



Expression of Support for the people of Burma 28 September 2007

Thousands of Buddhist monks, artists, and people in all walks of life are flooding the streets of Burma today. There is a nationwide general strike called by the All Burma Monk Alliance as they peacefully demonstrate in about twenty-six (26) cities and towns across the country. Given the past actions by the Burmese government, we fear that there is a massacre waiting to happen.

More than 200 people have already been arrested and detained, with fear of being tortured, and people from the media covering the events are facing harassment including confiscation of cameras from the authorities.

This wave of protests inside Burma started August 23 in a quiet march of about 40 demonstrators led by members of the opposition National League for Democracy to denounce the sharp fuel price hike that represents a 300 to 500% increase in diesel and gasoline prices.

The spark of protests inside Burma turned big and has now turned into something close to a people power revolt. The protests inside Burma, which started with small actions, have now swollen to large numbers. This reminds the international community of the 1988 national uprising in Burma and the violent reaction of the junta which crushed the people's aspirations for genuine democracy and social justice.

The people of Burma are again in a period of crucial struggle that has the potential for changing their lives. They are fighting for their basic right to live in a democratic and peaceful society.

We, members of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) support the people of Burma in their quest for justice, peace and democracy. We urge the international community to be vigilant in these trying times in Burma. We also support the following demands of the Burmese people:

- 1) For the government of Burma to address the basic needs of the people;
- 2) Release of all political prisoners including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi; and
- 3) For genuine national reconciliation to take place in Burma.

For the international community, but specifically the UN and the ASEAN, we believe that the time is ripe to directly engage the Burmese military regime and convince the ruling junta to initiate substantial and genuine reforms starting from genuine tri-partite dialogue where all parties will be included. This is a perfect opportunity for ASEAN to prove that it is sincere in building a truly caring and sharing ASEAN community. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, should personally place the issue of Burma on the formal agenda of the UN Security Council.

We are concerned about the actions that the junta is taking against the protesters and that people from the media covering the recent events. That is why we all call the government of Burma to;

- immediately cease to use force against its own citizens and, in particular, the demonstrators;
- engage with the help of the UN in negotiating an end to the current crisis;
- engage with all sectors of society in Burma in dialogue on a return to democracy.

We urge the Burmese regime to engage in dialogue and listen to the legitimate demands of the people of Burma—with a goal of achieving a prosperous and democratic nation for all.

Signed by the regional representatives and the global secretariat of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict;

- * African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), South Africa, Southern Africa,
- * Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee (CPCC), Canada, North America,
- * Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF), Fiji Islands, the Pacific,
- * European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP), the Netherlands, Global Secretariat,
- * Initiatives of International Dialogue (IID), the Philippines, Southeast Asia,
- * International Center on Conflict & Negotiation (ICCN), Georgia, the Caucasus,

- * KATU Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network KATU, Finland, Europe,
- * Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI), Kirgizstan, Central Asia,
- * Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI), Kenya, East and Central Africa,
- * Nansen Network in the Balkans, Serbia, the Balkans,
- * Non-Violence International-Moscow, Western Commonwealth of Independent States and Northern Caucasus,
- * Peace Boat, Japan, Northeast Asia,
- * Permanent Peace Movement, Lebanon, Middle East and Northern Africa,
- * Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS), Sri Lanka, South Asia,
- * Regional Coordination for Economic and Social Research (CRIES), Argentina, Latin America and the Caribbean,
- * US Steering Committee: InterAction and Alliance for Peacebuilding, USA, North America,
- * West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Ghana, West Africa,

Also on behalf of the following GPPAC Members;

- * Bernie Lovegrove, Director, the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, Australia,
- * Cema Bolabola, Director, the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations (PIANGO), Fiji Islands,
- * Dr. Karen Ohanjanyan, Coordinator, Nagorno Karabakh Committee of "Helsinki Initiative-92",
- * Peace and Democracy Foundation, Timor-Leste, member of GPPAC Timor-Leste,
- * Peter and Glenys Wood, Initiatives of Change NZ, New Zealand,
- * Priscilla Kare, General Secretary, the Young Women's Christian Association, Papua New Guinea,
- * Rae Julian, Executive Director, NZ Council for International Development, Kaunihera mo te Whakapakari Ao Whanui, New Zealand,
- * Suliana Siwatibau, the University of the South Pacific (USP), Fiji Islands.