

BURMA BULLETIN



A month-in-review of events in Burma



ALTERNATIVE A S E A N NETWORK ON BURMA
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- **Serious human rights violations against Rohingya continue, including harassment, arbitrary detention, torture, and the rape of women.**
- **The regime tightens restrictions on Muslims in Arakan State but encourages the creation of more Buddhist ‘model villages’ in areas affected by sectarian violence.**
- **The exodus of Rohingya boat people continues, along with increasing reports of deaths at sea. Thai, Malaysian, and Bangladeshi authorities continue to detain or turn away Rohingya refugees.**
- **UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma says that “significant human rights shortcomings” remain unaddressed, including the regime’s treatment of Rohingya and the Tatmadaw’s human rights violations in Kachin State.**
- **The regime proposes that over 20% of the budget for the 2013-14 fiscal year be allocated to military expenditure and only 4.4% and 3.9% to education and healthcare respectively.**
- **President Thein Sein strengthens the military’s grip on the executive with the appointment of three military men as key ministers in his latest cabinet reshuffle.**
- **Further fighting occurs in Kachin State despite talks between the regime and the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO).**
- **Farmers and villagers continue to protest and resist land confiscation and evictions by regime authorities.**
- **US eases restrictions on two crony-owned banks as Burma remains on an international blacklist for making insufficient progress in combating money laundering and terrorism financing.**

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KEY STORY

Ojea Quintana slams regime’s treatment of Rohingya

On 11-12 February, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana visited Arakan State as part of his six-day fact-finding mission to the country [See below *UN highlights “significant human rights shortcomings”*].¹ Ojea Quintana inspected conditions in Akyab [Sittwe] prison and in Rohingya IDP camps in Akyab, Myebon, and Pauktaw Townships.² On 12 February,

¹ RFA (11 Feb 13) UN Expert Visits Refugee Camps; NLM (13 Feb 13) Quintana visits relief camps in Sittway District

² UNIC Yangon (16 Feb 13) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar

regime authorities in Akyab briefly detained Rohingya activist Aung Win in order to prevent him from meeting Ojea Quintana.³ At the end of his visit, the Special Rapporteur slammed the regime over its handling of the situation in Arakan State and the treatment of Rohingya. Ojea Quintana highlighted the following issues of concern:⁴

- Allegations of torture and custodial deaths of Rohingya in Buthidaung prison.
- The arbitrary imprisonment of Rohingya leader Tun Aung in Akyab prison.
- The ongoing detention of four INGO staff in Buthidaung prison on “unfounded” charges.
- Restrictions on IDPs’ freedom of movement. Ojea Quintana said that the Rohingya IDP camp in Myebon “felt more like a prison than a camp.”
- Lack of adequate healthcare in the larger Rohingya IDP camps.
- The failure of regime authorities to promote dialogue between Buddhist and Muslim community leaders.

Ojea Quintana reiterated his call for Parliament to amend the 1982 Citizenship Law in order to end discrimination against Rohingya.⁵

Threats, intimidation, and restrictions hamper aid to Rohingya: MSF

On 7 February, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) released a statement on the humanitarian emergency in Arakan State.⁶ MSF said that tens of thousands of predominately Rohingya IDPs in Arakan State were still without access to medical care.⁷ MSF also urged regime authorities to “do more” to halt threats and intimidation directed at its staff from some members of the Rakhine community.⁸

In addition, at a 7 February press conference, MSF General Director Arjan Hehenkamp said that regime security forces restricted MSF visits and placed limits on the movement of Rohingya patients, even when they were critically ill.⁹ He also said that Rohingya were being confined in muddy and narrow strips of land without access to healthcare, clean water, or sanitation.¹⁰

Discrimination and abuses against Muslims and Rohingya continue

In February, the regime tightened restrictions on Muslims in Arakan State but encouraged the creation of more Buddhist ‘model villages’ in areas affected by sectarian violence. On 11 February, regime authorities in Arakan State instructed local immigration officials to prevent all Muslims - including those with ID cards - from traveling outside of their townships.¹¹ By contrast, it was reported that since December regime authorities had been resettling hundreds of Buddhist Rakhine living in Southern Bangladesh to Maungdaw Township, Northern Arakan State.¹² Regime authorities provided homes, land, and security for the settlers.¹³

Regime authorities also continued to commit serious human rights violations against Rohingya, including harassment, arbitrary detention, torture, and the rape of women:

- **3 February:** Na Sa Ka personnel from Area 4 in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, detained three Rohingya, including a 50-year-old Rohingya religious leader, on false charges of human trafficking.¹⁴

³ DVB (12 Feb 13) Prominent Rohingya human rights activist arrested in Sittwe

⁴ UNIC Yangon (16 Feb 13) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar

⁵ Reuters (16 Feb 13) UN envoy says abuses still go on in Myanmar despite reforms

⁶ MSF (07 Feb 13) Myanmar: Humanitarian emergency in Rakhine state

⁷ MSF (07 Feb 13) Myanmar: Humanitarian emergency in Rakhine state

⁸ MSF (07 Feb 13) Myanmar: Humanitarian emergency in Rakhine state

⁹ Irrawaddy (07 Feb 13) Medical Aid to Arakan State Rohingya Blocked, MSF Says

¹⁰ Irrawaddy (07 Feb 13) Medical Aid to Arakan State Rohingya Blocked, MSF Says

¹¹ DVB (12 Feb 13) Arakan officials instructed to restrict Muslims’ travel

¹² Irrawaddy (01 Feb 13) Buddhists Leaving Bangladesh Welcomed in West Burma; Kaladan News (02 Feb 13) Resettles over 130-Buddhist from Bangladesh

