

COLLECTIVE STATEMENT ON 2010 ELECTIONS
Calling for Genuine Political Reconciliation Before Elections in Burma

December 7, 2009

We, the united voice of people, communities, and organizations from Burma and around the globe, strongly reaffirm the necessity for genuine political reconciliation before the 2010 elections and call on the international community to take immediate action to ensure viable democratic change occurs in Burma. The people of Burma are entitled to have a genuine choice and the international community has an obligation to ensure that the people get this choice.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 21) states, “The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government”; however, the military regime in Burma continues to use coercive measures to hold onto power. Activists, community leaders, journalists, and monks continue to be arrested and harassed for voicing independent thought. Villages continue to be subjected to crimes against humanity under the regime’s brutal policy of controlling ethnic communities. The regime continues to manipulate the political sphere in order to secure their victory in the 2010 elections – based on the 2008 Constitution that was crafted by the military regime in order to perpetuate impunity and prolong their hold on power. Inclusive solutions proposed by democracy and ethnic leaders have been discarded with severe persecution. Once again, the regime is poised to repeat its systematic use of force, manipulation, and corruption during the 2008 constitutional referendum.

We call on the international community to insist that the regime meets crucial benchmarks in order to bring peace and stability to Burma before the elections, i.e.:

- 1. Release all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Khun Htun Oo, and Min Ko Naing.**
- 2. National Reconciliation: Inclusive dialogue with key stakeholders from democracy groups and ethnic nationalities, including comprehensive review of the 2008 Constitution.**
- 3. Cessation of systematic human rights abuses and criminal hostilities against ethnic groups, political activists, journalists, and civil society.**

If the election is allowed to go ahead without these changes, then it will only serve to institutionalize one-party rule, with military still holding the strings of power. Even in the unlikely event that the elections are free and fair, they will not bring any real change to Burma because the fundamentally flawed Constitution that allocates vast powers to military, lacks any checks and balances, allows for the ongoing discrimination and persecution of ethnic nationalities, gender discrimination, and lacks protection of human rights. Such a Constitution is dangerous for a country emerging from conflict and post-conflict situations, and will continue to push Burma’s vast problems into neighboring countries and throughout the region if necessary measures aren’t taken.

The inclusion of genuine democratic opposition parties in the democratic and constitutional process would not only assure political pluralism and a more effective representation of the people of diverse ethnicity, it would offer a sustained solution to decades-long political crisis. The Burmese opposition forces on Burma border’s area and across the world in reflecting the position of ethnic nationalities leadership and pro-democratic forces inside Burma, have developed a Proposal for National Reconciliation which offers solutions for the country to move forward, proposing ways that all groups, including the military can work together to finally bring democratic transition to Burma. **We urge the international community to be united in their support for the will of the people of Burma, and act with firm resolve not to allow this sham election to proceed until national reconciliation is realized.**

Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma
Asia Pacific Solidarity Coalition
Burma Campaign Australia
Burma Campaign Korea
Burma Campaign UK
Burma Centre Delhi
Burma Lawyers Council
Burma Partnership
Canadian Friends of Burma
Free Burma Campaign Singapore
Free Burma Campaign, South Africa
Free Burma Coalition-Philippines
Friends of the Third World
Initiatives for International Dialogue
Solidaritas Indonesia untuk Burma (Indonesian Solidarity for Burma)
Student Federation of Thailand
Shwe Gas Movement
Taiwan Free Burma Network