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

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BURMA UPDATE: SERIOUS CRIMES CONTINUE

- Over one year since sectarian violence broke out in Arakan State, 140,000 predominately Rohingya IDPs remain displaced. Rohingya face ongoing restrictions on freedom of movement and access to employment, health, and education.
- Regime authorities continue to commit abuses against Rohingya, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest, extortion, and harassment. In June and August, regime security forces shoot and kill a total of seven Rohingya IDPs in three separate incidents. In May, regime authorities pledge to enforce a 'two-child policy' for Rohingya in two townships in Arakan State.
- Anti-Muslim violence which broke out in Meikhtila, Mandalay Division, in March, continues for six-straight months, with attacks reported in 18 townships across three States and four Divisions. 46 people have been killed, including 44 people in Meikhtila. About 4,000 people remain displaced in Meikhtila.
- Two pieces of legislation currently under parliamentary review – the Printing and Publishing Bill and the Association Bill – threaten to impose new restrictions on press freedom and freedom of association. In addition, extremist Buddhist monk U Wirathu proposes draft legislation aimed at criminalizing unauthorized marriages between Buddhist women and Muslim men.
- Authorities continue to use repressive laws to arrest and prosecute activists, farmers, and human rights defenders, including women and those opposing land grabs. From June to September, the regime sentences 29 peaceful protestors to prison terms under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law. Three activists are jailed under the Unlawful Association Act, the Printers and Publishers Registration Act, and Article 505 of the Criminal Code.
- The Tatmadaw's offensive against the Kachin Independence Army has continued for over two years, with fighting reported in 16 of 18 townships in Kachin State and six townships in Northern Shan State. The regime continues to restrict aid to IDPs in Kachin Independence Army-held areas, with only three deliveries of UN aid permitted since July 2012.
- The proliferation of peace agreements between Naypyidaw and ethnic armed groups fails to halt conflict. In June-July, Tatmadaw troops attack the Kachin Independence Army, the Ta-ang National Liberation Army, the Shan State Army-North, and the New Mon State Party in the north, east, and south of the country.

INSIDE

2 REGIME'S PERSECUTION AND DISCRIMINATION OF ROHINGYA CONTINUES

- 2 One year on, Rohingya IDPs face ongoing hardship
- 2 Extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest, and other abuses against Rohingya continue
- 3 Regime fuels anti-Rohingya discrimination
- 4 UN slams Naypyidaw over human rights violations against Rohingya

4 ANTI-MUSLIM VIOLENCE SPREADS UNCHECKED

- 4 Regime idle as Anti-Muslim violence spreads
- 5 U Wirathu proposes restrictions on interfaith marriages
- 6 Regime backs U Wirathu
- 6 Muslims, Buddhists jailed over religious violence

7 TATMADAW FLOUTS AGREEMENTS, TARGETS KIA, SSA-N, TNLA, AND NMSP

- 7 Tatmadaw offensives damage peace prospects in Kachin conflict
- 7 Limited aid for 100,000 IDPs
- 8 Despite agreements, Tatmadaw attacks against ethnic armed groups continue

8 FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY DENIED; ARBITRARY ARRESTS & IMPRISONMENT ON THE RISE

- 8 Peaceful Gathering Law enables ongoing suppression of activists
- 9 Arbitrary arrests and imprisonment under repressive laws continue
- 10 Women human rights defenders targeted
- 11 Proposed new laws to introduce more restrictions

REGIME'S PERSECUTION AND DISCRIMINATION OF ROHINGYA CONTINUES

One year on, Rohingya IDPs face ongoing hardship

More than one year since the first of several waves of sectarian violence broke out in Arakan State, the situation for Rohingya IDPs, who make up at least 90% of the estimated 140,000 IDPs in Arakan State, remained grim.¹ On 17 June, the UN voiced concern for Rohingya IDPs who continued to face restrictions on their freedom of movement and access to employment, health, and education.² The UN said that 20,000 predominately Rohingya IDPs of primary school age had no access to formal education and had lost a whole year of schooling.³

In addition, the regime failed to rein in threats and intimidation directed at humanitarian workers from members of the Rakhine community. On 18 August, it was reported that a significant number of local aid workers in Arakan State resigned after being subjected to threats on social media for assisting Rohingya IDPs.⁴ The regime also continued to detain four INGO staff arrested in 2012 on charges described by UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana as “unfounded.”⁵ On 19 August, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Burma Ashok Nigam called for their immediate and unconditional release.⁶

Extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest, and other abuses against Rohingya continue

Regime authorities continued to commit serious abuses against Rohingya in Arakan State. In June and August, regime security forces shot and killed a total of seven Rohingya IDPs in three separate incidents. On 4 June, police in Parein Village, Mrauk U Township, Arakan State, shot and killed three Rohingya women who were part of a crowd of IDPs who refused to relocate to new shelters provided by regime authorities.⁷ On 27 June, regime authorities in Pauktaw Township, Arakan State, shot and killed two Rohingya IDPs following a dispute between a group of IDPs and a village leader.⁸ On 9 August, police shot and killed two Rohingya and injured more than a dozen others during clashes with IDPs at two camps in Ohntawgyi Village, Akyab [Sittwe] Township, Arakan State.⁹ The clashes occurred after a crowd of IDPs gathered outside the local police station and demanded the body of a Rohingya fisherman be handed over.¹⁰

Regime authorities also continued to detain Rohingya activists, including high-profile human rights defenders. On 15 July, police in Akyab, Arakan State, arrested 74-year-old Rohingya lawyer and activist Kyaw Hla Aung in connection with a protest staged by Rohingya IDPs in

¹ TRF (10 May 13) Myanmar monsoon threatens catastrophe for Rohingya; IRIN (02 May 13) Prospects for Rakhine reconciliation dim

² UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Myanmar (17 Jun 13) Situation remains bleak one year on for 140,000 people displaced in Rakhine state by inter-communal violence

³ UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Myanmar (17 Jun 13) Situation remains bleak one year on for 140,000 people displaced in Rakhine state by inter-communal violence

⁴ Myanmar Times (18 Aug 13) Rakhine aid workers resigning over social media threats

⁵ UNIC Yangon (16 Feb 13) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar

⁶ UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Myanmar (19 Aug 13) Statement attributable to the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar, Mr. Ashok Nigam, on World Humanitarian Day

