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Statement on the Parliamentarian's Request to the UN Security Council on the Formation of a Commission of Inquiry

1. The Burma Lawyers' Council (BLC) supports the over 400 parliamentarians from 29 countries who signed a letter to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) urging the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry regarding the heinous crimes that have been occurring in Burma. The BLC was recently invited by the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) to attend the Eighty Session of the Assembly of States Parties (ASP). During a meeting with the Court's prosecutors at the ASP, civil society groups were urged to continue campaigning for the UNSC to form a Commission of Inquiry. The letter from parliamentarians from all over the world demonstrates the strength of the campaign to end impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Burma.

2. The parliamentarians form a strong voice that is demanding the formation of a Commission of Inquiry. Tomas Ojea Quintana, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Burma, has acknowledged the importance of the international community in the campaign to end impunity in Burma but has not taken specific action himself. The BLC urges Mr. Quintana to make such appeals to the UNSC in his role as Special Rapporteur. Mr. Quintana's predecessor, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, likewise did not publicly demand a Commission of Inquiry while he was Special Rapporteur. Since leaving this post in 2008, Mr. Pinheiro has been a vocal advocate for the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry, an act he argues will bring accountability to perpetrators of international crimes, address the widespread culture of impunity in Burma, and deter future human rights violations. The BLC calls on Mr. Quintana to join the over 440 parliamentarians and many civil society groups in demanding that the UNSC establish a Commission of Inquiry into the crimes occurring in Burma. If Mr. Quintana joins the parliamentarians and human rights groups in demanding an



end to impunity in Burma, the UNSC and the United Nations Secretary General will not be able to ignore our many voices.

3. The recruitment of child soldiers is a serious crime that the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) commits far too often. The SPDC's use of child soldiers has been extensively reported by human rights groups both locally and internationally. The use of child soldiers is not only a human rights violation – it is a war crime. While child soldiers are only one example of the criminality of the SPDC, the ample information about this crime is itself enough for the UNSC to launch a Commission of Inquiry. The use of child soldiers is but one example of an international crime that should be the focus of a UNSC Commission of Inquiry – an investigation that would be an essential step in ending impunity in Burma.

Burma Lawyers' Council
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