

# Burma Motion

Proposer:

Secunder:

## **This SU notes that:**

1. Burma is ruled by a brutal military regime, which massacred 3,000-10,000 peaceful demonstrators, including many students, in 1988.
2. The regime's widespread use of forced labour, including women and children, has been described by the International Labour Organisation as a 'crime against humanity'. Forced labour has been used to develop tourism infrastructure and to attract foreign investment.
3. There are around 1,300 political prisoners in Burma, living in atrocious conditions – torture and solitary confinement are commonplace. Many of these prisoners are students.
4. Student Unions are banned in Burma.
5. Thousands of students have been killed and imprisoned since the regime took power.
6. Burmese student political prisoner .....<sup>1</sup> is an inspiration to Burmese democracy activists and other human rights activists around the world.
7. The brutal military regime in Burma actively encourages tourism, as it provides vital funds for the country's current dictatorship.
8. Thousands of adults and families have been relocated in order to make way for the construction of restaurants, hotels, and cultural attractions without any compensation or valid alternative land offered.
9. All profits made on any money exchanged in the country, or money spent in government owned attractions or guest houses (many of them are government owned or leased) goes to funding the regime. The regime already spends 40% of its GDP on arms, despite not being in any external conflict with any other countries.
10. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (the democratically-elected leader of Burma, who has not been allowed to take power, and who has been placed under house arrest 3 times by the junta) has been active in speaking out against the regime's use of tourism to gain credibility and funds. She has asked tourists not to go to the country until the military regime relinquishes power.

## **This SU further notes that:**

1. In November 2002 Lonely Planet produced a new guidebook promoting tourism to Burma.
2. Diethelm Keller Group is a private Swiss company with a wide range of investments, including Diethelm Travel, which operates holiday tours to Burma. Diethelm boasts that it pioneered tourism to Burma. Diethelm also own STA travel.
3. On January 9<sup>th</sup> 2004 7 students were sentenced to 15 years in prison for setting up an unauthorised sports union at a university in Rangoon.

## **This SU believes that:**

1. Foreign investment in Burma has:
  - i. Fuelled a brutal military dictatorship, which spends nearly half its budget on arms, allowing it to double the size of its army and continue its repression of the Burmese people, and commit ethnic genocide.
  - ii. Not improved the welfare of Burma's people; instead it has directly contributed to human rights abuses, especially forced labour and mass displacement, perpetrated by their oppressors.
  - iii. Allowed for the postponement of urgent economic and political reform.
  - iv. Continued against the wishes of the democratically elected National League for Democracy, led by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who have called for economic sanctions.
  - v. Given legitimacy and a voice for the military government.
2. Lonely Planet and Diethelm Keller/STA Travel should respect the views of the legitimate representatives of the Burmese people by withdrawing their support of travel to Burma.
3. Students form Lonely Planet's and STA Travel's core markets and we must send them a clear message that their actions are unacceptable.

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<sup>1</sup> Insert name of student prisoner you would like to become an Honorary President of your union/receive an honorary degree.

**This SU resolves:**

1. To join the Burma Sanctions Coalition and affiliate to the Burma Campaign Student Network, who are calling on the UK government and the EU to:
  - i. Honour its pre-election support for economic sanctions.
  - ii. Enact proper legislation empowering the government to impose unilateral investment sanctions on Burma.
  - iii. Proceed to impose sanctions once such legislation is in place.
2. To mandate a member of the Executive<sup>2</sup> to write to the Foreign Secretary informing him of this motion and urging him to impose sanctions on Burma.
3. To nominate .....<sup>3</sup> to become Honorary Union President/for an honorary .....<sup>4</sup> degree.
4. To ensure that a leaflet about the situation in Burma – outlining the dangers for travellers and information about why the Burma Campaign UK, Tourism Concern and the Foreign Office all advise travellers not to holiday in Burma – are given to all people booking flights to South East Asia (to be overseen by the Union - templates can be obtained from the Burma Campaign Student Network).
5. To stop all sales of package tours and direct flights to Burma.
6. To inform all travel shop staff about the decision and provide them with information on the issue.
7. Not to stock any Lonely Planet publications and to ban all Lonely Planet advertising until they withdraw their Burma guide.
8. To inform Lonely Planet (Tony and Maureen Wheeler, Lonely Planet Publications, 72-82 Rosebery Avenue, Clerkenwell, London, EC1R 4RW, UK) and The Burma Campaign (28 Charles Sq, London, N1 6HT) of this decision.
9. To instruct NUS Services Ltd to lobby STA Travel at the International Student Travel Conference to suspend Diethelm Keller’s operations in Burma, and inform STA Travel about the reasons behind this action (c/o Diethelm Keller Ltd., Muehlebachstrasse 208032 Zurich, Switzerland).
10. To instruct NUS Services Ltd Ethical and Environmental Committee to investigate Diethelm Keller/STA Travel’s links with Burma.
11. To display a statement about this motion in the Student Union Building

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<sup>2</sup> Or whoever your Union managing body is.

<sup>3</sup> Insert name of student prisoner you would like to become an Honorary President of your union/receive an honorary degree.

<sup>4</sup> Insert name of your uni/college