⁷ AP (05 Jun 13) Myanmar police say 3 Rohingya women killed in confrontation over relocation plan; OHCHR (11 Jun 13) UN Myanmar expert: Fatal shooting of Rohingya women the latest product of impunity; RFA (05 Jun 13) Three Rohingya Women Shot Dead, Several Injured Over Housing Dispute

⁸ UNHCR (28 Jun 13) UNHCR consternation at killing of two IDPs in Myanmar's Rakhine state; Irrawaddy (28 Jun 13) 2 Rohingyas Killed, 6 Injured, For 'Attacking Security Forces'

⁹ Reuters (12 Aug 13) Fresh Burma Clashes Signal Growing Muslim Desperation; Irrawaddy (12 Aug 13) Two Rohingya Killed by Police in Arakan: State Govt; Myanmar Times (18 Aug 13) Deaths prompt calls for security reform; RFA (12 Aug 13) Rakhine Residents Protest UN Official's 'One-Sided' Reports

¹⁰ Reuters (12 Aug 13) Fresh Burma Clashes Signal Growing Muslim Desperation; AP (12 Aug 13) UN human rights envoy arrives in Myanmar's troubled state of Rakhine; Irrawaddy (12 Aug 13) Two Rohingya Killed by Police in Arakan: State Govt

Akyab Township in late April.¹¹ On 13 August, police in Akyab, Arakan State, arrested Than Shwe, a 29-year-old Rohingya man, for posting online photos of the dead and injured during the 9 August police crackdown on IDPs.¹²

On 12 July, President Thein Sein issued an order that abolished the 1,200-strong border security force, known as Na Sa Ka, notorious for their persecution of Rohingya in Northern Arakan State.¹³ However, hopes that the situation for Rohingya would improve were short-lived. Police personnel took over Na Sa Ka's functions and promptly continued the Na Sa Ka's discriminatory and abusive practices against Rohingya, including arbitrary arrests, extortion, and harassment.¹⁴

Regime fuels anti-Rohingya discrimination

The regime continued to issue statements and support policies which fueled discrimination against Rohingya communities. On 26 May, regime authorities in Arakan State resurrected a longstanding ban on Rohingya having more than two children.¹⁵ The regime said the ban, which was initially put into effect in the early 1990s but had not been systematically enforced in recent years, would be implemented in Maungdaw and Buthidaung Townships.¹⁶ On 11 June, it was reported that regime Immigration and Population Minister Khin Yi backed the 'two-child policy' on Rohingya and claimed that the measure would benefit Rohingya women.¹⁷

President Thein Sein and other regime officials also reiterated their refusal to acknowledge Rohingya identity and denied discrimination and persecution of Rohingya communities. In July, Thein Sein said that there wasn't any plan to amend the 1982 Citizenship Law - under which the overwhelming majority of Rohingya would not be considered citizens - and, once again, denied the existence of Rohingya as one of Burma's ethnic groups.¹⁸ Thein Sein also denied accusations of ethnic cleansing of Rohingya and said that the claims were part of a "smear campaign" against his administration.¹⁹ In addition, on 12 July, President Thein Sein's spokesperson Ye Htut reiterated the regime's claim that Burma "never had a Rohingya ethnicity."²⁰

UN slams Naypyidaw over human rights violations against Rohingya

In June, top UN officials condemned the regime over human rights violations and discriminatory policies against Rohingya. On 11 June, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana said that there continued to be no accountability for the "widespread and systematic" human rights violations committed against Rohingya in Arakan State.²¹ On 19 June,

¹¹ DVB (15 Jul 13) Burma disbands notorious NaSaKa border guard force; AI (17 Jul 13) Myanmar: Arrests continue amid promise to release all prisoners of conscience; Narinjara News (17 Jul 13) Fugitive Muslim leader arrested in Arakan

¹² AP (14 Aug 13) Man arrested after Myanmar unrest; Irrawaddy (14 Aug 13) Rohingya Activist Arrested After Sharing Photos of Police Crackdown

¹³ President's Office (14 Jul 13) Notification No.59/2013 - Abolishing of Border Area Immigration Control Headquarters; DVB (15 Jul 13) Burma disbands notorious NaSaKa border guard force; Narinjara News (13 Jul 13) Burma abolishes Nasaka force; TRF (15 Jul 13) Myanmar abolishes notorious border guard force

¹⁴ Kaladan News (13 Jul 13) Police starts harassment and extortion after Nasaka dissolved in Maungdaw; Kaladan News (22 Jul 13) Authority uses new tactic in Arakan State; Kaladan News (26 Jul 13) Hluntin extorts Kyat 50,000 from villager in Maungdaw; Kaladan News (03 Aug 13) Police loots market going Rohingya in Maungdaw; Kaladan News (06 Aug 13) Surveillance police officer extorts money from Eid festival shoppers; Kaladan News (06 Aug 13) Army and police increase harassment in Maungdaw; Kaladan News (10 Aug 13) Hluntin robs shop in Maungdaw

¹⁵ AFP (26 May 13) Myanmar reaffirms two-child rule for Rohingya; AP (25 May 13) 2-child limit for Muslims in parts of Myanmar;

¹⁶ AP (25 May 13) 2-child limit for Muslims in parts of Myanmar; AFP (26 May 13) Myanmar reaffirms two-child rule for Rohingya; RFA (23 May 13) Myanmar's Rakhine State Imposes Two-Child Limit on Rohingyas; Reuters (27 May 13) Suu Kyi denounces two-child limit on Myanmar Rohingya families; BBC (27 May 13) Aung San Suu Kyi condemns Rohingya 'two-child policy'

¹⁷ Reuters (11 Jun 13) Myanmar minister backs two-child policy for Rohingya minority

¹⁸ Today's Zaman (16 Jul 13) Myanmar president: No plans to amend the 1982 Citizenship Law

¹⁹ AFP (19 Jul 13) Myanmar leader says ethnic cleansing claims are "smear campaign"

²⁰ Myanmar Times (22 Jul 13) US planned to sanction disbanded border security force, say activists

²¹ OHCHR (11 Jun 13) UN Myanmar expert: Fatal shooting of Rohingya women the latest product of impunity