¹³ Irrawaddy (01 Feb 13) Buddhists Leaving Bangladesh Welcomed in West Burma; Kaladan News (02 Feb 13) Resettles over 130-Buddhist from Bangladesh

¹⁴ Kaladan News (05 Feb 13) Authorities increase harassment in Maungdaw

- **5 February:** Na Sa Ka personnel from Area 6 in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, shut down three Islamic schools.¹⁵
- **5 February:** A court in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, sentenced 11 Rohingya to 10 years in prison each for their alleged involvement in the June riots.¹⁶
- **9 February:** Na Sa Ka personnel from Area 8 in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, detained and tortured a 35-year-old Rohingya religious leader for his alleged involvement in the June riots.¹⁷
- **12 February:** Four Rohingya men from Ludine Village, Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, died in custody at a local Na Sa Ka camp.¹⁸
- **18 February:** Na Sa Ka personnel from Area 5 in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, gang-raped and tortured two Rohingya girls aged 18 and 14.¹⁹
- **20 February:** Na Sa Ka personnel in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, tortured and raped at least 11 women, including teenage girls.²⁰

In addition, high-ranking regime officials continued to make statements that fueled discrimination against Rohingya. On 20 February, during question time in the People's Assembly, regime Immigration and Population Deputy Minister Kyaw Kyaw Win denied the existence of Rohingya as an ethnic group of Burma.²¹ Kyaw Kyaw Win also said that the term 'Rohingya' was a "newly coined word."²²

Rohingya exodus continues

Rohingya boat people continued to set out to sea in desperate attempts to find refuge, most of them heading for Thailand and Malaysia. On 7 February, a Thai official said that 5,899 Rohingya boat people had entered Thailand since October 2012.²³ On 21 February, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said that an estimated 1,800 boat people had arrived in Malaysia in 2013.²⁴

On 3 and 16 February, the Sri Lankan Navy rescued 170 boat people - mostly Rohingya - from two sinking boats off of Sri Lanka's eastern coast.²⁵ The first group reported one death at sea and the second group said that 98 people had died of starvation and dehydration during their two-month journey and their corpses had to be thrown overboard.²⁶

Thai authorities continued to either turn away boat people who attempted to land on its shores or detain them as illegal immigrants.

- **4 February:** Thai authorities turned away 145 Rohingya boat people off Trang Province.²⁷
- **22 February:** Thai authorities detained eight Rohingya boat people who landed in Phuket Province after having been at sea for 28 days.²⁸

Rohingya refugees also continued to arrive in Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Indonesia:

- **1 February:** Indonesian authorities found 54 Rohingya boat people adrift north of Aceh Province.²⁹
- **16 February:** Border Guards of Bangladesh (BGB) personnel pushed-back 57 Rohingya who were arrested on 15-16 February at various points along the Burma-Bangladesh border.³⁰

¹⁵ Kaladan News (05 Feb 13) Authorities increase harassment in Maungdaw

¹⁶ Kaladan News (06 Feb 13) 11- Rohingya villagers sentenced to jail in Maungdaw

¹⁷ Kaladan News (12 Feb 13) Nasaka detains a religious leader in Maungdaw

¹⁸ Kaladan News (14 Feb 13) No life security of Rohingya people in Arakan

¹⁹ Kaladan News (19 Feb 13) Two girls gang-raped in Maungdaw

²⁰ Guardian (26 Feb 13) Rapes by Burmese security forces 'may cause more strife' in troubled region

²¹ NLM (21 Feb 13) No 'Rohingya' race in Myanmar, says Deputy Minister; EMG (24 Feb 13) No 'Rohingya' in Myanmar ethnic groups, deputy minister says

²² NLM (21 Feb 13) No 'Rohingya' race in Myanmar, says Deputy Minister

²³ AFP (07 Feb 13) Nearly 6,000 Rohingya refugees enter Thai waters: army

²⁴ UNHCR (21 Feb 13) UNHCR urges action to prevent boatpeople tragedy in Bay of Bengal

²⁵ AFP (03 Feb 13) Sri Lanka rescues 138 Bangladeshi and Myanmar nationals from a sinking boat; Reuters (18 Feb 13) Myanmar migrant survivors tell of throwing dead overboard

²⁶ Reuters (18 Feb 13) Myanmar migrant survivors tell of throwing dead overboard; AFP (03 Feb 13) Sri Lanka rescues 138 Bangladeshi and Myanmar nationals from a sinking boat

²⁷ Bangkok Post (04 Feb 13) Police turn back 145 sea-faring Rohingya

²⁸ Phuketwan (22 Feb 13) More Rohingya Land on Phuket: Police Search for Surin Boatpeople

²⁹ Jakarta Post (28 Feb 13) Islands in focus: 121 Rohingya refugees stranded in Aceh

³⁰ Kaladan News (17 Feb 13) 57 Rohingya pushed back to Burma

- **18 February:** Malaysian authorities detained 102 Burmese boat people who had landed on Penang Island the previous day.³¹
- **26 February:** Indonesian fishermen rescued 121 Rohingya north of Aceh Province who had traveled from Arakan State.³²
- **28 February:** Indonesian fishermen rescued 63 Rohingya boat people, including 23 children, east of Aceh Province.³³

Following the intensifying exodus of Rohingya, throughout February UNHCR reiterated its calls for countries in the region to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to boat people and to help prevent the rising number of deaths during their perilous journey.³⁴

INSIDE BURMA

Massive military spending proposed

Parliament continued to discuss the National Planning Bill for the 2013-14 fiscal year during the ongoing sixth session in Naypyidaw. However, several MPs, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, criticized the bill because it failed to reflect the people's priorities and address the economic inequalities among Burma's states and divisions.³⁵ In mid-February, it was reported that the regime had proposed that 20.86% of the budget for the 2013-14 fiscal year be allocated to military expenditure.³⁶ By contrast, the regime proposed to allocate only 4.4% and 3.9% to education and healthcare respectively.³⁷

Tatmadaw attacks continue despite regime-KIO talks

In February, peace talks between the regime and the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) failed to prevent further fighting, as the Tatmadaw continued to attack Kachin Independence Army (KIA) positions. On 4 February, a regime delegation led by President's Office Minister Aung Min met with KIO representatives in Ruili, Yunnan Province, China.³⁸ Karen National Union (KNU) and Shan State Army-South (SSA-S) representatives, as well as a Chinese Foreign Ministry official, were among those present as observers.³⁹ The talks yielded no major breakthroughs, with no ceasefire brokered. Both sides agreed to de-escalate military tensions; establish a liaison channel; establish a ceasefire monitoring system on the ground; and hold further talks, in coordination with the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), before the end of February.⁴⁰ On 24 February, the KIO informed the regime that it would not be ready to meet again before the end of the month as it was still conducting consultations with civil society.⁴¹

The Tatmadaw continued to attack KIA forces before and after the 4 February talks:

- **3 February:** Tatmadaw troops fired four artillery shells at KIA positions near Laiza, Momauk Township, Kachin State.⁴²
- **3 February:** Tatmadaw troops overran a KIA outpost near Hpakant, Kachin State.⁴³

³¹ Star (20 Feb 13) 102 Myanmar 'boat people' nabbed

³² AFP (27 Feb 13) Over 100 Rohingya asylum seekers rescued off Indonesia; Bangkok Post (27 Feb 13) Rohingya claim Thais shot at them

³³ AFP (01 Mar 13) 63 Rohingya rescued off Indonesia

³⁴ Nation (01 Feb 13) Call to help Rohingya as more arrive in Thailand; UNHCR (21 Feb 13) UNHCR urges action to prevent boatpeople tragedy in Bay of Bengal; UN News Center (22 Feb 13) UN concerned about refugees crossing 'deadliest stretches of water' to flee homes; UNHCR (26 Feb 13) UN High Commissioner for Refugees says Regional effort needed to reduce Indian Ocean death toll

³⁵ Myanmar Times (18 Feb 13) National planning bill needs to change, say MPs

³⁶ DVB (19 Feb 13) Military spending challenged in parliament

³⁷ Irrawaddy (21 Feb 13) Billion-dollar Military Budget Irks MPS

³⁸ RFA (04 Feb 13) Kachin Peace Talks Held

³⁹ UNFC (04 Feb 13) Joint Communiqué from KIO and Central Peace Committee (English)

⁴⁰ Xinhua (04 Feb 13) Myanmar gov't, KIO resume peace talks in China's Ruili: joint statement; AP (04 Feb 13) Myanmar reaches deal with rebels to ease tensions

⁴¹ Mizzima News (26 Feb 13) KIO postpones talks with govt peace committee

⁴² Kachin News Group (05 Feb 13) Burma army pushes on amid KIO peace talks

⁴³ Irrawaddy (05 Feb 13) Ruili Meeting Restarts Talks, But Yields No Results

- **6 February:** Tatmadaw troops shelled KIA positions near Lajayang in Momauk Township, Kachin State.⁴⁴
- **6 February:** Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA forces in Hohpyet, Kutkai Township, Northern Shan State.⁴⁵
- **23 February:** Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA forces in Chipwi and Tsawlaw in Kachin State.⁴⁶

Regime pledges aid access but obstruction persists

After obstructing the delivery of aid to IDPs in Kachin Independence Army (KIA)-controlled areas throughout the ongoing 21-month conflict in Kachin State, on 5 February, the regime announced that it would allow the UN and INGOs to provide humanitarian assistance to all IDP camps across the state.⁴⁷ However, the regime failed to provide a timeframe for the commencement of assistance. On 17 February, UN and INGO humanitarian staff traveled to Hpakant, Kachin State, to begin providing assistance to some 5,000 IDPs living in 41 regime-controlled camps.⁴⁸ However, in February, only the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was able to deliver humanitarian aid to KIA-controlled areas in the form of surgical and other medical supplies.⁴⁹

In addition, the regime continued to hinder the delivery of local aid to IDPs. On 1 February, Tatmadaw troops turned back 12 Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC) members near Lawng Hkang, Hpakant Township, Kachin State, as they attempted to deliver aid to IDPs in Seng Ra Village near Hpakant.⁵⁰

