

# BURMA BULLETIN

XXXXXXXX A month-in-review of events in Burma XXXXXXXX

ALTERNATIVE ASEAN NETWORK ON BURMA  
campaigns, advocacy & capacity-building for human rights & democracy

Issue 41

May 2010

- **SPDC pushes ahead with its election plan.** The regime delays registration approval of Kachin political parties, rejects international election observers, throws out NLD election complaint, and maintains an oppressive media environment.
- **NLD ceases to exist as a registered political party under the SPDC election laws.** However, it continues to carry out political activities, including election boycott campaigns.
- **By refusing to comply with the junta's electoral restrictions, the NLD is united with Burma's main ethnic political parties in boycotting the SPDC's illegitimate elections.**
- **US, EU, UN, and ASEAN express concerns about Burma's planned elections.**
- **The SPDC's Myitsone dam project continues to fuel abuses.** The regime forcibly relocates hundred of villagers and detains dozens of local activists who oppose the project.
- **On the second anniversary of cyclone Nargis, the UN reports that more than 100,000 are still homeless while 180,000 still lack sufficient drinking water.**
- **Severe water shortages hit nearly every State and Division in Burma.** NLD and private organizations act to distribute water to affected communities despite SPDC harassment and intimidation.
- **US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell meets with SPDC officials, NLD Executive Committee members, and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.**
- **UN report says North Korea illegally transferred nuclear technology to the SPDC.**
- **The corrupt privatization of the Burmese economy continues as the junta awards private banking licenses to four key SPDC cronies, including Htoo Trading Chairman Tay Za.**

For comprehensive monitoring of the 2010 elections, please visit the "[2010 Election Watch](#)" at [www.altsean.org](http://www.altsean.org). The Election Watch also summarizes developments according to elements of UN, OSCE, and EU guidelines.

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## KEY STORY

### 2010 elections

In May, the SPDC pushed ahead with its election plan. The political process continued to be characterized by: the tight control of party activities through the SPDC Election Commission; the failure to provide adequate judicial remedies to election complaints; an oppressive media environment; and a lack of transparency.

- As of 31 May, the Election Commission had approved the registration of 24 of the 42 political parties that filed registration papers to contest the elections. However, the Election Commission has delayed the registration approval of two Kachin parties, the Kachin State Progressive Party and the United Democracy Party (Kachin State), because of the Kachin Independence Organization's resistance to accept the SPDC's Border Guard Force ultimatum.<sup>1</sup>
- On 5 May, Burma's Supreme Court rejected the NLD's petition to annul the SPDC election law provisions that prevent individuals who are serving prison terms from being members of a political party.<sup>2</sup>
- Journalists in Rangoon said that the SPDC Censorship Board was not allowing any coverage that criticized the formation of the junta-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP).<sup>3</sup>
- On 9 May, SPDC Election Commission Chairman Thein Soe said that international election observers would not be needed.<sup>4</sup> Thein Soe justified the rejection of international observers by claiming that the regime "has a lot of experience with elections."<sup>5</sup>

## Opposition to elections

On 25 May, the All Burma Monks' Alliance, the 88 Generation Students, and the All Burma Federation of Student Unions issued a joint statement that urged the Burmese people to boycott the elections.<sup>6</sup> On 13 May, it was reported that NLD members in Mandalay, Sagaing, and Magwe Divisions distributed leaflets that urged citizens not to vote in the elections.<sup>7</sup>

Outside Burma, the Burmese pro-democracy coalition Ten Alliances<sup>8</sup> launched the "Global Campaign Against Burma's 2010 Military Election." The campaign, endorsed by more than 150 organizations worldwide, aims at raising awareness about the lack of legitimacy of the upcoming elections. Between 27 and 30 May, activists held campaign activities and demonstrations in Thailand, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, UK, Ireland, France, Switzerland, Italy, US, Canada, and Brazil.<sup>9</sup>

## NDF applies for party registration

On 7 May, about 25 senior members of the now dissolved NLD said they would form the National Democratic Force (NDF), to contest the elections.<sup>10</sup> The NDF leadership includes former NLD CEC members Than Nyein, Khin Maung Swe, Win Naing, and Thein Nyunt.<sup>11</sup> On 27 May, the NDF filed registration papers to contest the elections.<sup>12</sup>

## International concern over elections

The US, the EU, the UN, and ASEAN reiterated their concerns over the SPDC elections.