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay slammed the regime's 'two-child policy' for Rohingya in Arakan State's Maungdaw and Buthidaung Townships as "blatantly discriminatory" and urged Naypyidaw to immediately rescind the order.²² In addition, on 14 June, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) President issued a statement that urged the regime to review the 1982 Citizenship Law and grant full citizenship rights to Rohingya.²³

ANTI-MUSLIM VIOLENCE SPREADS UNCHECKED

Regime idle as anti-Muslim violence spreads

The regime failed to prevent or contain the spread of anti-Muslim violence after deadly unrest broke out in Meikhtila, Mandalay Division, on 20 March.²⁴ Anti-Muslim attacks have continued for six-straight months. Since March, anti-Muslim violence was reported in four townships in Mandalay Division, nine townships in Pegu Division, one township each in Rangoon and Sagaing Divisions, and one township in each of Kachin, Shan, and Arakan States. At least 46 people were killed during anti-Muslim attacks, including 44 people in Meikhtila.²⁵ During the Meikhtila violence, Buddhist mobs massacred 32 Muslim students (aged between 14 and 24) during an attack on an Islamic boarding school.²⁶

- From March to August, anti-Muslim attacks were reported in 18 Townships across three States and four Divisions.
- 46 people were killed, including 44 in Meikhtila, Mandalay Division; one in Taikgyi Township, Rangoon Division; and one in Lashio, Northern Shan State.
- During the violence in Meikhtila, Buddhist mobs massacred 32 Muslim students.
- Attacks in Meikhtila displaced 12,800 people in March. As of September, about 4,000 people remained displaced. Violence in Lashio displaced about 1,200 people.
- 21 Muslims and 33 Buddhists have been jailed in connection with the violence.

As with the riots in Meikhtila, security forces failed to intervene to stop anti-Muslim attacks. On 30 April, Buddhist mobs ransacked two mosques and set ablaze more than 100 Muslim-owned homes, killing one person and injuring at least nine in Okkan, Taikgyi Township, Rangoon Division.²⁷ On 28-29 May, Buddhist mobs, including Buddhist monks, destroyed a mosque, an orphanage, and Muslim-owned shops and homes in Lashio.²⁸ One Muslim man was killed in the riots.²⁹ According to residents, security forces failed to stop the violence and stood idle as the riots unfolded.³⁰ One month later, anti-Muslim attacks flared up again. On 30 June-1 July, Buddhist mobs torched five Muslim-owned houses in Sandoway [Thandwe] Township, Arakan State, after a rumor spread that a local Rakhine woman had been raped.³¹ Once again, police

²² OHCHR (19 Jun 13) Myanmar must tackle discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities – Pillay

²³ HRC, 23rd session, Situation of human rights of Muslims in Myanmar, 11 June, UN Doc A/HRC/23/L.26

²⁴ Reuters (21 Mar 13) New curfew declared after 10 killed in central Myanmar riots

²⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (03 Apr 13) Briefing by Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin to the diplomatic corps on record incidents

²⁶ PHR (05 Apr 13) Burma's Leaders Should Take Steps to Investigate and Prevent Anti-Muslim Violence; Irrawaddy (09 Apr 13) 32 Students Allegedly Massacred in Recent Meikhtila Violence

²⁷ AP (01 May 13) Several Myanmar villages burned as new anti-Muslim violence kills 1, injures at least 9

²⁸ AP (29 May 13) Northeastern Myanmar hit by new sectarian violence after rumor of Muslim attack; mosque burned; BBC (28 May 13) Burma Muslim-Buddhist clashes erupt in Shan state; Xinhua (29 May 13) Riot-hit township in northern Myanmar calm after overnight curfew: official; AFP (29 May 13) Myanmar urges calm after fresh religious violence; NLM (30 May 13) Criminal case leads to riots in Lashio; Reuters (29 May 13) Buddhist mobs attack Muslim homes for 2nd day in Myanmar; one dead; AFP (29 May 13) One dead, four hurt in Myanmar religious unrest: govt; RFA (29 May 13) More Casualties as Violence Spreads in Myanmar's Shan State; AFP (29 May 13) Fresh Religious Unrest Rocks Eastern Myanmar; DVB (29 May 13) Mob targets reporters during Lashio riots; Irrawaddy (29 May 13) Despite Calls for Calm, Religious Clashes Continue in Lashio; AP (29 May 13) 2nd day of Anti-Muslim violence strikes NE Myanmar

²⁹ Reuters (30 May 13) Troops patrol Myanmar city after violence, Muslims hide

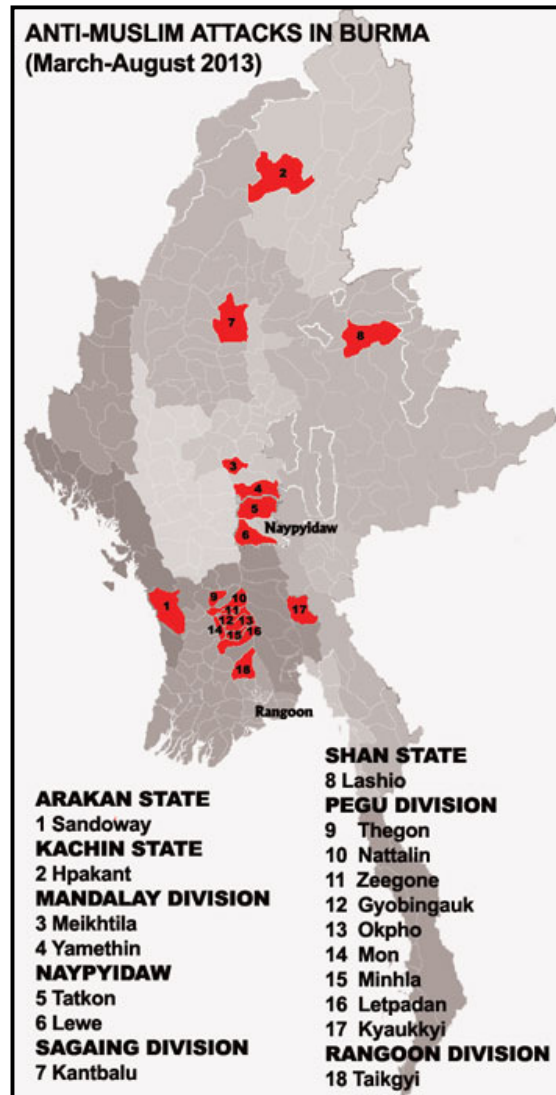
³⁰ RFA (29 May 13) More Casualties as Violence Spreads in Myanmar's Shan State; AP (30 May 13) Buddhist mobs spread fear among Myanmar's Muslims

