested since the protests began on 19 August 2007, including the leaders of the 88 Generation Students, such as Min Ko Naing, who has already spent 16 years in prison, and Ko Ko Gyi, who has spent 15 years in prison;

3. Expresses its grave concern about the adverse effect which the extraordinary price increase for basic commodities is having on the Burmese population and the fact that the Burmese junta is clearly incapable of utilising the country's extraordinary natural resources for the benefit of the people of Burma;

4. Expresses deep concern about the military build-up in Rangoon and the violent attacks by security forces and proxy civilian organisations;
5. Strongly condemns the SPDC's use of civilian mobs such as the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) and the Swan Ahr Shin (SAS) to arrest, attack, intimidate and threaten protestors and activists, and calls for the immediate disbanding of these and similar groups;
6. Demands the immediate and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi;
7. Condemns the SPDC's unremitting oppression of the Burmese people and its persistent persecution and imprisonment of pro-democracy activists; draws particular attention to the case of U Win Tin, a 77-year old journalist detained as a political prisoner for almost two decades now for writing a letter to the UN on the ill-treatment of political prisoners and the poor conditions in which they are held;
8. Deplores the fact that, despite the condition of the country, regional and international criticism and forty-five years of rule, the SPDC has failed to respect even the most basic human rights or to make any substantial progress towards democracy;
9. Urges cessation of the current illegitimate constitutional process, and its replacement by a fully representative National Convention including the NLD and other political parties and groups, taking account of the recommendations made by the UN Secretary-General to transform it into an inclusive and democratic constitution-formulating process;
10. Applauds the unprecedented intervention by the Head of ASEAN's Inter-Parliamentary Caucus, urging China actively to engage in bringing about change for the better in Burma;
11. Reiterates its regret that the Burmese Foreign Minister, Nyan Win, banned from travelling to the EU, was permitted to attend the eighth ASEM Foreign Ministers' meeting in Germany this year, only days after the military junta in Burma had extended the illegal house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi for another year;
12. Insists that the night-time curfew imposed on the monks of Thanlyin and other restrictions on the free expression of opposition to the regime and its methods be removed;
13. Urges China and India, as well as Russia, to use their considerable economic and political leverage over the Burmese regime in order to bring about substantial improvements in the country and, in any case, to cease the supply of weaponry and other strategic resources;
14. Calls again on businesses which invest in Burma to ensure that, in carrying out their projects, human rights are genuinely respected and, if human rights abuses do occur, to suspend their activities in Burma; expresses disappointment that some countries have seen fit substantially to increase their investments in Burma, regardless of the dire human rights situation there;

15. Welcomes the renewal of EU targeted sanctions, but recognises that they have failed to achieve the desired impact on those directly responsible for the suffering of the Burmese people, and calls therefore on the Council to analyse the weaknesses in the present sanctions system and to introduce further measures as may be necessary in order to guarantee a greater degree of effectiveness;
16. Insists, in this context, that all Member States rigorously apply the restrictive measures already agreed;
17. Notes that, in accordance with the restrictive measures against Burma, support is limited to humanitarian aid and assistance for those most in need;
18. Calls on the Member States' Foreign Ministers to discuss measures for strengthening the Council Common Position renewing restrictive measures against Burma/Myanmar at the next General Affairs and External Relations Council on 7 to 8 September 2007;
19. Urges the governments of the UK, France, Belgium, Italy and Slovakia, that are all members of the UN Security Council, to make a concerted effort to introduce, and obtain unanimous backing for, a binding resolution in regard to Burma, including the release of Aung San Suu Kyi; notes that a similar resolution was passed in January 2007 but vetoed by China and Russia and opposed by South Africa; calls for an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council to address the current situation in Burma;
20. Urges the governments of all the Member States that are members of the United Nations Human Rights Council to make a concerted effort to introduce and obtain support for a resolution on Burma at the next session of the Council in September 2007;
21. Urges leaders at the APEC Summit in Sydney on 8 and 9 September 2007 to address the recent human rights abuses in Burma and to agree on action to induce change in that country;
22. Calls on Ibrahim Gambari, appointed as Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General on Burma in May, to visit Rangoon and other parts of Burma as a matter of urgency, ensuring that he has the opportunity to meet Aung San Suu Kyi and other leading members of the opposition, as well as regime figures;
23. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States, the governments of the ASEAN member countries, the National League for Democracy, the State Peace and Development Council, the Government of the People's Republic of China, the Government of India, the Government of Russia, the Government of the United States of America, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

- (1) OJ L 111, 28.4.2007, p. 50.
- (2) OJ C 92 E, 20.4.2006, p. 410.
- (3) OJ C 280 E, 18.11.2006, p. 473.
- (4) Texts adopted, P6\_TA(2006)0607.