Talks overshadowed by Tatmadaw attacks in Shan State

In February, the regime held separate talks with the Shan State Army-South (SSA-S) and the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) in Chiang Mai, Thailand. On 19 February, a regime delegation led by President's Office Minister Aung Min met with SSA-S leader Yawd Serk to discuss the current ceasefire between the regime and the SSA-S.⁵¹ During the talks, Yawd Serk lodged a complaint with Aung Min over continued Tatmadaw attacks.⁵² On 20 February, a regime delegation led by President's Office Minister Aung Min met with UNFC representatives, including Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) General Secretary La Ja.⁵³ The two sides discussed a framework for political dialogue and the presence and role of mediators and observers at future meetings.⁵⁴ Both sides agreed to hold further talks in two months.⁵⁵

However, even as the talks occurred, the Tatmadaw engaged in fighting with the Shan State Army-North (SSA-N), a UNFC member, and the SSA-S:

- **19 February:** Tatmadaw troops from LIB 322 attacked SSA-N positions near Mongkao in Tangyan Township, Shan State.⁵⁶
- **20 February:** Tatmadaw troops clashed with SSA-N forces in Tangyan Township, Shan State.⁵⁷
- **24 February:** Tatmadaw troops clashed with SSA-S forces in Kholam, Nansang Township, Shan State.⁵⁸

⁴⁴ Kachin News Group (08 Feb 13) Despite talks Kachin conflict continues

⁴⁵ Kachin News Group (08 Feb 13) Despite talks Kachin conflict continues

⁴⁶ Kachin News Group (25 Feb 13) Fighting between KIO and army continues in Chipwe, Pangwa

⁴⁷ Irrawaddy (05 Feb 13) UN Allowed to Help Kachin Civilians in Rebel Areas

⁴⁸ UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Myanmar (17 Feb 13) Humanitarian assistance leaves for Hpakant, Kachin State

⁴⁹ ICRC (28 Feb 13) Myanmar: Aid reaches victims of violence in Kachin

⁵⁰ Kachin News Group (04 Feb 13) Burma army blocks aid group from entering Hpakant

⁵¹ Irrawaddy (19 Feb 13) After Meeting, Govt, SSA Schedule More Talks in Naypyidaw

⁵² SHAN (20 Feb 13) People's participation key to duration of peace: Shan-Naypyitaw meeting

⁵³ RFA (20 Feb 13) Burma Holds Peace Talks With Ethnic Alliance

⁵⁴ NLM (21 Feb 13) Union Peace Working Committee, UNFC hold talks, issue joint-statement

⁵⁵ RFA (20 Feb 13) Burma Holds Peace Talks With Ethnic Alliance

⁵⁶ DVB (25 Feb 13) Armed group claims military attacking sites slated for resettlement; SHAN (20 Feb 13) Newsflash

⁵⁷ SHAN (20 Feb 13) Newsflash

⁵⁸ SHAN (01 Mar 13) Burma Army reinforcing troops in recent battle scene with RCSS/SSA

More military men, no ethnic reps in new cabinet

In February, President Thein Sein strengthened the military's grip on the executive in his latest cabinet reshuffle. Despite the appointment of six civilians as deputy ministers, including a woman and the first opposition MP, Thein Sein installed three military men to head key regime ministries. In addition, no representatives from ethnic nationalities were among those appointed.⁵⁹

- **5 February:** President Thein Sein appointed former general and Irrawaddy Division USDP MP Hsan Hsint as regime Religious Affairs Minister.⁶⁰
- **5 February:** President Thein Sein appointed deputy ministers for the regime's Energy, Mines, Labor, Science and Technology, and Hotels and Tourism ministries.⁶¹ Among those five was Tin Shwe, a National Democratic Force (NDF) National Assembly MP.⁶²
- **13 February:** President Thein Sein appointed Air Force Commander-in-Chief Gen Myat Hein as regime Communications and Information Technology Minister and Tatmadaw officer Lt Gen Thet Naing Win as regime Border Affairs Minister.⁶³
- **19 February:** President Thein Sein appointed Win Myint as regime Construction Deputy Minister.⁶⁴

Thein Sein's cabinet appointments	
Name	Position
Hsan Hsint	Religious Affairs Minister
Myat Hein	Communications & Information Technology Minister
Lt Gen Thet Naing Win	Border Affairs Minister
Aung Htoo	Energy Deputy Minister
Than Tun Aung	Mines Deputy Minister
Win Maw Tun (F)	Labor Deputy Minister
Zaw Min Aung	Science & Technology Deputy Minister
Tin Shwe	Hotels & Tourism Deputy Minister
Win Myint	Construction Deputy Minister

Land confiscation and evictions continue amid protests

Farmers and villagers continued to protest and resist land confiscation and evictions by regime authorities:

- **7 February:** Regime authorities in Pegu, Pegu Division, told more than 2,000 residents that they would face one month in prison if they did not vacate their homes by 1 March to make way for development projects.⁶⁵ However, residents opposed the eviction order and refused to relocate to another area.⁶⁶
- **17 February:** Farmers in Phyu Township, Pegu Division, demanded that regime authorities compensate them for the confiscation of up to 10,000 acres of land for infrastructure projects, including three dams.⁶⁷
- **25 February:** It was reported that earlier in the month police had charged seven residents from Inngyinkon and Kanbe Villages, Nyaungshwe Township, Southern Shan State, with obstructing local authorities.⁶⁸ The seven had demonstrated to demand adequate compensation for the confiscation of their land to make way for the development of a hotel zone.⁶⁹
- **26 February:** Police in Maubin Township, Irrawaddy Division, shot and injured at least 17 farmers who were among hundreds of villagers trying to get back about 10,000 acres of land that the authorities had confiscated without compensation.⁷⁰

⁵⁹ Myanmar Times (18 Feb 13) Debate sparked over Myanmar's new telecoms minister

⁶⁰ Xinhua (05 Feb 13) Myanmar appoints new religious minister, five deputy ministers

⁶¹ NLM (06 Feb 13) Appointment of Union Minister; NLM (06 Feb 13) Appointment of deputy ministers; Xinhua (05 Feb 13) Myanmar appoints new religious minister, five deputy ministers; DPA (06 Feb 13) Myanmar adds civilians to senior government positions

⁶² AFP (06 Feb 13) Myanmar drafts first opposition MP to Cabinet; Myanmar Times (11 Feb 13) Non-USDP member deputy minister

⁶³ NLM (14 Feb 13) Appointment of Union Ministers; Irrawaddy (14 Feb 13) Former Generals to Run Burma's Telecoms, Border Affairs Ministries

⁶⁴ NLM (20 Feb 13) Deputy Minister appointed

⁶⁵ Mizzima News (14 Feb 13) Bago residents face eviction, 30 days imprisonment

⁶⁶ Mizzima News (14 Feb 13) Bago residents face eviction, 30 days imprisonment

⁶⁷ Myanmar Times (25 Feb 13) Myanmar farmers seek compensation for land grabs

⁶⁸ Myanmar Times (25 Feb 13) Seven charged over Inle Lake hotel zone protest

⁶⁹ Myanmar Times (25 Feb 13) Seven charged over Inle Lake hotel zone protest

⁷⁰ RFA (26 Feb 13) Burmese Farmers Shot in Land Clash; RFA (27 Feb 13) Burma Moves to Contain Village Land Turmoil

Opposition to the Monywa copper mine grows

Villagers in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division, continued to express their opposition to the Monywa copper mine.

- **13 February:** Hundreds of villagers gathered near the Monywa copper mine site to demand a complete halt to the project.⁷¹
- **17 February:** Residents of 19 of the 26 villages affected by the Monywa copper mine's operations gathered in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division, to demand the mine's closure and that regime authorities identify those responsible for the 29 November violent crackdown on peaceful protesters.⁷²
- **18 February:** Activists in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division, said that they launched a petition campaign to demand that the UN urge regime authorities to stop the Monywa copper mine's operations.⁷³

Meanwhile, the regime-appointed commission investigating the Monywa copper mine failed to submit its findings to President Thein Sein by the 31 January deadline.⁷⁴ On 28 February, 26 representatives from villages affected by the Monywa copper mine went on a 12-hour hunger strike over the commission's delay in releasing its report.⁷⁵

On 14 February, the Upper Burma Lawyers Network and the US-based Justice Trust released a report on their independent investigation of the Monywa copper mine and the regime's 29 November crackdown.⁷⁶ The report found that regime officials used fraud and coerced villagers to sign contracts to hand over their land for the mine's expansion.⁷⁷ With regard to the crackdown, the report found that regime authorities had used "excessive force" on protesters, including the use of white phosphorus grenades that injured over 100 monks and villagers.⁷⁸

HUMAN RIGHTS

UN highlights "significant human rights shortcomings"

On 10 February, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana arrived in Burma for a six-day visit to the country.⁷⁹ In Naypyidaw, Ojea Quintana met with MPs and several regime officials.⁸⁰ In Rangoon, he met with five political prisoners in Insein prison, members of the regime's Human Rights Commission, as well as civil society organizations, activists, and politicians, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and 88 Generation Student leaders.⁸¹ He also traveled to Arakan and Kachin States, where he visited various prisons and IDP camps.⁸²

At the conclusion of his visit, on 16 February, Ojea Quintana issued a statement that said that "significant human rights shortcomings" remained unaddressed.⁸³ In addition to the situation in Arakan

⁷¹ DVB (14 Feb 13) Protests against controversial Chinese copper mine resume

⁷² EMG (18 Feb 13) Villagers unite to call for closing of massive copper mine

⁷³ RFA (18 Feb 13) UN Asked to Help Stop Mine Project

⁷⁴ VOA (01 Feb 13) Copper Mine Controversy Tests Burma's Leaders

⁷⁵ RFA (28 Feb 13) Burmese Mine Activists Hold Hunger Strike

⁷⁶ Irrawaddy (14 Feb 13) Fraud, Excessive Force Used at Letpadaung Mine: Report

⁷⁷ BBC (14 Feb 13) Burma police 'used white phosphorous' on mine protesters; VOA (14 Feb 13) Burma Authorities Accused of Fraud, Coercion at China-Backed Mine

⁷⁸ AP (14 Feb 13) Myanmar protesters want justice for mine crackdown; BBC (14 Feb 13) Burma police 'used white phosphorous' on mine protesters; Irrawaddy (14 Feb 13) Fraud, Excessive Force Used at Letpadaung Mine: Report; Myanmar Times (18 Feb 13) Lawyers' Network urges government to act over crackdown

⁷⁹ NLM (11 Feb 13) Mr Quintana arrives Yangon

⁸⁰ UNIC Yangon (16 Feb 13) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar; NLM (15 Feb 13) Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker receives Mr. Tomas Ojea Quintana; NLM (15 Feb 13) Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw receives Mr Tomas Ojea Quintana; NLM (15 Feb 13) Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw Citizens' Fundamental Rights, Democracy and Human Rights meets Mr Quintana

⁸¹ UNIC Yangon (16 Feb 13) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar; NLM (14 Feb 13) Quintana visits Central Jail (Insein)

⁸² RFA (11 Feb 13) UN Expert Visits Refugee Camps; UNIC Yangon (16 Feb 13) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar; NLM (14 Feb 13) Quintana visits Central Jail (Insein); NLM (13 Feb 13) Quintana visits relief camps in Sittway District

⁸³ Reuters (16 Feb 13) UN envoy says abuses still go on in Myanmar despite reforms

State [See above *Ojea Quintana slams regime's treatment of Rohingya*], Ojea Quintana expressed concern over the following issues:⁸⁴

- The significant number of political prisoners that remain behind bars and the ongoing practice of torture in places of detention.
- The militarization of Kachin State and the ongoing practice of arbitrary arrest and torture by the Tatmadaw of Kachin accused of having ties to the Kachin Independence Army (KIA).
- The regime's administrative and political obstacles to humanitarian access in Kachin State.
- The judiciary's lack of independence from the executive branch.
- Oppressive laws still in force, such as the Unlawful Association Act and the State Protection Law.
- Legislation concerning the right to assemble which fails to comply with international human rights standards.
- Constitutional provisions which undermine the rule of law and fundamental human rights.
- Development projects that may have a detrimental effect on the human rights situation, through land confiscation, forced evictions, and environmental degradation.

Ojea Quintana reiterated his call for the establishment of a parliamentary "truth commission" which he said would be "crucial" for the process of national reconciliation and the prevention of future human rights violations.⁸⁵

Political Prisoners Review Committee formed

On 7 February, the regime announced the formation of a committee tasked with reviewing the cases of the remaining political prisoners in order "to grant them liberty."⁸⁶ The committee, chaired by President's Office Minister Soe Thein, included regime officials, members of political parties, and representatives from civil society groups, such as the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) and the 88 Generation Students.⁸⁷ On 23 February, the committee held its first meeting in Rangoon.⁸⁸

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Nambiar visits Kachin State, calls for humanitarian access

On 6 February, UN Sec-Gen's Special Advisor on Burma Vijay Nambiar concluded a four-day visit to the country.⁸⁹ During his trip, Nambiar visited four IDP camps in Myitkyina Township, Kachin State.⁹⁰ He discussed the situation in Kachin State with various regime officials and members of civil society and urged the regime to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid from the UN and other organizations into the camps.⁹¹ On 7 February, Nambiar issued a statement in which he welcomed the regime's assurances of the resumption of humanitarian access for the UN and international aid agencies to IDPs in Kachin State.⁹²

⁸⁴ UNIC Yangon (16 Feb 13) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar

⁸⁵ UNIC Yangon (16 Feb 13) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar

⁸⁶ AFP (07 Feb 13) Myanmar committee to 'grant liberty' to dissidents; Xinhua (07 Feb 13) Myanmar to grant amnesty to remaining political prisoners; NLM (07 Feb 13) Committee to be formed to grant liberty to remaining political prisoners

⁸⁷ AFP (07 Feb 13) Myanmar committee to 'grant liberty' to dissidents; Xinhua (07 Feb 13) Myanmar to grant amnesty to remaining political prisoners; NLM (07 Feb 13) Committee to be formed to grant liberty to remaining political prisoners; EMG (24 Feb 13) Number of remaining political prisoners to be reviewed

⁸⁸ EMG (24 Feb 13) Number of remaining political prisoners to be reviewed

⁸⁹ UNIC Yangon (07 Feb 13) Statement on behalf of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General of the UN on Myanmar

⁹⁰ RFA (05 Feb 13) UN Envoy Visits Kachin Refugees; UNIC Yangon (07 Feb 13) Statement on behalf of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General of the UN on Myanmar; UN News Center (07 Feb 13) Myanmar: UN chief welcomes agreement to de-escalate conflict in Kachin

⁹¹ RFA (05 Feb 13) UN Envoy Visits Kachin Refugees; Xinhua (07 Feb 13) UN voices support to efforts for de-escalation in Myanmar

⁹² UNIC Yangon (07 Feb 13) Statement on behalf of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General of the UN on Myanmar; UN News Center (07 Feb 13) Myanmar: UN chief welcomes agreement to de-escalate conflict in Kachin; Xinhua (07 Feb 13) UN voices support to efforts for de-escalation in Myanmar

Tavoy project: investors wary, villagers displaced

In February, doubts lingered over the future of the Tavoy project in Tenasserim Division. On 11 February, Thai Transport Minister Chadchart Sittipunt said that the Tavoy project had stalled due to several factors, including disagreement between Thailand and Japan over several aspects of the project and Japan's lack of commitment to investing in Tavoy.⁹³ On 26 February, it was reported that Thailand's Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning (OTP) said that plans to expand the road linking Thailand's Kanchanaburi Province to the Tavoy deep-sea port were postponed because the predicted transport volume did not justify investment in the expansion.⁹⁴

Notwithstanding the uncertainty over the future of the Tavoy project, its development continued to have a negative impact on local communities:

- **19 February:** It was reported that at the end of January, the Italian-Thai Development (ITD) company began bulldozing the homes of residents in Cha Khan Village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division, to make way for the Tavoy deep-sea port project.⁹⁵
- **21 February:** Regime authorities ordered residents of Mu Do Village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division, to vacate their homes by mid-April to make way for the Tavoy deep-sea port project.⁹⁶

In both cases, villagers said that they did not receive adequate compensation from ITD for the loss of their land or homes.⁹⁷

Burma's financial sector remains blacklisted

The US eased restrictions on two banks owned by Burma's most notorious cronies as concerns remained over the transparency of Burma's financial sector.

On 22 February, the US Treasury Department authorized US companies and investors to do business with four of Burma's banks. Two are state-owned (Myanmar Economic Bank and Myanmar Investment and Commercial Bank) and two are run by regime cronies Zaw Zaw and Tay Zaw (Asia Green Development Bank and Ayeyarwady Bank).⁹⁸ Despite easing restrictions, all four banks remained on the US Treasury Department's Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) list.⁹⁹

Despite the US' display of optimism for reform of Burma's banks, the country's financial sector continued to pose potential risks to the international financial system. On 22 February, the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) reported that Burma remained on its list of 13 countries that have failed to make sufficient progress in combating money laundering and terrorism financing.¹⁰⁰ The FATF urged the regime to enhance financial transparency and establish necessary laws and policy frameworks in order to adequately identify and criminalize terrorist financing.¹⁰¹

OTHER BURMA NEWS IN FEBRUARY

1	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi receives an honorary doctorate from South Korea's Seoul National University.
1	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrives back in Rangoon after a nine-day overseas trip that included stops in Hawaii and South Korea.
2	More than 30 people, including regime, BGF, KNU/KNLA Peace Council, Tatmadaw, DKBA, and KNU

⁹³ Bangkok Post (12 Feb 13) Chadchat admits Dawei port project stalled

⁹⁴ Bangkok Post (26 Feb 13) Dawei road expansion plan shelved

⁹⁵ KIC (19 Feb 13) Cha Khan villagers, homes bulldozed to make way for deep sea port

⁹⁶ KIC (25 Feb 13) Forced relocation, company compensation falls short of replacing village lands

⁹⁷ KIC (25 Feb 13) Forced relocation, company compensation falls short of replacing village lands; KIC (19 Feb 13) Cha Khan villagers, homes bulldozed to make way for deep sea port

⁹⁸ Reuters (25 Feb 13) U.S. gives banking green light to Myanmar tycoons

⁹⁹ AP (22 Feb 13) US allows business with 4 Myanmar banks

¹⁰⁰ FATF (22 Feb 13) FATF Public Statement 22 February 2013

¹⁰¹ FATF (22 Feb 13) FATF Public Statement 22 February 2013

	representatives, attend a meeting in Myawaddy to discuss the proposed establishment of a SEZ in Myawaddy, refugee repatriation, and parliamentary affairs.
3	Regime Finance and Revenue Minister Win Shein tells a press briefing in Naypyidaw that Burma still owes US\$9.6 billion in debt to the international community.
3	Thirty-one ethnic women's groups in Burma release a joint statement condemning the regime for committing sexual violence against Kachin women and urge the regime to give priority to the protection of civilians, especially women and children, and include ethnic women in the peace process.
4	Regime authorities in Mrauk U Township, Arakan State, shorten the curfew hours from 8 pm until 6 am to 10 pm until 6 am.
5	World Bank's International Finance Corporation announces a US\$165 million interest-free loan to Burma to conduct projects such as the generation of electricity.
5	At the end of its six-day visit to Burma, IMF releases a statement that says further policy reform is essential to "sustained inclusive growth in Burma."
6	Regime FM Wunna Maung Lwin meets with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton in Brussels to discuss economic cooperation between Burma and the EU.
7	A group of activists from Mandalay Division's Myingyan Township set off on a 650-km peace walk to the KIO headquarters in Laiza, Momauk Township, Kachin State.
7	UK announces its International Defense Engagement Strategy, which includes the establishment of a military attaché and a military section in the UK Embassy in Burma.
8	ADB President Haruhiko Karuda announces the establishment of a US\$50 million fund for Burma's education, urban development, infrastructure, and community development programs.
8	National Parliament establishes a 17-member committee chaired by National Parliament Deputy Speaker Mya Nyein to investigate the online activities of a blogger known under the pseudonym Dr Seik Phwar.
10	During a meeting with about 1,000 Kachin residents in Mohnyin, Kachin State, People's Assembly Speaker Shwe Mann says that the time is still not right for conducting by-elections in Mogaung and Hpakant Townships.
11	Regime Ministry of Mining announces that applications for gem mining permits can be made from 18 February to 19 March and will be issued at 1 million kyat (US\$1,167) per gem mine block.
11	President Thein Sein's spokesman Ye Htut denies that Naypyidaw is behind a possible attempt to hack into the e-mail accounts of journalists working for foreign and local media who Google warned might have been the targets of 'state-sponsored attackers.'
11	Two Tatmadaw officers attend the US-led Cobra Gold military exercise in Thailand.
11	UK Foreign Secretary William Hague calls for an "urgent resolution" to the citizenship status of Rohingya during a meeting with regime FM Wunna Maung Lwin in London.
12	In a Union Day video message to NLD members, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi says she is willing to help negotiate an end to the conflict in Kachin State.
12	United Nationalities Alliance says that the current constitution is unacceptable to ethnic groups and that an all-inclusive conference should be held in an effort to achieve genuine peace.
12	President Thein Sein meets with 22 State and Division National Races Affairs Ministers in Naypyidaw to discuss strengthening national unity.
12	UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-moon says that civilians remain subject to unacceptable threats to life and dignity in conflict zones worldwide, including Burma.
12	A parliamentary delegation from India led by Lower House Speaker Meira Kumar arrives in Rangoon for a four-day visit to Burma.
12	A landmine explosion in Htantabin Township, Pegu Division, hits a Tatmadaw truck from LIB 4, killing two soldiers.
12	In his Union Day message, President Thein Sein says Burma needs to have greater political, economic, and defense strength "for its perpetuation."
12	President Thein Sein hosts a Union Day dinner for representatives of the KNU, SSA-N, SSA-S, KNLA, DKBA, PNLO, MNSP, NSCN, and CNF in Naypyidaw.
13	Regime announces that 91 domestic and foreign companies submitted expressions of interest for national telecommunications licenses in Burma.
15	Kachin Women's Association of Thailand says that Tatmadaw troops destroyed 66 Christian churches in Kachin State since the beginning of the conflict in June 2011.
15	AIPMC calls on Indonesia and other ASEAN member states to support calls for the UN Human Rights Council to renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma.
15	Regime releases 24 child soldiers during a ceremony attended by UNICEF representatives and senior regime and Tatmadaw officials in Rangoon.
16	A delegation of Canadian MPs led by Parliamentary Secretary Deepak Obhrai arrives in Burma for a six-day visit.
17	A mob of hundreds of Buddhists attacks an Islamic religious school in Rangoon's Thaketa Township

	because they believe that the building is being turned into a mosque.
18	The regime cuts the electricity supply to industrial zones in Rangoon Division down to five hours per day.
21	Australian FM Bob Carr announces that Australia will provide A\$1.25 million (US\$1.289 million) for shelter, clean water, and sanitation in Arakan State; A\$750,000 (US\$773,939) to support access to clean water and sanitation in Kachin State; and A\$500,000 (US\$515,959) to fund landmine clearance operations in Southeast Burma.
21	Regime and US officials sign an agreement in Naypyidaw to restart joint opium poppy yield surveys in early 2013 and cooperate in counter-narcotics training.
21	A delegation of 50 US company representatives visits Burma to explore trade and investment opportunities.
21	KNU Chairman Gen Mutu Say Poe meets with Vice-President Mauk Kham in Myawaddy, Karen State, to discuss ongoing peace talks and the inclusion of high-ranking Tatmadaw leaders in future talks.
21	Regime Attorney General Tun Shin and US Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Michael Posner discuss issues related to the rule of law during a meeting in Naypyidaw.
21	Australian FM Bob Carr urges Burma's regime to address tensions between Buddhist Rakhine and Muslim Rohingya in Arakan State, including the issue of Rohingya's citizenship status.
24	Police in Hnityarkhwe Village, Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay Division, clash with residents and detain a local Buddhist monk who led a protest against the disruption of the power supply.
25	US Chamber of Commerce and the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry sign a MoU to promote bilateral trade and investment.
25	UK risk-assessment firm Maplecroft says that businesses face "serious reputational risks" for associating with regime security forces who commit human rights violations in protection of commercial assets.
25	President Thein Sein leaves Burma for an 11-day European tour that includes stops in Norway, Finland, Austria, Belgium, and Italy.
25	President Thein Sein appoints the Constitution Tribunal's nine judges.
26	President Thein Sein arrives in Oslo for a three-day visit to Norway.
26	Nobel Peace Prize laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu meets with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other former political prisoners in Rangoon and says he hopes to see a "truly democratic" Burma.
27	Electric Power Deputy Minister Myint Zaw says that the regime has approved six new hydropower projects on the Salween River in Shan, Karenni, and Karen States.
28	Eleven Media Group releases a statement calling on all media organizations and journalists in Burma to oppose the proposed new media law because it "undermines the right to free expression."

REPORTS ON BURMA RELEASED IN FEBRUARY

"State Terror in the Kachin Hills", Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT) <http://bit.ly/Z4uoa3>

"The Ongoing Humanitarian Emergency in Myanmar's Rakhine State", Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) <http://bit.ly/WUxqMn>

"Deciphering Myanmar's Peace Process: A Reference Guide", Burma News International (BNI) <http://bit.ly/12XuHcf>

"Developing Disparity: Regional Investment in Burma's Borderlands", Transnational Institute (TNI) and Burma Centre Netherlands (BCN) <http://bit.ly/UOmWBS>

"Attacks on the Press - Burma", Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) <http://bit.ly/12niGwJ>

"Monthly Chronology of Burma's Political Prisoners for January, 2013", Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) <http://bit.ly/13rqXvx>

"Migration Information Note 18 - January 2013", International Organization for Migration (IOM) <http://bit.ly/11LWnf6>

"Landowners or Laborers - What choice will developing countries make?", Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) <http://bit.ly/WG8Z9f>

"Restrictions on Human Rights Defenders' Access to Funding Bolster Impunity", Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders <http://bit.ly/Z1dPKV>