³¹ AP (01 Jul 13) Tense calm returns to western Myanmar after religious violence; 4 houses torched; Reuters (01 Jul 13) Rioters renew violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State; Xinhua (01 Jul 13) Curfew imposed on western Myanmar's Thandwe as unrest sparks; DVB (02 Jul 13) Mob ignores curfew, sets fire to Muslim home in Arakan state

failed to intervene to stop the violence.³² On 24 August, a Buddhist mob set fire to dozens of Muslim-owned homes and shops in Htan Kone Village, Kantbalu Township, Sagaing Division, following rumors that a Muslim man had sexually assaulted a young woman.³³ Local NLD MP Myint Naing blamed the authorities for failing to contain the violence.³⁴

U Wirathu proposes restrictions on interfaith marriages

Extremist Buddhist monk U Wirathu, known for his anti-Muslim views and his leading role in the so-called '969' movement - which has urged Buddhists to shun Muslim businesses - courted further controversy in June by petitioning for restrictions on interfaith marriages.³⁵ On 13 June, during a conference to discuss ongoing religious violence in Burma at a monastery in Rangoon Division's Hmawby Township, U Wirathu circulated a draft legislative proposal aimed at criminalizing unauthorized marriages between Buddhist women and Muslim men.³⁶ According to the document, any Buddhist woman seeking to marry a Muslim man would be required to obtain prior permission from her parents and local authorities.³⁷ The proposed restrictions would also require Muslim men who marry Buddhist women to convert to Buddhism.³⁸ Violators could face up to 10 years in prison.³⁹



³² Myanmar Times (04 Jul 13) Arrests made over Thandwe rape case; DVB (01 Jul 13) Officials install curfew in Arakan state after mob targets Muslims; Irrawaddy (01 Jul 13) Thandwe 'Stable' After Anti-Muslim Attack: Official; DVB (02 Jul 13) Mob ignores curfew, sets fire to Muslim home in Arakan state

³³ AP (25 Aug 13) Buddhists torch Muslim homes in Myanmar; RFA (25 Aug 13) Shops, Houses Torched in Fresh Anti-Muslim Violence in Myanmar

³⁴ RFA (25 Aug 13) Shops, Houses Torched in Fresh Anti-Muslim Violence in Myanmar; DVB (26 Aug 13) MP blames local authorities for Htan Kone riot

³⁵ Independent (09 Apr 13) 'They stood shouting at us to come out and be killed': Anti-Muslim violence in central Burma has left thousands of people homeless

³⁶ Irrawaddy (13 Jun 13) Monks' Convention in Burma Calls for Restricting Buddhist-Muslim Marriage; Mizzima News (14 Jun 13) Monks propose restricting interfaith marriages; DPA (21 Jun 13) Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi opposes interfaith marriage proposal; Irrawaddy (17 Jun 13) Monks Conference Calls for Harmony, Criticizes Interfaith Marriage Draft Law; Reuters (27 Jun 13) SPECIAL REPORT-Myanmar gives official blessing to anti-Muslim monks

³⁷ Irrawaddy (13 Jun 13) Monks' Convention in Burma Calls for Restricting Buddhist-Muslim Marriage; Mizzima News (14 Jun 13) Monks propose restricting interfaith marriages; Myanmar Times (21 Jun 13) Monks to amend controversial marriage law

³⁸ Irrawaddy (13 Jun 13) Monks' Convention in Burma Calls for Restricting Buddhist-Muslim Marriage; Myanmar Times (21 Jun 13) Monks to amend controversial marriage law

³⁹ Irrawaddy (13 Jun 13) Monks' Convention in Burma Calls for Restricting Buddhist-Muslim Marriage; Mizzima News (14 Jun 13) Monks propose restricting interfaith marriages; Myanmar Times (21 Jun 13) Monks to amend controversial marriage law

On 18 July, U Wirathu said that about 2.5 million people had signed a petition in support of the proposed legislation and that the signatures would be sent to Parliament along with the proposed draft law.⁴⁰

Regime backs U Wirathu

Despite President Thein Sein's pledge of a "zero tolerance approach" towards those who "fuel ethnic hatreds," the regime repeatedly backed extremist Buddhist monk U Wirathu.⁴¹ Time magazine's portrayal of U Wirathu as the "face of Buddhist terror" on the cover of its upcoming 1 July issue, prompted the regime to defend him and ban the magazine's distribution.⁴² On 23 June, the President's Office issued a press release that described U Wirathu as a "noble person" committed to peace and accused Time's cover story of undermining efforts to rebuild trust between faiths.⁴³ On 27 June, it was reported that regime Religious Affairs Minister Hsan Hsint said that U Wirathu's sermons promoted "love and understanding between religions."⁴⁴

Muslims, Buddhists jailed over religious violence

Despite the overwhelmingly anti-Muslim nature of attacks perpetrated by Buddhist mobs in Central and Northern Burma beginning in March, the regime was quick to prosecute and jail Muslim individuals.⁴⁵ Between 11 April and 11 June, the regime imprisoned 13 Muslims but no Buddhists in connection with religious violence in various parts of the country.⁴⁶ In addition, on 23 April, a court in Kyaukkyi Township, Pegu Division, sentenced a 42-year-old Muslim man to two years in prison on charges of "insulting" religion, after he removed a '969' sticker from a local shop.⁴⁷ On 19 June, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay slammed the regime's failure to bring to justice those involved in anti-Muslim attacks in various parts of Burma and said that the lack of accountability sent out a message that violence directed against Muslim communities was "somehow acceptable or justified."⁴⁸

On 28 June, the Meikhtila District Court sentenced a 24-year-old Buddhist to seven years in prison on charges of murder during the Meikhtila riots – the first Buddhist sentenced on charges related to the March violence.⁴⁹ As of 24 September, authorities had jailed 21 Muslims and 33 Buddhists in connection with the violence.

