

HUMAN RIGHTS
YEARBOOK
1996
BURMA

This book is dedicated to the countless citizens of Burma
who have sacrificed their homes, their freedom, and their lives to lifting
the veil of terror that shrouds the truth in Burma today.

First Edition: 1000 copies, July 1997
Published by: Human Rights Documentation Unit (NCGUB)

With generous Support from:

The Foreign Ministry of the Royal Danish Government

Norwegian Burma Council

Layout designed by: HRDU

Printed at:
Government Printing Office
National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma

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**Views expressed in this book are not necessarily those of
the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma.**

PREFACE

BY

H.E. Dr. Sein Win
Prime Minister

THE NATIONAL COALITION GOVERNMENT OF THE
UNION OF BURMA

Another year has passed, yet there are no signs that the ruling military junta in Burma, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), has changed or is willing to change its repressive ways. Systematic persecution of elected representatives, leaders, and members of the National League for Democracy (NLD), repression of pro-democracy activists and politicians, and atrocities against ethnic nationalities at the border have all continued unabated for the sake of keeping the military entrenched in power.

One encouraging sign, however, is that despite the intensifying repression, people continue to show outstanding courage, demanding change at every available opportunity. Demonstrations by students, monks, and the general population are breaking out intermittently. However, each time a display of public dissent takes place, the military junta takes the opportunity to persecute members of the NLD by arresting, torturing, and imprisoning NLD leaders, members, and supporters.

The root cause of human rights violations in Burma is a self-fulfilling belief by the military that Burma can remain secure only under military rule, and hence, the military justifies its suppression of dissent and, worse, oppression of its people. The ruling military junta is convinced that international and domestic pressure for democratization can be ignored as long as they continue to have access to financial resources to maintain their agenda.

The military is wrong in assuming that it has a monopoly over patriotism. Unfortunately, history has shown that it is difficult, if not impossible, to change the minds of dictators while they remain strong. For the sake of the country and its people, the military junta must be forced into a situation where it can no longer resist change. Human Rights violations in Burma will cease when the generals see the futility of working against the people and agree to work for national reconciliation with the democratic forces as well as the ethnic nationalities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Burma continues to be under a reign of terror imposed by the ruling military junta. The situation is aggravated by the lack of rule of law in the country.

When a general uprising for reforms started in Burma on August 8, 1988, the military violently crushed the democracy movement. After staging a coup, the generals imposed military rule in Burma in the name of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC).

SLORC promised to hold multiparty democratic elections and to hand over the state power to the election's winning party. When elections were held on May 27, 1990, the National League for Democracy won by a landslide garnering more than 82 percent of the seats. The generals, however, ignored the wishes of the people and refused to acknowledge the election results. Power has yet to be transferred to the people.

In 1993, SLORC convened the so-called National Convention. It invited a few elected representatives and stacked its convention with an overwhelming majority of its hand-picked delegates. The sham Convention was to draft a constitution preferred by the military -- one which would prolong the military dictatorship in Burma. Today, the constitution drafting process is still going on and no fixed timetable has been announced as to when that process is due to finish.

Since there is no constitution in the country, the SLORC is taking all liberties with regard to constitutional and legislative matters, and has been acting as an entity above the law. Thus, it has been acting as the sole maker of the law and has hijacked the entire judicial system. Law courts have lost their right to uphold the law or to be independent in making decisions. Since SLORC has a monopoly over legislative, administrative and judicial powers, no one dares to criticize the injustices being committed by the SLORC.

Today, an untold number of human rights violations by the SLORC are taking place all over the country and in many different ways. Using various excuses, the SLORC has been threatening and harassing people who refused to tow its line. People who criticize the military are jailed under trumped-up charges. Students, monks, politicians and other activists advocating democracy and human rights are illegally detained, tortured, and given long prison terms. Torture and inhumane treatment of political prisoners have become routine practice for SLORC.

In November 1996, the SLORC also used a crowd of its unruly supporters in an attempt to assassinate Nobel Peace Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who is well known for her leading role in the efforts to restore democracy and human rights in Burma. These atrocious acts are glaring evidence that there is no rule of law. Since the law has remained silent, brutality and atrocity by the SLORC have been ruling the day in Burma.

SLORC has consistently been urging the people of Burma to work for law and order. Yet, it is the SLORC that breaks the law, commits human rights abuses, and violates all principles that accompany the rule of law.

This Report documents incidents in 1996 that reflect the life of the people in Burma under a reign of terror brought about by a regime that cares little about human suffering. The first two reports were initiated in 1994 with the support of the Norwegian Law Students (HUMAK).

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to the members of the Norwegian Burma Council for their unwavering support in making this Report possible. In addition, I would like to thank all the ethnic organizations and the many individuals who supported this project. The very existence of the Human Rights Documentation Unit (HRDU) would not have been possible without the assistance of these friends of Burma. The emergence of the HRDU has given me a greatly satisfying opportunity to work closely with organizations that are noble and just and have a profound sympathy for the people of Burma. I wish to put on record my profound gratitude to the KHRG, ABSDF, HRFOM, MIS, SHRF, CHRO, GN-32, FTUB, SAIN, Burma Issue, Images Asia, and the Burma Relief Center for their enthusiastic assistance and cooperation for the publication of this book. Sincere thanks also to all those people who helped prepare this book for publication, including Mr. Cameron Beatty and many individuals whose names cannot be mentioned but whose contribution cannot go unnoticed. I also would like to express my gratitude to the Foreign Ministry of the Royal Danish Government which generously assisted the publication of this book and to Ms. Lisa Patlis who has contributed much of her precious time to editing the report.

Victory to the rule of law in Burma!
Down with the military dictatorship!

Thein Oo
Minister for Justice (NCGUB) and
Coordinator
Human Rights Documentation Unit

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS, TERMS, AND MEASUREMENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABSDF:	All Burma Students' Democratic Front
ABSDF/WB:	All Burma Students' Democratic Front - Western Burma
ABSL:	All Burma Students' League
ABYMU:	All Burma Young Monks Union
aka:	also known as
ALP:	Arakan Liberation Party
approx:	approximately
ASC:	Arakanese Students' Congress
BAD:	Border Area Development Program
B.E.:	Burmese Era
Brig :	Brigadier
BI:	Burma Issues
BIG:	Burma Information Group
Bn:	Battalion
BPP:	Border Patrol Police (Thailand)
BRC:	Burmese Relief Center
BSPP:	Burma Socialist Program Party
Capt:	Captain
CEC:	Central Executive Committee (NLD)
CHRO:	Chin Human Rights Organization
CNF:	Chin National Front
Comdr:	Commander
Col:	Colonel
Coy:	Company
Cpl:	Corporal
CPPSM:	Campaign for the Publicity of the People's Struggle in Monland
DDSI:	Directorate of Defense Services Intelligence
DKBA:	Democratic Kayin (Karen) Buddhist Association
DPA:	Democratic Patriotic Army
Dta Baw:	The Yellow Ones (the common Karen names for DKBA)
DVB:	Democratic Voice of Burma
FEC:	Foreign Exchange Certificate
	Officially valued at US\$ 1 = 1 FEC = 5.6 Kyat.

	Unofficial/black market FEC 1= 210-230 kyats
ft:	feet
FTUB:	Federation of Trade Unions, Burma
Gen:	General
HRDU:	Human Rights Documentation Unit (NCGUB)
HRV:	Human Rights Violations
HURFOM:	Human Rights Foundation of Monland
IA:	Images Asia
IB:	Infantry Battalion
IDC:	Immigration Detention Center (Thailand)
ILO:	International Labor Organization
Ind:	Independent
Lt:	Lieutenant
kg:	Kilogram
KHRG:	Karen Human Rights Group
KIA	Kachin Independence Army (Military wing of KIO)
KIC:	Karen Information Center
KIO	Kachin Independence Organization
KNLA:	Karen National Liberation Army (military wing of KNU)
KNPP:	Karenni National Progressive Party
KNU:	Karen National Union
Ko Per Baw:	The Yellow Headbands (the common Karen names for DKBA)
Ko Per Kit:	The Striped Headbands (usually red-and-white headbands) A relatively small group which has allied itself with DKBA.
Ko Per Wah:	The White Headbands which was recently formed. Formed by a monk who then allied himself with DKBA chief U Thuzana
ks:	Kyats (approx. value: official US\$1 = 5.6 ks; unofficial US\$1 = 210-230 ks)
LIB:	Light Infantry Battalion
LID:	Light Infantry Division
LORC:	Law and Order Restoration Council (on the ward, township, state, and division levels)
MAMD:	Mon Army, Mergui District
Maj:	Major
Ma Wa Ta:	Township-level SLORC authorities
MIS:	Military Intelligence Services (aka DDSI)
MIS:	Mon Information Service(Bangkok)
mm:	millimeter
MNRC:	Mon National Relief Committee
MOGE:	Myanmar Oil & Gas Enterprise
MOI:	Ministry of Interior (Thailand)
MOU:	Memorandum of Understanding