<sup>1</sup> Mizzima News (11 May 10) Election Commission delays KSPP approval

<sup>2</sup> AFP (05 May 10) Myanmar's Suu Kyi fails to prevent party dissolution; DPA (06 May 10) Last day for Myanmar opposition party, NLD official says

<sup>3</sup> Irrawaddy (05 May 10) Tight Censorship on Reporting USDP

<sup>4</sup> Irrawaddy (12 May 10) Junta Rejects International Election Observers

<sup>5</sup> DVB (14 May 10) UN rues Burma election monitor ban

<sup>6</sup> ABMA/88 Generation Students/ABFSU (25 May 10) Let's strongly oppose the 2010 Election which will make the 2008 Constitution come into operation!; Mizzima News (26 May 10) Monks and students urge poll boycott

<sup>7</sup> Irrawaddy (13 May 10) NLD Focuses On Electoral Rights

<sup>8</sup> The Ten Alliances comprise: National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB), Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB), National Democratic Front (NDF), National League for Democracy Liberated Area (NLD-LA), Members of Parliamentary Union (MPU), National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB), Forum for Democracy in Burma (FDB), Women's League of Burma (WLB); Students and Youth Congress of Burma (SYCB), Nationalities Youth Forum (NYF)

<sup>9</sup> Irrawaddy (27 May 10) Mae Sot's global day of action; Mizzima News (27 May 10) Migrant workers vote in 'People's Ballot' campaign; Narinjara News (28 May 10) Burmese demonstrates anger against military junta

<sup>10</sup> VOA (06 May 10) Members of Burma's Main Opposition Group to Form New Party; VOA (07 May 10) Burma Opposition Members Split to Form New Party; AFP (07 May 10) Suu Kyi supporters to form new political party; Irrawaddy (07 May 10) NDF Party to Ally with Pro-democracy, Ethnic Groups

<sup>11</sup> DPA (07 May 10) New opposition party emerges from ashes of NLD; DVB (07 May 10) New opposition says Suu Kyi 'is still leader'; Mizzima News (14 May 10) Win Tin calls NDF 'crows in peacock feathers'

<sup>12</sup> NLM (28 May 10) Applications for formation, registration of political party scrutinized, passed; Xinhua (28 May 10) Myanmar NLD splinter group puts up application for new party formation

- **5 May:** The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana issued a statement that said the powers granted to the SPDC Electoral Commission “could impede the activities of political parties.” Ojea Quintana said elections “must be open to full participation, they must be transparent, and they must be conducted in a manner that allows for free and fair choice.” Ojea Quintana called on the junta to free all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, to allow them to participate in the elections.<sup>13</sup>
- **9-10 May:** Before departing for Burma, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell said that the US had concerns about the elections laws and the environment that had been created.<sup>14</sup> At the conclusion of his trip on 10 May, Campbell said that as a direct result of what the US has seen, the elections will lack international legitimacy. Campbell also noted that the SPDC’s response to the concerns he raised was extremely disappointing. Campbell urged the regime to: take immediate steps to open the political process in the time remaining before the elections and release political prisoners.<sup>15</sup>
- **20 May:** The European Parliament met in Strasbourg and adopted a resolution on the pre-election climate in Burma. The resolution called for the repeal of the SPDC election laws because the laws make the holding of free elections “impossible”. The MEPs urged the SPDC to heed the appeals of the international community and allow Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners to participate in the political process. The MEPs also called on the junta to lift restrictions on freedom of assembly, association, movement and expression.<sup>16</sup>
- **26 May:** ASEAN and the EU urged the SPDC to make its upcoming elections “credible, transparent, democratic and inclusive” and said that the early release of political prisoners would contribute to making the elections more inclusive.<sup>17</sup>

## INSIDE BURMA

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### NLD activities continue

On 5 May, the NLD held a final gathering at its Rangoon headquarters before its dissolution. About 150 NLD members and several foreign diplomats attended the event.<sup>18</sup> At midnight on 6 May, the NLD ceased to exist as a registered political party under the SPDC election laws.<sup>19</sup>

On 27 May, about 100 NLD members and supporters gathered at the residence of party Vice-Chairman Tin Oo to mark the anniversary of the victory in the 1990 elections.<sup>20</sup> NLD members in Yenanchaung Township, Magwe Division, and in Mandalay also held ceremony to mark the anniversary.<sup>21</sup>

### Cracks in the regime

The regime continued to suffer from military defections, discontent among local officials, and instability.

- **15 May:** Six SPDC Army soldiers from the Akyab-based LIB 232 defected to the Arakan Liberation Army.<sup>22</sup> The soldiers cited abuses committed by their commander as the reason for their defection.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>13</sup> OHCHR (05 May 10) Myanmar: “It’s not too late for the Government to keep its promises” – UN Special Rapporteur; UN News Center (05 May 10) Myanmar: UN expert urges Government to ‘keep its promises’ on elections; Irrawaddy (06 May 10) Quintana Says Conditions Not Present for Credible Elections; Mizzima News (06 May 10) UN envoy urges junta to keep poll promise

<sup>14</sup> Al Jazeera (09 May 10) US envoy to visit Myanmar again

<sup>15</sup> US Embassy Rangoon (10 May 10) Press Release by Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell

<sup>16</sup> European Parliament News Report (20 May 10) Human rights: Thailand, Burma and Pakistan

<sup>17</sup> AFP (26 May 10) EU, ASEAN urge ‘credible’ elections in Myanmar

<sup>18</sup> AP (06 May 10) NLD Holds Last Event as Legal Party

<sup>19</sup> DPA (06 May 10) Last day for Myanmar opposition party, NLD official says; Straits Times (07 May 10) The end of Suu Kyi’s party; Bangkok Post (07 May 10) Burma democracy leader Suu Kyi’s party dissolved

<sup>20</sup> AFP (27 May 10) Suu Kyi supporters mark ‘stolen’ polls; AP (27 May 10) Myanmar opposition marks anniversary of victory; Mizzima News (27 May 10) Election victory day observed; Irrawaddy (27 May 10) A Sad Ceremony Marks a Great Victory

<sup>21</sup> Mizzima News (27 May 10) Election victory day observed

<sup>22</sup> Narinjara News (18 May 10) 6 Burmese Soldiers Surrender to ALA with Weapons

<sup>23</sup> Kaladan News (19 May 10) Six soldiers kill Captain desert to Indo-Burma border; Mizzima News (19 May 10) Six junta soldiers defect to Arakan militia; Narinjara News (18 May 10) 6 Burmese Soldiers Surrender to ALA with Weapons

- **24 May:** It was reported that lower-ranking SPDC officials in 10 wards in Thongwa Township, Rangoon Division, resigned because of the bad reputation they acquired among local residents.<sup>24</sup>
- **End of May:** During its quarterly meeting in Naypyidaw, the SPDC reshuffled its regional military commanders and other senior military posts.<sup>25</sup>

### **New anti-terrorism law**

On 6 May, SPDC police chief Brig Gen Khin Yi said the junta would enact new anti-terror legislation in the coming months.<sup>26</sup>

### **Myitsone dam project fuels abuses**

On 23 May, SPDC authorities in Myitkyina, Kachin State, arrested over 50 youth activists during a midnight crackdown. Most of those arrested were members of the Education and Economy Development for Youth, the youth-wing of the Kachin Independence Organization. SPDC authorities also detained the Kachin Nationals Consultative Assembly leader Labang Gam Awng for one day.<sup>27</sup> The police accused the activists of being involved in the 17 April bomb blasts near the Myitsone dam construction site.<sup>28</sup> However, locals believed the 17 April explosions might have been a junta ploy to speed up the forced relocation of villagers near the Myitsone dam construction site.<sup>29</sup>

In May, the regime stepped up relocation efforts in the Myitsone dam project area:

- **1 May:** SPDC local authorities ordered over 1,000 villagers from Myitkyina and Waingmaw Townships to help local militia to demolish houses of the about 1,100 residents of Tang Hpre Village.<sup>30</sup>
- **28 May:** It was reported that SPDC authorities, USDA members, and SPDC Army soldiers forcibly relocated all 63 households (about 150 people) in Mazup Village.<sup>31</sup>
- **Since April:** SPDC Army soldiers from IB 138 forcibly relocated eight villages near Machyangbaw Town.<sup>32</sup>

### **SPDC recruits local militias for BGF**

In May, the SPDC moved to form Border Guard Forces (BGF) from smaller pro-junta militia groups as the key ethnic ceasefire groups continued to reject the SPDC's ultimatum.<sup>33</sup> On 18 May, SPDC Army Military Affairs Security Chief Lt Gen Ye Myint reached an agreement with militia leaders in Tachilek, Shan State, to form BGFs from several small militia groups comprised of ethnic Lahu, Akha and Shan from villages nearby.<sup>34</sup>

On 21-23 May, representatives from the Karen Nation Union (KNU), the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), the New Mon State Party (NMSF), the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), and the Chin National Front (CNF) met in Thailand and reached an agreement to assist one another if the SPDC launched an attack against any of them.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>24</sup> DVB (24 May 10) Rangoon authorities quit en masse

<sup>25</sup> Irrawaddy (28 May 10) Junta to Reshuffle Regional Commanders

<sup>26</sup> DVB (07 May 10) Burma to enact anti-terror laws; Xinhua (06 May 10) Myanmar to Introduce Anti-terrorism Law Soon

<sup>27</sup> Kachin News Group (24 May 10) Surprise arrest of Kachin youths in Myitkyina; Kachin News Group (25 May 10) Burmese junta arrests Kachin youth leader in northern Burma; Kachin News Group (25 May 10) Helpless Myitsone villagers' fervent plea for help; Kachin News Group (26 May 10) More youths with KIO links arrested and tortured; Kachin News Group (27 May 10) Kachin youth leader Labang Gam Awng freed

<sup>28</sup> Kachin News Group (26 May 10) More youths with KIO links arrested and tortured

<sup>29</sup> Kachin News Group (17 May 10) Fresh wave of Chinese workers as locals face relocation

<sup>30</sup> Mizzima News (19 May 10) Kachins forced to oust Kachin villagers for dam project; Kachin News Group (20 May 10) Fresh batch of 300 Chinese dam workers arrive in Myitkyina; Mizzima News (04 May 10) Households near Myitsone ordered to relocate; Kachin News Group (25 May 10) Helpless Myitsone villagers' fervent plea for help

<sup>31</sup> Kachin News Group (28 May 10) First village forcibly relocated for Irrawaddy dam project

<sup>32</sup> Kachin News Group (17 May 10) Eight Kachin villages to relocate for hydropower project on their-own

<sup>33</sup> Irrawaddy (24 May 10) Border Guard Force Plan to Be Sidelined

<sup>34</sup> Irrawaddy (18 May 10) Militias to Become Border Guard Forces

<sup>35</sup> Irrawaddy (27 May 10) Ethnic groups enter alliance; Mizzima News (28 May 10) Five ethnic militias join forces amid junta threat

## **Aid still needed in the delta**

On the second anniversary of cyclone Nargis, more than 100,000 people remained homeless while more than 180,000 still lacked sufficient drinking water according to the UN.<sup>36</sup> The UN also said that only US\$180 million of the US\$690 million required for a three-year recovery plan had been received including only 30% of the funds required for drinking water, healthcare, and sanitation.<sup>37</sup>

## **Child soldiers**

On 21 May, UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-moon urged the UN Security Council to consider tough measures against governments that persist in recruiting child soldiers, including the SPDC.<sup>38</sup> Ban issued his press statement in conjunction with the release of a UN report that included Burma on a list of countries that still recruit child soldiers.<sup>39</sup>

On 16 May, SPDC Army soldiers from LIB 586 in Pyontaza, Pegu Division, shot and stabbed to death a 15-year-old boy who refused their forced recruitment efforts.<sup>40</sup>

## **Severe water shortages hit Burma**

During May, unseasonably high temperatures coupled with the late onset of monsoon rains caused severe water shortages affecting thousands of people in Pegu, Irrawaddy, Rangoon, Magwe, Mandalay, and Sagaing Divisions, and Mon, Arakan, and Shan States.<sup>41</sup> Because residents in the affected areas were forced to rely on contaminated water sources, there was an increase in cases of diarrhea and dysentery - with several deaths attributed to the diseases as well.<sup>42</sup> In Mandalay, over two hundred people died from heat related causes.<sup>43</sup> On 14 May, a UNDP official in Rangoon said the situation in some villages in the Irrawaddy delta had reached emergency levels.<sup>44</sup>

Because the SPDC did not adequately responded to the crises, the NLD, private business, and other organizations mounted aid efforts to help alleviate the suffering.<sup>45</sup> In the midst of the tragic situation, SPDC officials tried to intimidate and obstruct private donors in their delivery of water supplies. In addition, the USDA ordered private organizations that provided water relief to mark their vehicles with a USDA flag.<sup>46</sup>

The heat wave also caused a shortage of electricity in Rangoon. On 14 May, the SPDC cut off power to small businesses in Rangoon because of low water levels at hydropower plants.<sup>47</sup> The power cuts affected private hospitals, shopping centers, small businesses, and factories.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> AP (01 May 10) UN: More Funds Needed for Nargis Recovery; Irrawaddy (08 May 10) Lack of Aid Leaves 180,000 still Thirsting for Water in Nargis Zone; Mizzima News (04 May 10) 180,000 need drinking water in Irrawaddy Delta; Irrawaddy (04 May 10) Donors View Civil Society in New Light after Nargis; BBC (03 May 10) Fresh Burma aid appeal two years on from Cyclone Nargis; DVB (03 May 10) \$500m 'still needed' for cyclone victims

<sup>37</sup> AP (01 May 10) UN: More Funds Needed for Nargis Recovery; Mizzima News (04 May 10) 180,000 need drinking water in Irrawaddy Delta

<sup>38</sup> AP (22 May 10) UN chief urges action against child soldiers; VOA (22 May 10) UN Names Countries, Groups Using Child Soldiers

<sup>39</sup> AP (22 May 10) UN chief urges action against child soldiers; VOA (22 May 10) UN Names Countries, Groups Using Child Soldiers

<sup>40</sup> DVB (31 May 10) Boy shot dead for refusing army; Irrawaddy (31 May 10) Boy, 15, Killed by Troops after Resisting Enlistment

<sup>41</sup> Mizzima News (11 May 10) 60 villages in Pegu face water crisis; DVB (10 May 10) Water shortages sweeping Burma; Irrawaddy (10 May 10) Record Temperatures Cause Water Shortages; Mizzima News(13 May 10) Social workers groups blame authorities for ignoring water shortage; Mizzima News (13 May 10) Foundation raises funds for water crisis; Narinjara News (14 May 10) Water Scarce in Arakan State; Mizzima News (15 May 10) Dala cholera risk as water shortages spread; Mizzima News (17 May 10) Heavy rain fails to relieve dried-up Monywa; Mizzima News (21 May 10) Severe water shortages reported across Burma

<sup>42</sup> Mizzima News (13 May 10) Social workers groups blame authorities for ignoring water shortage; IMNA (11 May 10) Contaminated water supplies lead to deaths in Ye township; Xinhua (13 May 10) Diarrhoea hit Myanmar Waw township amid water scarcity

<sup>43</sup> DVB (20 May 10) Heatwave kills 230 in Mandalay

<sup>44</sup> Irrawaddy (14 May 10) Junta Idle As Water Crisis Deepens

<sup>45</sup> Mizzima News(13 May 10) Social workers groups blame authorities for ignoring water shortage; Mizzima News (13 May 10) Foundation raises funds for water crisis; Irrawaddy (14 May 10) Junta Idle As Water Crisis Deepens

<sup>46</sup> DVB (14 May 10) Water crisis hits Rangoon; Irrawaddy (17 May 10) Death Rate of Elderly, Children Rising with Temperatures

<sup>47</sup> Irrawaddy (17 May 10) Electricity for Businesses Cut Off in Rangoon; Mizzima News (17 May 10) Junta juggles with Rangoon power supply; Xinhua (20 May 10) Myanmar temporarily stops power supply for industrial use in Yangon

## HUMAN RIGHTS

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### Freedom of information

- On 3 May, Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) included SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe in the world's top 40 list of "Predators of Press Freedom."<sup>49</sup>
- The SPDC Censorship Board ordered Burmese media not to publish comments made by US Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell about his recent visit to Burma. The Censorship Board also ordered the removal of reports on the Eleven journal website about Campbell's meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.<sup>50</sup>
- The SPDC Censorship Board suspended the publication of Voice and First Music journals for one week effective 22 May. The two journals had reported on the filing of an assault case by a reporter from the 7 Day News journal against actress Htet Htet Moe Oo.<sup>51</sup>

### Detention conditions

- **3 May:** It was reported that student activist Di Nyein Lin suffers from an unknown eye disorder in Khamti prison, Sagaing Division.<sup>52</sup>
- **5 May:** It was reported that 88 Generation Student leader Mya Aye needed urgent treatment in Taunggyi prison, Shan State. Mya Aye suffers from a heart condition, hypertension, and gastric problems and has not received adequate medical treatment in prison.<sup>53</sup>
- **10 May:** It was reported that Sithu Zeya was denied food for two days and repeatedly beaten during interrogation in a Rangoon police station.<sup>54</sup>
- **19 May:** Human Rights Defenders and Promoters member Kyaw Soe, 39, died in Myingyan prison hospital, Mandalay Division. He was the 144th political prisoners to die in custody since 1988.<sup>55</sup>

### Prison sentences

- **21 May:** A Rangoon's Kyauktada Township court sentenced student leader Kyaw Ko Ko, 28, to an additional five years in prison for his involvement in the Saffron Revolution. In February 2009, a Rangoon court had already sentenced him to three years in prison for violating the Electronic Act.<sup>56</sup>
- **30 May:** A Rangoon court sentenced NLD youth member Kyaw Moe Naing aka Kyaw Gyi to an additional 10 years in prison for violating the Electronic Act. Kyaw Moe Naing was already serving a four and half year prison sentence for distributing portraits of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.<sup>57</sup>

## DISPLACEMENT

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### Rohingya still fleeing to Bangladesh

In May, Rohingya still continued to flee Arakan State for Bangladesh. On 19 May, 18 Rohingya drowned after their boat capsized in a storm while they were crossing the Naff River from Burma to

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<sup>48</sup> Irrawaddy (17 May 10) Electricity for Businesses Cut Off in Rangoon; Mizzima News (17 May 10) Junta juggles with Rangoon power supply; Xinhua (20 May 10) Myanmar temporarily stops power supply for industrial use in Yangon

<sup>49</sup> Irrawaddy (04 May 10) Than Shwe a Predator, Says Media Watchdog

<sup>50</sup> Irrawaddy (14 May 10) Regime Censors Media Reports on Campbell Visit

<sup>51</sup> Mizzima News (24 May 10) Journals suspended over Htet Htet Moe Oo alleged assault; Irrawaddy (24 May 10) Two Rangoon Journals Temporarily Banned

<sup>52</sup> Mizzima News (14 May 10) Jailed student leader has eye disease

<sup>53</sup> Irrawaddy (06 May 10) Mya Aye in Poor Health: AI

<sup>54</sup> Mizzima News (18 May 10) Rangoon blast lensman's father in court

<sup>55</sup> AAPP (19 May 10) A Political Prisoner Passed Away in Myingyan Prison; Mizzima News (20 May 10) Activist dies in jail hospital after neglect

<sup>56</sup> RFA (21 May 10) Dissident Jail Term Extended; Irrawaddy (25 May 10) Five Years Added to Student Leader's Sentence

<sup>57</sup> Mizzima News (31 May 10) Insein court tacks 10 years on to youth's term

Bangladesh.<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, Bangladesh authorities arrested more than 180 Rohingya and pushed many of them back to Burma.<sup>59</sup>

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

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### **Campbell meets Daw Suu**

On 9-10 May, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell visited Burma.<sup>60</sup> On 9 May, Campbell met with SPDC officials including FM Nyan Win, Information Minister Kyaw San, Science and Technology Minister Thaung, Labor Minister Aung Kyi, and the SPDC Election Commission Chairman Thein Soe.<sup>61</sup>

On 10 May in Rangoon, Campbell met with ten members of the NLD Central Executive Committee. NLD leader Win Tin said that the NLD members told Mr Campbell not to recognize the results of the upcoming election because the polls will not be credible or inclusive.<sup>62</sup> Campbell then met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at the SPDC Seinle Kantha guesthouse in Rangoon.<sup>63</sup> Campbell was the first foreign official to meet with Daw Suu since the NLD decided to boycott Burma's upcoming elections. US State Department spokesman PJ Crowley said that during the course of Campbell's conversation with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, she shared his disappointment that the SPDC's election plans, its unwillingness to expand political space and its refusal to have meaningful dialogue with ethnic nationality groups.<sup>64</sup>

### **US renews Burma sanctions**

In May, the US Congress began the process to renew US economic sanctions on Burma while President Obama formally extended sanctions first implemented by Executive Order in May 1997.<sup>65</sup> In addition, the US Senate passed two resolutions: one that expressed solidarity with the NLD and another that condemned the SPDC's continued repression in Burma.<sup>66</sup>

### **North Korea supplies weapons technology to the SPDC**

On 27 May, the Associated Press obtained a UN report that indicated that Pyongyang is involved in illegal transfer of nuclear and ballistic technology to Iran, Syria and Burma. A seven-member panel of experts monitoring the implementation of sanctions against North Korea said they also looked into "suspicious activity in Myanmar" that included transfers made by Namchongang Trading, one of the companies subject to UN sanctions.<sup>67</sup> [See Altsean briefer *Action Needed: Burmese Junta Threatens Comprehensive Regional Security*]

During his trip to Burma on 9-10 May, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell discussed the junta's ties to North Korea with SPDC officials. Campbell warned the junta to abide by UN Security Council resolutions on North Korea.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Kaladan News (22 May 10) Boat capsizes, 18 drown in Naf River

<sup>59</sup> Kaladan News (06 May 10) Eighty five Rohingyas jailed in Bangladesh; Kaladan News (27 May 10) Fresh crackdown on Rohingya in Bangladesh; Kaladan News (29 May 10) Police destroy unregistered Kutupalong makeshift camp again; Kaladan News (01 Jun 10) 21- Arakanese Rohingya pushed back to Burma

<sup>60</sup> DPA (09 May 10) "Troubled" US assistant secretary of state visits Burma; Xinhua (10 May 10) U.S. high-ranking official ends visit to Myanmar

<sup>61</sup> Mizzima News (10 May 10) US envoy meets Suu Kyi, Ends visit upset at junta pre-poll conduct

<sup>62</sup> BBC News (10 May 10) US diplomat Campbell meets Burma's Suu Kyi

<sup>63</sup> Mizzima News (10 May 10) US envoy meets Suu Kyi, Ends visit upset at junta pre-poll conduct; Guardian (10 May 10) US official meets Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi

<sup>64</sup> VOA (10 May 10) US: Burma Engagement Not Ending Despite 'Disappointing' Envoy Visit; DVB (12 May 10) Burma eyes a long future with the US

<sup>65</sup> AFP (14 May 10) Obama extends sanctions on Myanmar; AFP (05 May 10) Top US Senator pushes Myanmar sanctions; Irrawaddy (05 May 10) We Must Deny the Military Regime in Burma the Legitimacy it Craves by Mitch McConnell; Irrawaddy (12 May 10) US Congress Moves to Renew Burma Sanctions

<sup>66</sup> AFP (07 May 10) US Senate stands by Myanmar opposition; Irrawaddy (28 May 10) US Senators Condemn Burma's Regime

<sup>67</sup> AP (27 May 10) UN experts say NKorea is exporting nuke technology

<sup>68</sup> Kyodo News (11 May 10) U.S. envoy warns Myanmar junta on elections, N Korea

## ECONOMY

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### SPDC issues bank licenses to cronies

In May, the corrupt privatization of the Burmese economy continued as the SPDC granted licenses to establish private banks to four key SPDC cronies, including Htoo Trading Chairman Tay Za. Other cronies included Max Myanmar Managing Director Zaw Zaw, IGE Chief Nay Aung, and Eden Group Managing Director Chit Khaing.<sup>69</sup>