⁴⁰ Irrawaddy (18 Jul 13) Petition to Restrict Interfaith Marriage Garners 2.5 Million Signatures in Burma

⁴¹ AFP (15 Jul 13) Myanmar to free all political prisoners by year end: president

⁴² AP (25 Jun 13) Myanmar bans Time magazine over cover story about monk called 'Face of Buddhist terror'; AFP (26 Jun 13) Myanmar bans Time's 'Buddhist Terror' cover story; DPA (26 Jun 13) Myanmar bans Time magazine issue on 'Buddhist Terror'; EMG (26 Jun 13) Myanmar bans Time's 'The Face of Buddhist Terror' cover story

⁴³ BBC (24 Jun 13) Burmese leader defends 'anti Muslim' monk Ashin Wirathu; DVB (24 Jun 13) Burma president backs anti-Muslim 'hate preacher' Wirathu; EMG (24 Jun 13) Myanmar government condemns TIME magazine's July issue

⁴⁴ Reuters (27 Jun 13) SPECIAL REPORT-Myanmar gives official blessing to anti-Muslim monks

⁴⁵ Xinhua (12 Apr 13) Myanmar court sentences 3 defendants to prison for Meikhtila riot; Irrawaddy (12 Apr 13) Muslim Gold Shop Owners Imprisoned for Meikhtila Unrest; Myanmar Times (24 Apr 13) Second hearing begins in Meikhtila trial; Irrawaddy (23 Apr 13) Seven Muslims Accused of Killing Monk Face Trial in Meikhtila; EMG (26 Apr 13) Seven suspects on trial for killing a Buddhist monk; AP (12 Apr 13) Myanmar sentences 3 Muslims to 14-year prison terms after last month's sectarian violence

⁴⁶ Xinhua (12 Apr 13) Myanmar court sentences 3 defendants to prison for Meikhtila riot; AFP (21 May 13) Myanmar jails 7 for up to 28 years for riots; AP (19 Jun 13) Myanmar court convicts 2 Muslims over violence; AP (12 Jun 13) Myanmar Jails Man for Attack That Sparked Rioting

⁴⁷ DVB (25 Apr 13) Muslim jailed for removing Buddhist logo from shop

⁴⁸ OHCHR (19 Jun 13) Myanmar must tackle discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities – Pillay

⁴⁹ AFP (08 Jul 13) Myanmar jails two Buddhists for riot murders

TATMADAW FLOUTS AGREEMENTS, TARGETS KIA, SSA-N, TNLA, AND NMSP

Tatmadaw offensives damage peace prospects in Kachin conflict

After more than two years of fighting, the Tatmadaw's offensive against the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), which began in June 2011, has continued. Despite a 30 May agreement between the regime and the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) to de-escalate hostilities, the Tatmadaw continued to attack KIA positions in Kachin and Northern Shan States. On 23 June, KIO spokesperson La Nan said that KIA forces had clashed with Tatmadaw troops 21 times since the 30 May agreement.⁵⁰ In addition, Tatmadaw troops continued to clash with the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), an ally of the KIA, with fighting reported in five townships of Northern Shan State in June-August.⁵¹

The Tatmadaw also continued to target civilians as part of its military offensives against the KIA. On 18 June, Tatmadaw artillery fire hit three civilian houses in Wing Seng, Muse Township, Northern Shan State.⁵² On the same day, Tatmadaw troops killed a civilian, who had been forced to work as a porter on the frontline from 14 June, during a clash with KIA forces near Loi Sa in Muse Township.⁵³ In early September, Tatmadaw soldiers in Nhka Ga Village, Machanbaw Township, Kachin State, tortured and killed two civilians who were among a group of 10 local villagers detained on suspicion of having ties to the KIA.⁵⁴ As of early September, at least 70 men from across Kachin and Northern Shan States remained in jail or were awaiting trial on charges of having ties to the KIA.⁵⁵

- 26 months of ongoing conflict between the Tatmadaw and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA).
- Fighting reported in 16 of the 18 townships in Kachin State and in six townships in Northern Shan State.
- 100,000 civilians displaced since the conflict began, including an estimated 53,000 registered IDPs sheltering in KIA-held areas.
- Since June 2011, only seven deliveries of UN aid reached IDPs in KIA-controlled areas – three since July 2012.
- Since July 2012, UN aid only reached approximately 25% of the registered IDPs in KIA-held areas.
- Tatmadaw attacks continued despite two executive orders by President Thein Sein calling for the suspension of operations against the KIA.
- Tatmadaw soldiers killed at least nine civilians during military operations against the KIA in Kachin and Northern Shan States since the start of the year.
- In October 2012, the Kachin Women's Association Thailand documented the rape or sexual assault of 61 women and girls by the Tatmadaw since the beginning of the conflict – of whom around half were killed.

Limited aid for 100,000 IDPs

On 31 July, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that an estimated 100,000 people remained displaced in Kachin and Northern Shan States.⁵⁶ Since July 2012, the regime granted UN humanitarian agencies access to IDPs in Kachin-Independence Army (KIA)-controlled areas on only three occasions – one in June and two in September 2013.⁵⁷ These deliveries, comprised of food, medicine, and other supplies designed to provide short-term

⁵⁰ AP (23 Jun 13) Myanmar rebel clashes continue despite agreement

⁵¹ Irrawaddy (21 Jun 13) Clashes in Shan State Kill 4 Govt Soldiers, Ethnic Militia Claims; Kachinland News (27 Jul 13) Despite peace rhetoric, battles continue in northern Shan State; Mizzima News (25 Jul 13) Battles ongoing in northern Shan State; Myanmar Times (18 Aug 13) Palaung accuse govt troops over latest clash

⁵² Kachinland News (19 Jun 13) Burmese army's mortar shells hit civilian houses

⁵³ Kachinland News (19 Jun 13) Burmese army's mortar shells hit civilian houses

⁵⁴ Kachinland News (19 Sep 13) Two Kachin civilians tortured and killed by government soldiers

⁵⁵ Irrawaddy (02 Sep 13) Torture Persists in Kachin State

⁵⁶ OCHA (31 Jul 13) Myanmar: Internal Displacement Snapshot - Kachin and northern Shan States (July 2013)

⁵⁷ UNIC Yangon (21 Aug 13) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar; OCHA (19 Jun 13) Myanmar: UN aid convoy crosses Kachin frontlines; DVB (09 Sep 13) UN aid reaches Laiza for first time in almost two years; Kachinland News (17 Sep 13) Another UN aid convoy reaches Laiza; Mizzima News (23 Sep 13) UN delivers second round of aid to Kachin refugees

relief, reached an estimated 13,100 IDPs – approximately 25% of the 53,000 registered IDPs in KIA-held areas.⁵⁸

Despite agreements, Tatmadaw attacks against ethnic armed groups continue

The proliferation of peace agreements under President Thein Sein failed to halt fighting or defuse tensions with ethnic armed groups. From January 2012, Tatmadaw troops clashed with seven ethnic armed groups after each had signed peace agreements with the regime.