MSC:	Military Strategic Command
MTA:	Mong Tai Army (led by Khun Sa)
n.a.:	[not available]
Na Wa Ta:	State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC)
NBC:	Norwegian Burma Council
NCGUB:	National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma
NCO:	Non-commissioned officer
NGO:	Non-governmental organization
NLD:	National League for Democracy
NLD (LA):	National League for Democracy (Liberated Area)
NLM:	The New Light of Myanmar (SLORC-controlled newspaper)
NMSP:	New Mon State Party
Pa Wa Ta:	State-level SLORC authorities
Pali:	Pali, the Prakrit language of the Buddhist Scriptures
Pvt:	Private
Pyi:	Country
pyi:	eight-condensed-milk tin
SAIN:	Southeast Asia Information Network
Sd.:	Signed with signature
Sgt:	Sergeant
Shwedagon:	The Great Pagoda in Rangoon
SHRF:	Shan Human Rights Foundation
S.H.A.N.:	Shan Herald Agency for News
SLORC:	State Law and Order Restoration Council
sq:	square
SSA:	Shan State Army
SSIA:	Shan State Independence Army
SUA:	Shan United Army (now-defunct when MTA exits)
SURA:	Shan United Revolutionary Army
Ta Wa Ta:	Division-level SLORC authorities
TOC:	Tactical Operations Command
TRC:	Thailand Revolutionary Council
UN:	United Nations
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization
UNDP:	United Nations Development Program
USDA:	Union Solidarity and Development Association
Ya Wa Ta:	Town-quarter-level or Village-level SLORC authorities
yrs:	Years

TERMS

Baht:	monetary unit of Thailand (see “Measurements”).
Black Areas:	areas fully under the control of anti-government forces.
Bo:	military commander.
Brown Areas:	areas partially under the control of anti-government forces
Daw:	an honorific used to address an adult female
furlong:	(see “Measurements”)
Jaggery:	a hard brown crystallized substance which is obtained from boiling sugarcane juice and sap from toddy palm stems; used as brown sugar or syrup
Kawthoolei:	Karen name for the Karen nation.
Khun:	polite form of address in the Thai language
Ko:	Burmese form of address to a young male
kyat:	monetary unit in Burma
longyi:	Burmese word for sarong
Ma:	Burmese form of address to a young female
Mahn:	Burmese form of address to a Karen male
Maung:	Burmese form of address to a young male
Mehm/Min:	form of address to a young Mon male
Mi:	form of address to a Mon female
Movement :	the SLORC appoints a village “headman” (not the same as the
Paper	real headman), usually against his will, and this man is then authorized to issue movement papers to his villagers, verifying who they are.
Na Ka Sa:	Burmese abbreviation for paramilitary border patrol on Burma’s Bangladeshi border
Nai:	Burmese form of address to an adult Mon male
Naw:	Burmese form of address to a Karen female
plah:	Karen measurement of distance, from elbow to fingertip (1 plah is under 2 feet)
pya:	100 pyas = 1 kyats
ringworm:	derogatory SLORC reference to KNLA soldiers
Sai:	Burmese form of address to a young Shan male
Sangha:	Buddhist order of monks
Sao:	male of Shan royal descent
Saw:	form of address to a Karen male
Sayadaw:	presiding monk of a Buddhist monastery
Tatmadaw:	Burmese Army
Thakin:	master;lord (used to address the British colonial rulers; later politicized by the Burmese independence movement in the 1930s)
tickle:	(see “Measurements”)
tin:	(see “Measurements”)

tract (village): area consisting of 4-6 villages
 U: an honorific used to address an adult male in Burma
 viss: (see "Measurements")
 White Areas: area fully under the control of the Tatmadaw

