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The Burma Lawyers' Council demands that the SPDC officially announce and release their confirmed Draft of the Constitution

1. Little more than one month remains before the referendum on the Constitution (Draft) of the Union of Burma, based on the principles adopted by the SPDC National Convention, is to be held in May 2008. The people will only be able to vote for or against the Constitution (Draft) after they have had an opportunity to study it. Thus, the SPDC has the duty to promptly distribute their Constitution (Draft) to the people.

2. During the last week of March, a copy of the Constitution (Draft) under the nation's logo was circulated inside and outside of Burma. But an investigation into the true source of this copy has had no definite results. It appears to be an actual announcement of the SPDC because it is systematically categorized, the design is clear, the introduction and the logos are complete, and the words are neatly printed.

3. A comparison between the "Fundamental Principles and Detailed Basic Principles" adopted by the National Convention and the circulated copy of the Constitution (Draft) reveal some important differences. Some of these differences will worsen the nation's conditions and situation. For example, according to the circulated copy of the Constitution (Draft), certain provisions of the Constitution can only be amended through a referendum in which **all** eligible voters approve the amendment (in addition to 75% of the members of Parliament). The Constitutional Principles of the National Convention, on the other hand, only required a **majority** of eligible voters to approve a constitutional amendment of these provisions. If this Constitution (Draft) were to be released by an NGO or other opposition organization to be considered by the public, the SPDC would deny that it is their legal announcement and thus embarrass the organization that released it. It will harm the people of Burma if they cannot thoroughly examine the Constitution (Draft) now, before they vote.

4. Accordingly, we demand that the SPDC, or the Constitutional Drafting Commission formed by SPDC, promptly announce and release to the public the confirmed Constitution (Draft).

Date: 1 April 2008

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