Despite an agreement signed between the regime and the Shan State Army-North (SSA-N) in January 2012, as well as the latest talks between the two sides on 11 May in Tangyan, Shan State, Tatmadaw attacks on SSA-N positions in Shan State continued, with fighting reported in five townships in June and July.⁵⁹ In July, the Tatmadaw also attacked New Mon State Party (NMSP) forces – yet another attack on a group which had concluded a peace agreement with the regime.⁶⁰ On 16 July, Tatmadaw troops from LIB 581 killed two NMSP soldiers and abducted an NMSP soldier and his wife during a clash in Thumingalan Village, Bokpyin Township, Tenasserim Division.⁶¹

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY DENIED; ARBITRARY ARRESTS & IMPRISONMENT ON THE RISE

Peaceful Gathering Law enables ongoing suppression of activists

The regime continued to use the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law to restrict freedom of assembly and prosecute activists. Between May and August, the regime arrested and charged many activists and human rights defenders under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law for their participation in peaceful demonstrations without obtaining prior official permission. On 7 May, regime authorities in Rangoon's Thingangyun Township charged two farmers for holding a series of protests against land confiscation since January.⁶² On 2 August, regime authorities detained activists Htin Kyaw, Lu Aye, Sein Htwe, and Myint Naing for holding a peaceful demonstration against land confiscation in Rangoon's North Okkalapa Township on 30 July.⁶³ On 14 August, regime authorities in Monywa, Sagaing Division, charged 10 women, including Karen activist and former political prisoner Naw Ohn Hla, for participating in a peaceful protest against the Monywa copper mine a day earlier.⁶⁴ On 27 August, police in Rangoon arrested activists Tin Htut Paing, Hlaing Min Oo, Sithu, Kyaw Thu, Nilar Han, and Kyaw Nay Lin for demonstrating against the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law in Rangoon.⁶⁵ On the same day, regime authorities in Rangoon's Kyauktada Township charged activists Phyu Phyu Win and Win Cho for peacefully marching through downtown Rangoon to commemorate the 1988 pro-democracy uprising on 8 August.⁶⁶

⁵⁸ OCHA (09 Sep 13) Myanmar: Humanitarian Cross-line Mission to Kachin State, (7 - 10 September, 2013)

⁵⁹ NLM (14 May 13) Union Peace-Making Work Committee meets responsible persons of SSPP/SSA; SHAN (13 Jun 13) Shan Army's liaison reps attacked; SHAN (08 Jun 13) Burma Army, Shan rebels renew clashes; SHAN (12 Jul 13) Three clashes in one day; SHAN (21 Jun 13) Burma army attacks Shan army base again

⁶⁰ NLM (27 Feb 12) Union-level peace-making group and NMSP ink initial peace deal

⁶¹ DVB (23 Jul 13) Armed Mon group calls on army to return abducted members

⁶² Irrawaddy (08 May 13) Land Rights Activists Sued for Protesting Without Permission

⁶³ RFA (09 Aug 13) Myanmar Activist Stages Hunger Strike in Insein Prison; FIDH (08 Aug 13) Burma: Judicial harassment and arbitrary detention of Mr. Ko Htin Kyaw

⁶⁴ DVB (14 Aug 13) Latpadaung protestor hit with charges for demonstrating without permission; DVB (16 Aug 13) Women's group slams 'violent' arrest of Latpadaung activists; Myanmar Times (16 Aug 13) Villagers continue to push against Letpadaung project

⁶⁵ RFA (27 Aug 13) Myanmar Activists Held for Marching Against Protest Law

⁶⁶ RFA (27 Aug 13) Myanmar Activists Held for Marching Against Protest Law

In addition, from June to August, the regime sentenced 29 activists and farmers to prison terms under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law. On 1 June, the Shwebo District Court, Sagaing Division, sentenced activist Aung Soe to 18 months in prison and two farmers to six months in for protesting against the Monywa copper mine in Salingyi Township on 25 April.⁶⁷ On 6 June, a court in Monywa, Sagaing Division, sentenced activist Myint Aung to one year in prison for organizing several protests in 2012 against the Monywa copper mine.⁶⁸ On 12 June, a court in Mandalay's Chan Aye Thazan Township sentenced seven protestors to prison terms ranging from three to 15 months for demonstrating on 7 August 2012 against the relocation of Mandalay's Kinetan market.⁶⁹ On 4 September, a court in Kyauktaw Township, Arakan State, sentenced local community leaders Hla May, Maung Win, Tin Tin Aye, and Maung Thein Hlaing to three months in prison for leading a protest against the construction of permanent shelters for Rohingya IDPs in Kyauktaw on 7 March.⁷⁰ On 9 September, a court in Sandoway Township, Arakan State, sentenced activist Soe Wai to nine months in prison for demonstrating against land confiscation on 2 September.⁷¹ On 13 September, a court in Taunggoat Township, Arakan State, sentenced local community leaders Soe Win, Min Tun, and Than Lwin Tun to three months in prison for demonstrating against the resettlement of Rohingya to permanent shelters in Taunggoat Township in March.⁷² On 26 September, a court in Kyaukpyu Township, Arakan State, sentenced 10 activists to three months in prison for demonstrating against the Kyaukpyu-Kunming oil and gas dual pipeline on 18 April.⁷³