MEASUREMENTS

acre: 1 acre = 4,840 sq. yards = 0.407 hectare
 2.471 acres = 11,960 sq. yards = 1 hectare
 640 acres = 1 sq. mile = 2.590 sq. kilometers
 baht: 1 baht = 100 satang = US\$ 0.038
 28 baht = US\$ 1
 FEC: 1 FEC = US\$1 = kyat 5.6 (official)
 1 FEC = Kyats 210 - 230 (unofficial)
 furlong: 1 furlong = 220 yards (1/8) mile = 201 meters
 kyat: 1 kyat (ks) = US\$ 0.16 (official)
 1 kyat = US\$ 0.004 (unofficial)
 lakh: 1 lakh = 100,000
 tickle: 1 tickle = 0.576 ounces = 16.33 gram
 tin: 1 tin (rice/condensed milk) = approx 250 ml
 viss: 1 viss = 3.6 lbs = 1.633 kg
 622.22 viss = 1 long ton (2,240 lbs) = 1.016 metric tons

NOTE ABOUT SPELLINGS:

Since there are no standardized transcriptions in the Roman alphabet for Burmese, Mon, and other ethnic languages, words are spelled variously, according to different spelling conventions or by how they sound (the spelling of Halockhani refugee camp is a classic example of this, by Westerners as well as Thais and locals). In addition, spellings have further been confused by the ruling junta's official Burmanization of well-known English spellings (e.g. Myanmar for Burma).

In order to avoid confusion and politicization, this report will restrict its use of language to the established and more widely-accepted anglicized spellings, since this report was written in English.

A list of alternative spellings from various sources are provided as follows:

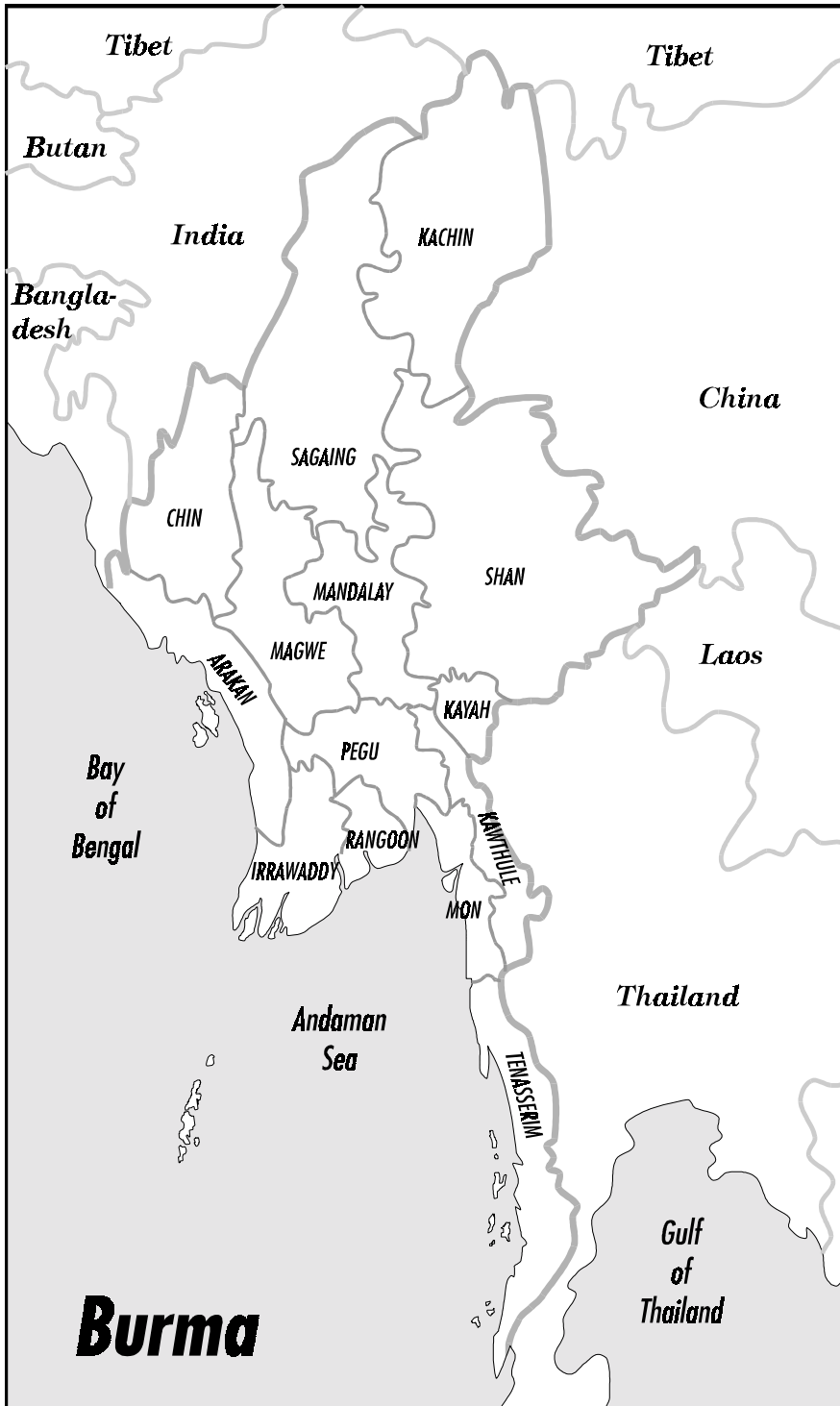
Ayeyarwady:	Irrawaddy
Bagan:	Pagan
Bago:	Pegu
Bamar:	Burman
Dawei:	Tavoy
Hinthada:	Henzada
Hpa-an:	Pa-an
Kayah:	Karenni
Kayin:	Karen
Kyaing Don:	Kengtung
Magway:	Magwe
Mawlamyine:	Moulmein
Muang Tai:	Mong Tai
Myeit:	Mergui
Myanmar:	Burma
Patheingyi:	Bassein
Pyaw:	Prome
Sittoung:	Sittaung
Sittwe, Sittway:	Akyab
Tanintharyi:	Tenasserim
Thandwai:	Sandoway
Thanlwin:	Salween River
Taungtha:	Moei River
Toungtha:	Taungtha
Yangon:	Rangoon