### OTHER BURMA NEWS IN MAY

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1	SPDC Army Northern Regional Command Commander Maj Gen Soe Win announces a five-million-kyat (US\$5,102) reward for leading to the capture of those responsible for the April 17 serial bomb blasts near the Myitsone dam construction site.
3	Thai authorities in Sangkhlaburi detain 99 Mon who crossed into Thailand from Three Pagodas Pass, Karen State, to look for work.
3	A mine accident in Chipwi Township, Kachin State, kills at least 15 Chinese miners and injures five.
3	Weekly Eleven journal reports that Burma's border trade hit US\$1.38 billion in the 2009-10 fiscal year, the highest in five years.
4	US State Department spokesman PJ Crowley says that the SPDC needs to open up genuine political space.
5	NLD gives financial assistance to 127 children of political prisoners during a ceremony at the party headquarters in Rangoon.
5	US Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell says that the US must renew sanctions against the SPDC because the military regime has failed to make "real progress" on democratic reforms.
5	Two bombs explode in downtown Myitkyina, Kachin State. No casualties are reported.
6	Thai police in Bangkok arrest 10 drug traffickers linked to the DKBA and seize 90,000 amphetamine tablets and five grams of amphetamine powder.
6	Eighty workers from the Htawara Blanket Factory in Rangoon's Hlaing Tharyar Township demand wage increases, a safe work environment, and healthcare benefits.
6	Police chief Brig Gen Khin Yi says SPDC authorities arrested a man linked to the 15 April grenade attack in Rangoon. Khin Yi says the attack was carried out by four members of the Vigorous Burmese Student Warriors.
6	A bomb explodes at a police station in Thanbyuzayat, Mon State. No injuries are reported.
7	Bangladeshi Foreign Affairs Minister Dipu Moni says that Burma will accept the repatriation of 9,000 Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh after the upcoming election in Burma.
7	US State Department spokesperson PJ Crowley says that the NLD was a beacon of hope for the people of Burma and applauds its decision not to register as a political party under the SPDC's flawed electoral laws.
7	SPDC Army Artillery Battalion 318 fires three rocket-propelled-grenades into Hnee-padaw Village, Mudon Township, Mon State. No injuries are reported.
8	Thai police raid the Omega garment factory in Mae Sot and arrest 160 undocumented Burmese migrants.
10	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's legal team files a special appeal against her house arrest.
10	SPDC establishes diplomatic ties with Fiji at the ambassadorial level.
11	Two people are killed and three injured after a landmine explosion hits a bus in Papun Township, Karen State.
13	Philippines Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo says that the Burma's upcoming elections are a fraud and a farce.
13	UN spokesman Martin Nesirki says that the UN will continue to encourage the SPDC to open its borders to foreign election observers "to inspire confidence" in Burma's polls.
14	Indian government awards India's Essar Projects a US\$76 million contract to construct ports and inland water transport components of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project in Arakan State.
16	Two-hundred factory workers in Taunggoat, Arakan State, stage a protest after the factory owner refused to provide a three-month severance pay when the factory closed.
17	SSA-S forces clash with SPDC Army backed militia groups near Tachilek, Shan State.
18	The Yangon Times reports that the SPDC will hand over its fuel stations to the USDA, the SPDC Army-

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<sup>69</sup> Xinhua (17 May 10) Myanmar to grant giant private entrepreneurs to run banks; Irrawaddy (19 May 10) Six Burmese Businessmen Seek Private Banking Licenses; DVB (20 May 10) Burma's banks set for a shakeup; Irrawaddy (31 May 10) Four Businessmen Granted Private Bank License



	owned Myanmar Economic Holdings Company, and 18 other privately owned companies.
19	An SPDC Army soldier shoots and kills a Thai Army soldier in Mae Sam Leap Village north of Mae Sariang in Mae Hong Son Province, Thailand.
20	NLD Central Executive Committee Member Soe Myint, 87, dies in Rangoon.
21	SSA-S Chief Lt Gen Yawd Serk urges all Burmese to continue to support Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
23	Thirteen Burmese migrants die and three are injured after their pickup truck crashes when it tries to evade Thai authorities near Cha-am in Phetchaburi Province.
24	Bangladesh authorities in Cox's Bazaar arrest three UNHCR registered refugees and take them to Cox's Bazaar jail.
24	A fire destroys Mingalar Zay wholesale market, in Rangoon's Mingala Taungnyunt Township.
24	US Senator Jim Webb announces that he will visit Burma again in June.
24	A local villager dies after stepping on a landmine in Shwegyin Township, Pegu Division.
25	The Czech Republic grants US\$120,000 in humanitarian aid to Burmese people living along the Thai-Burma border.
26	Malaysian RELA thugs conduct raids in Kuala Lumpur and arrest around 300 unregistered Chin refugees.
26	SPDC authorities release poet Saw Wei.
26	ASEAN Sec-Gen Surin Pitsuwan says that ASEAN hopes that Burma's upcoming elections will open the way to a national reconciliation and to greater interaction with the international community.
27	About 50 people demonstrate outside the Burmese embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka, to mark the 20 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1990 elections in Burma.
27	On the 20 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of Burma's 1990 elections, a bipartisan group of US Senators condemn the continuing repression in Burma.
29	Bangladesh police destroy more than 30 huts of unregistered Rohingya refugees in the settlement near the Kutupalong camp.
30	Police in Maungdaw, Arakan State, detain about 30 shopkeepers in Maungdaw for issuing tokens instead of small change.

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<http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/burma-myanmar/B105%20The%20Myanmar%20Elections.ashx>

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[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/retrieveattachments?openagent&shortid=EGUA-85NMA2&file=Full\\_Report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/retrieveattachments?openagent&shortid=EGUA-85NMA2&file=Full_Report.pdf)