Arbitrary arrests and imprisonment under repressive laws continue

The regime continued to use other draconian laws to arbitrarily arrest and sentence activists and human rights defenders. On 11 June, regime authorities in Nattalin Township, Pegu Division, detained three activists under the Unlawful Association Act for visiting Pae Ma Khan Village to show support for farmers who plowed land confiscated from them by the military.⁷⁴ On 10 July, police in Prome Township, Pegu Division, arrested Generation Wave activist Wai Phyo under the Printers and Publishers Registration Act for organizing a 'Free Political Prisoners' poster campaign in 2011.⁷⁵ On 29 August, a court in Monywa, Sagaing Division, sentenced Naw Ohn Hla to two years in prison on charges of sedition under Article 505(b) of the Criminal Code in connection with a 13 August protest against the Monywa copper mine.⁷⁶

On 29 July, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana said he was "very concerned" about ongoing "politically motivated" arrests and imprisonment in the country.⁷⁷ Ojea Quintana also said that the regime-appointed political prisoner review committee should have the mandate to investigate new cases of arbitrary imprisonment.⁷⁸ According to the

⁶⁷ Irrawaddy (03 Jun 13) Anti-Letpadaung Mine Activists Condemn Detained Protesters' Sentences

⁶⁸ Mizzima News (07 Jun 13) Latpadaung activist sentenced to hard labor; EMG (17 Jun 13) More political prisoners in Myanmar these days: political analysts

⁶⁹ EMG (14 Jun 13) Protestors jailed for demonstrating "without permission"; EMG (17 Jun 13) More political prisoners in Myanmar these days: political analysts

⁷⁰ Narinjara News (06 Sep 13) Four Arakanese community leaders convicted; Irrawaddy (05 Sep 13) Anti-Rohingya Demonstrators in Arakan Are Assembly Law's Latest Victims

⁷¹ Narinjara News (14 Sep 13) Solo protester sent to prison

⁷² Narinjara News (14 Sep 13) Social network leaders sent to jail in Arakan; Narinjara News (06 Sep 13) Four Arakanese community leaders convicted

⁷³ RFA (26 Sep 13) Myanmar Jails Activists Over Protest Against China-Led Petroleum Project

⁷⁴ Irrawaddy (12 Jun 13) Social Network Activists Arrested After Supporting Farmers in Pegu Division

⁷⁵ Amnesty International (17 Jul 13) Myanmar: Arrests continue amid promise to release all prisoners of conscience

⁷⁶ DVB (29 Aug 13) Latpadaung protestor sentenced to two years for sedition; Irrawaddy (29 Aug 13) Activist Naw Ohn Hla Jailed 2 Years for Letpadaung Protest; RFA (29 Aug 13) Myanmar Activist Jailed for Two Years Over Letpadaung Protest

⁷⁷ OHCHR (29 Jul 13) Myanmar: UN expert welcomes latest release of prisoners of conscience, but raises alarm over ongoing arrests

⁷⁸ OHCHR (29 Jul 13) Myanmar: UN expert welcomes latest release of prisoners of conscience, but raises alarm over ongoing arrests

Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), about 120 political prisoners remained behind bars.⁷⁹

Women human rights defenders targeted

Regime authorities have targeted women human rights defenders who have been at the forefront of campaigns against land confiscation and harmful regime-backed mega-projects. Prominent women human rights defenders include: **Bawk Ja** and **Naw Ohn Hla**, who are currently in prison after longstanding activism defending the rights of local communities;⁸⁰ **Aye Net** and **Thwe Thwe Win**, who campaigned against the Monywa copper mine and were imprisoned for four nights in September 2012;⁸¹ **Myint Myint Aye** and **Mi Mi Khine**, who were detained in June 2013 in Nattalin Township, Pegu Division, after demonstrating against land confiscation.⁸²

Bawk Ja

Bawk Ja is a Kachin human rights activist and National Democratic Force (NDF) member. In 2010, Bawk Ja helped farmers take legal action against the crony-owned Yuzana company for its confiscation of land in the Hukawng Valley, Kachin State.⁸³ She also campaigned against the Myitsone dam project in Kachin State.⁸⁴ Bawk Ja ran as NDF candidate for Hpakant Township, Kachin State, in the November 2010 elections but lost to a USDP candidate - former Chief of the Tatmadaw's Bureau of Special Operations-6 and current Livestock, Fisheries, and Rural Development Minister Ohn Myint - amid allegations of voting irregularities.⁸⁵ Bawk Ja initially challenged the result with the regime Election Commission but later withdrew her complaint shortly after a warrant was issued for her arrest in January 2011.⁸⁶ She could not run in the 2012 by-elections as a result of the regime Election Commission's abrupt decision to cancel voting in Kachin State.⁸⁷ In July 2013, police in Myitkyina, Kachin State, detained Bawk Ja on charges of negligent homicide.⁸⁸ The NDF said the charges were politically motivated and had already been dropped in 2010.⁸⁹



Naw Ohn Hla

Naw Ohn Hla is a Karen human rights activist and former NLD member. She has been imprisoned numerous times, including for her role in leading prayer vigils in Rangoon for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners since 2004.⁹⁰ In October 2009, police arrested Naw Ohn Hla after she returned from a prayer vigil at a Rangoon monastery and she was sentenced in February 2010 to two years in prison with hard labor.⁹¹ She was released in May 2011 under a presidential amnesty.⁹² In November 2012, regime authorities arrested and charged Naw Ohn Hla under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law and Section 505 (b) of the Criminal Code in connection with a 26 November protest against the Monywa copper mine in Sagaing Division.⁹³ In August 2013, regime authorities arrested Naw Ohn Hla and sentenced her to two years in prison on charges of sedition under Article 505(b) of the Criminal Code in connection with a 13 August peaceful protest against the Monywa copper mine.⁹⁴ She is currently facing separate charges under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law.⁹⁵



⁷⁹ Irrawaddy (02 Aug 13) Political Prisoner Pledge, Govt Actions Don't Align: Activist

⁸⁰ Irrawaddy (19 Jul 13) Activist Bawk Ja Arrested for Negligent Homicide; RFA (29 Aug 13) Myanmar Activist Jailed for Two Years Over Letpadaung Protest

⁸¹ NYT (26 Sep 12) In Battling Mine Project in Myanmar, 2 'Iron Ladies' Rise

⁸² Irrawaddy (12 Jun 13) Social Network Activists Arrested After Supporting Farmers in Pegu Division