BURMA AT A GLANCE: FACTS AND FIGURES

Country name:	Union of Burma (1948); Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma (1974); Union of Myanmar (1989)
Area:	261,000 sq miles
Coastline:	1,600 miles
Population:	48.3 million
Urban population:	26%
Population density:	160 people/sq mile.
Refugees:	approximately 300,000 in Thailand; 20,000 in China and India; 50,000 in Bangladesh
Internally displaced:	approximately two million people
Birth rate:	2.1%
Life expectancy:	59 years
Adult literacy:	19.4%

School attendance:	26.7%
People per telephone:	265.5
People per TV:	22.0
People per doctor:	12,500
Infant mortality:	79
Languages:	Arakanese, Burmese, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Mon, Shan, Wa, English and more than 100 minority dialects
Religions:	Buddhist (85%), Animist (5%), Christian (4.5%), Muslim (4%), Hindu (1.5%)
Per-capita GDP(PPP):	US\$ 753
GDP growth:	6.0%
Per capital GNP:	US\$ 890
Saving % of GDP:	12%
Reserves excl. gold:	US\$ 0.2 billion
Cur acct. balance:	US\$ 0.3 billion
Exports 12 months:	US\$ 1.0 billion
Inflation CPI:	31.5%
Foreign debt:	US\$ 8.3 billion
GDP spending:	3.1 % on military (non-SLORC figures: over 50%), 2.2% education, 0.8% health.
Wage earners:	6 million (rough estimate)
LDC status:	since 1987
Natural resources:	tin, plutonium, zinc, copper, cobalt, gold, rubies, jade, teak (80% of world's reserves), fish (704 metric tons/year), gas, oil, rice, sesame, groundnuts
Agriculture:	68% of workforce employed in agriculture; 15% of arable land; under 50% of potentially productive land under cultivation
Rice exports:	3.5 million tons (1,930); 2 million tons (1962); 20,000 tons (1988)
Opium production:	1,300 tons (1988), 2,400 tons (1994) (70% of US market)
Administrative areas:	7 States (Arakan, Chin, Mon, Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Shan); 7 Divisions (Irrawaddy, Magwe, Mandalay, Pegu, Rangoon, Sagaing, Tenasserim)
Last election:	27 May 1990; NLD won more than 82% of legislative seats
Next election:	Unknown

Map of Burma showing State and Division Borders



Graphics by Radio Burma Group 1995

Map of Burma Showing Major Cities