⁸³ Irrawaddy (31 Aug 13) Tycoon Agrees to Return Confiscated Land

⁸⁴ Mizzima News (30 Sep 11) Bawk Ja to sue Chinese company building Myitsone Dam project

⁸⁵ Kachin News Group (19 Jul 13) Burmese police arrest Kachin activist Bawk Ja

⁸⁶ Kachin News Group (19 Jul 13) Burmese police arrest Kachin activist Bawk Ja; Kachin News Group (19 Jan 11) Junta issues arrest warrant for Bawk Ja of NDF (Breaking News); Myanmar Times (22 Jul 13) Kachin activist Daw Bawk Ja arrested over 2008 death

⁸⁷ AP (23 Mar 12) Myanmar postpones by-election in restive north

⁸⁸ Irrawaddy (19 Jul 13) Activist Bawk Ja Arrested for Negligent Homicide

⁸⁹ Myanmar Times (22 Jul 13) Kachin activist Daw Bawk Ja arrested over 2008 death

⁹⁰ Irrawaddy (18 Sep 07) Naw Ohn Hla arrested; Irrawaddy (18 Sep 07) Prominent Burmese woman activist arrested in Rangoon; Mizzima News (20 Sep 07) Naw Ohn Hla's mysterious arrest and release; DVB (03 Sep 13) The face of defiance

⁹¹ Mizzima News (05 Oct 09) Four women activists arrested by special branch; AP (16 Feb 13) Myanmar sentences 4 activists as UN envoy visits

Proposed new laws to introduce more restrictions

Two pieces of draft legislation currently under parliamentary review threaten to impose new curbs on press freedom and freedom of association.

Printing and Publishing Bill

On 4 July, the People's Assembly approved the Printing and Publishing Bill.⁹⁶ The regime's Information Ministry drafted the bill, which would replace the 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration Act, without consulting any media organizations, including the Myanmar Press Council and the Myanmar Journalists Association.⁹⁷ Burmese journalists as well as domestic and international press watchdogs strongly criticized the legislation.⁹⁸ The bill contained numerous prohibitions, including restrictions on the publication of reports that "jeopardize community tranquility and prevalence of law and order" or "break the provisions" of the constitution.⁹⁹ In addition, the bill would continue to authorize the regime's Information Ministry to issue, suspend, and revoke publishing licenses.¹⁰⁰ The Printing and Publishing Bill will now go to the National Assembly for discussion.¹⁰¹

Association Bill

On 5 August, the People's Assembly Bill Committee presented the draft Association Bill to MPs.¹⁰² The proposed legislation, drafted by the regime's Home Affairs Ministry, would require all NGOs to register with a ministerial committee that would have the sole authority to approve or reject registration.¹⁰³ The body would also be responsible for monitoring activities of registered organizations.¹⁰⁴ Representatives of organizations that failed to register with the committee would face up to three years in prison and a 500,000 kyat (\$US513) fine.¹⁰⁵ Civil society organizations criticized the bill because it imposed onerous requirements on NGOs and could discourage smaller groups from carrying out their activities.¹⁰⁶ Activists also said that the regime had drafted the proposed legislation without broad public consultation.¹⁰⁷ On 21 August, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana said that the proposed legislation would be a "serious setback" for the development of a strong and vibrant civil society in the country.¹⁰⁸

⁹² Irrawaddy (19 May 11) Burma's Amnesty Program Receives Widespread Criticism

⁹³ Reuters (28 Nov 12) Myanmar activists held over latest copper mine protest; RFA (27 Nov 12) Authorities Arrest Mine Activists; Mizzima News (28 Nov 12) Copper mine protesters arrested and charged

⁹⁴ RFA (29 Aug 13) Myanmar Activist Jailed for Two Years Over Letpadaung Protest

⁹⁵ Irrawaddy (13 Sep 13) Hunger-striking Activist Naw Ohn Hla to Appeal Sentence by Month's End

⁹⁶ Mizzima News (05 Jul 13) Myanmar publishers hope new bill offers them protection; Myanmar Times (08 Jul 13) Media bill gets freedom of expression clause; Irrawaddy (04 Jul 13) Lower House Passes Controversial Publishing Bill

⁹⁷ RSF (07 Mar 13) Retrograde bill threatens tentative progress; Irrawaddy (04 Mar 13) Govt Sends Controversial Press Law to Parliament

⁹⁸ EMG (06 Jul 13) Myanmar journalists decry approved press bill; EMG (07 Jul 13) Ministry to control journalists via complicated laws: MJA; DVB (10 Jul 13) Burma publishing bill to reintroduce censorship: activists; BNI (10 Jul 13) BNI opposed to new media law; Irrawaddy (10 Jul 13) Intl. Press Watchdogs Condemn Burma's Publishing Bill; Mizzima News (10 Jul 13) Press Council members threaten to resign; Myanmar Times (15 Jul 13) Controversy over press law

⁹⁹ NLM (08 Mar 13) Draft Printing and Publishing Law and voices of media

¹⁰⁰ RFA (05 Jul 13) Myanmar's Press Council Opposes New Media Legislation; Irrawaddy (08 Jul 13) Burma's Press Council Threatens Resignation Over Media Rules; DVB (10 Jul 13) Burma publishing bill to reintroduce censorship: activists

¹⁰¹ Myanmar Times (08 Jul 13) Media bill gets freedom of expression clause

¹⁰² NLM (06 Aug 13) Organizational set-up of enterprises depends on cost-to-income ratio to ensure a healthy financial measure: Deputy NPED Minister

¹⁰³ DVB (12 Aug 13) Ministry to meet with civil society groups to discuss controversial association bill

¹⁰⁴ Myanmar Times (11 Aug 13) MPs to meet with NGOs over draft law

¹⁰⁵ DVB (12 Aug 13) Ministry to meet with civil society groups to discuss controversial association bill; Myanmar Times (11 Aug 13) MPs to meet with NGOs over draft law

¹⁰⁶ Irrawaddy (07 Aug 13) Activists Reject Bill on Associations as Legislation Goes to Parliament; EMG (06 Aug 13) Civil Society slams Association Bill for restricting basic rights

¹⁰⁷ Myanmar Times (11 Aug 13) MPs to meet with NGOs over draft law

¹⁰⁸ UNIC Yangon (21 Aug 13) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar