

BURMA BULLETIN



A month-in-review of events in Burma



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

Issue 85

January 2014

- Violence erupts in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, leaving 48 Rohingya dead, says the UN.
- Military to get more in the 2014-15 proposed budget.
- Formal talks between the regime and ethnic armed groups are postponed until February.
- Tatmadaw troops continue aggression against ethnic armed groups in Kachin, Northern Shan, and Karen States.
- More than 40 political prisoners remain imprisoned despite President Thein Sein's promise to free all political prisoners by the end of 2013.
- The regime charges a local NLD leader, a Buddhist monk, and two land rights activists under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law.
- Women's League of Burma releases a report detailing the Tatmadaw's use of rape as a weapon of war.
- The regime abuses its power as ASEAN chair by barring discussions about the Rohingya issue during the 2014 ASEAN meetings.

KEY STORY

Anti-Rohingya violence continues in Arakan State

In January, violence erupted in Du Chee Yar Tan Village, Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, after three Rohingya bodies were found in a fresh grave. The discovery of the three, who were abducted by local authorities, triggered a series of events that resulted in violence against Rohingya villagers.

- **9 January:** A group of local Buddhist Rakhine abducted and killed eight Rohingya who were trying to cross the border into Bangladesh at Du Chee Yar Tan Village (aka Du Char Yar Tan), Maungdaw Township.¹
- **13-14 January:** During a clash between police officers and Rohingya villagers from Du Chee Yar Tan Village, the

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¹ UN News Center (23 Jan 14) Top UN officials call for probe into latest violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state; Fortify Rights (23 Jan 14) Myanmar: End Mass Arrests of Muslim Men and Boys in Rakhine State, Protect At-Risk Communities; HRW (23 Jan 14) Burma: Investigate New Killings of Rohingya

villagers killed police officer Sgt Aung Kyaw Thein.² Police and local Rakhine retaliated and killed at least 40 Muslim Rohingya men, women, and children in Du Chee Yar Tan Village.³

Arakan Project coordinator Chris Lewa said that tensions had been building in northern Arakan State since December, after monks from the '969' movement toured the area, giving sermons by loudspeaker advocating the expulsion of all Rohingya.⁴

The regime continually denied reports of violence as they emerged. On 17 January, President Thein Sein's spokesman Ye Htut told reporters on the sidelines of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Pagan, Mandalay Division, that the regime "had no information about killings."⁵ On 20 January, the regime Information Ministry announced that Associated Press (AP) staff were warned they would be considered "responsible" if their reports triggered unrest in Arakan State.⁶ The regime also said they could not have a parliamentary investigation until they receive "reports from the ground."⁷

On 22 January, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) visited Du Chee Yar Tan Village along with a delegation led by Arakan State Chief Minister Hla Maung Tin to inspect the site and talk to Maungdaw Township locals.⁸ President Thein Sein's spokesman Ye Htut insisted that the delegation did not find any evidence of the reported incidents.⁹

The regime Myanmar Human Rights Commission (MHRC) and the Rakhine Investigation Commission were granted access to the village, on 22-26 January, but found no evidence of any killings.¹⁰ On 23 January, state media reported that only the disappearance of the police sergeant and his firearm were being investigated.¹¹ The UN released a statement on the same day reporting that 48 Rohingya were dead due to violence in Arakan State.¹² On 24 January, the regime responded, denying the reports and saying the UN's "accusations are unacceptable."¹³ President Thein Sein's spokesman Ye Htut said the reports were rumors spread to discredit the regime while Burma was in the international spotlight due to the ASEAN meeting in Pagan.¹⁴

On 28 January, the regime denied international media who had reported the events, access to a media briefing, including AP, The Irrawaddy, Voice of America, The Myanmar Times, and Mizzima News.¹⁵

International reactions to the Rohingya Massacre

The regime's outright denial of the violence in Arakan State [See above *Anti-Rohingya violence continues in Arakan State*] sparked widespread reactions from the international community. International leaders and organizations issued statements condemning the violence and urging further investigation:

² Human Rights Watch (23 Jan 14) Burma: Investigate New Killings of Rohingya; RFA (16 Jan 14) Rights Group Claims More Than a Dozen Muslims Killed in New Myanmar Violence; AP (16 Jan 14) Group: Myanmar mob kills more than a dozen Muslims; AP (16 Jan 14) Mob 'hacks women to death' in Myanmar; AP (16 Jan 14) Mob 'hacks women to death' in Myanmar; AP (17 Jan 14) Govt denies Buddhist mob attacked, killed Muslims in Maungdaw; Fortify Rights (23 Jan 14) Myanmar: End Mass Arrests of Muslim Men and Boys in Rakhine State, Protect At-Risk Communities

³ UN News Center (23 Jan 14) Top UN officials call for probe into latest violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state

⁴ AP (16 Jan 14) Group: Myanmar mob kills more than a dozen Muslims; AP (17 Jan 14) Muslims 'killed by Myanmar mob'; AP (17 Jan 14) Myanmar denies Buddhist mob kills Muslim villagers; AP (17 Jan 14) Govt denies Buddhist mob attacked, killed Muslims in Maungdaw; Irrawaddy (17 Jan 14) Buddhist Mob, Police Raid Rohingya Village, Many Left Dead: Rights Group; VOA (20 Jan 14) Reports of Religious Violence in Remote Part of Burma Draw Concern

⁵ AP (17 Jan 14) Myanmar denies Buddhist mob kills Muslim villagers

⁶ DVB (22 Jan 14) MOI says reporters reprimanded, reporters say otherwise

⁷ Irrawaddy (24 Jan 14) Burma Govt Rejects 'Unacceptable' UN Statement on Rohingya Killings

⁸ DVB (27 Jan 14) Arakan security forces search for missing Maungdaw menfolk; NLM (25 Jan 14) Deaths of women, children in Rakhine State are false reports of foreign news agencies Myanmar Times (24 Jan 14) Pressure grows for investigation into Rakhine violence

⁹ Irrawaddy (24 Jan 14) Burma Govt Rejects 'Unacceptable' UN Statement on Rohingya Killings

¹⁰ Irrawaddy (28 Jan 14) Govt Rejects Call for Int'l Investigation Into Alleged Rohingya Killings

¹¹ Irrawaddy (24 Jan 14) Burma Govt Rejects 'Unacceptable' UN Statement on Rohingya Killings

¹² Irrawaddy (24 Jan 14) Burma Govt Rejects 'Unacceptable' UN Statement on Rohingya Killings

¹³ Irrawaddy (24 Jan 14) Burma Govt Rejects 'Unacceptable' UN Statement on Rohingya Killings

¹⁴ Irrawaddy (24 Jan 14) Burma Govt Rejects 'Unacceptable' UN Statement on Rohingya Killings

¹⁵ Irrawaddy (28 Jan 14) Govt Rejects Call for Int'l Investigation Into Alleged Rohingya Killings

- **17 January:** UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana urged the regime to conduct an investigation into reports of violence against Rohingya in Du Chee Yar Tan Village in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, hold human rights violators accountable, respect the rights of those detained, and allow independent monitoring groups access to the village.¹⁶
- **17 January:** The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Secretary General Iyad Ameen Madani issued a press release saying the regime failed to stop violence against Rohingya as it agreed to in November 2013.¹⁷
- **17 January:** The US and UK Embassies in Rangoon released a joint statement condemning the acts of violence between Buddhists and Muslims and urged the regime to hold both civilians and security personnel who were responsible accountable for their actions. The statement also called on the regime to take “urgent, concrete steps to address security, rule of law, justice, humanitarian access, and reconciliation” in Arakan State.¹⁸
- **23 January:** UN Under-Sec-Gen for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos released a statement urging the regime to protect civilians, allow humanitarian access to the area, launch an impartial investigation, and respect the rights of those arrested and detained.¹⁹ UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay called for the regime to respond “quickly and decisively” and launch an investigation into the violence at Du Chee Yar Tan Village.²⁰

Extremist Buddhist monks promote discrimination

In addition to stirring up tensions in Arakan State, on 15 January, more than 10,000 Buddhist monks, some affiliated with the ‘969’ movement including extremist Buddhist monk U Wirathu, attended a conference in Mandalay to discuss a proposal to restrict interfaith marriages.²¹ At the conference, the group continued to gather signatures for a draft law restricting interfaith marriage between Buddhist women and Muslim men, first proposed in June 2013 [See *June 2013 Burma Bulletin*].²² The monks said they had submitted about three million signatures to National Democratic Force (NDF) MPs in support of the proposed interfaith marriage law.²³ During the conference, the monks also voiced support for amendments to the Political Parties Registration Law, proposed to the National Parliament in August 2013, which appear to strip Muslim Rohingya of their right to form political parties, run for office, and vote in elections [See *August 2013 Burma Bulletin*].²⁴

INSIDE BURMA

Parliament’s ninth session convenes

On 13 January, Parliament convened for its ninth regular session in Naypyidaw.²⁵ Important developments included:

13 January: People’s Assembly New National Democracy Party (NNDP) MP Thein Nyunt introduced a proposal to seek the National Defense and Security Council (NDSC)’s ratification of the general amnesty granted to political prisoners released since 2011, in order to guarantee their unconditional release.²⁶

¹⁶ UN Human Rights Council (17 Jan 14) UN expert on Myanmar calls on Government to clarify reports of clashes in northern Rakhine State; UN News Centre (17 Jan 14) Myanmar: UN rights expert urges Government to probe reports of Muslim deaths in clashes

¹⁷ Organization of Islamic Cooperation (17 Jan 14) Press Release

¹⁸ US Embassy Rangoon, UK Embassy Rangoon (17 Jan 14) U.S. and UK Joint Statement on Violence in Maungdaw, Rakhine State

¹⁹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (23 Jan 14) Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos - Statement on Myanmar

²⁰ OHCHR (23 Jan 14) Pillay calls for killings in northern Rakhine State to be investigated; AFP (24 Jan 14) UN urges Myanmar to probe killings

²¹ Irrawaddy (16 Jan 14) Monk Conference Backs Bills to Restrict Interfaith Marriage, Rohingya Voting

²² Irrawaddy (21 Jan 14) ‘Religious Roots of Social Harmony’ Discussed in Rangoon

²³ Irrawaddy (16 Jan 14) Monk Conference Backs Bills to Restrict Interfaith Marriage, Rohingya Voting

²⁴ Irrawaddy (16 Jan 14) Monk Conference Backs Bills to Restrict Interfaith Marriage, Rohingya Voting

²⁵ Xinhua (13 Jan 14) Myanmar’s two Houses begin 9th sessions in Nay Pyi Taw

²⁶ EMG (14 Jan 14) General amnesty bill to go to parliament

13 January: USDP MP Aung Ko told the People's Assembly that the regime Home Affairs Ministry objected to amending Article 18 of the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law because Naypyidaw was concerned about public order.²⁷

17 January: The National Parliament approved, by a vote of 327 to 174 with eight abstentions, the Myanmar Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Bill.²⁸ MPs voted against President Thein Sein's proposal which opposed parliamentary approval of SEZs.²⁹ The MPs' vote granted Parliament oversight in the development of SEZs.³⁰

20 January: Regime Home Affairs Deputy Minister Brig Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun introduced the Anti-Terrorism Bill to Parliament. The bill was prioritized, alongside the proposed Anti-Money Laundering Bill, to incorporate Financial Action Task Force (FATF) suggestions [See below *Bid to get off money laundering blacklist*].³¹

21 January: The National Parliament postponed the approval of the Printing and Publishing Bill, after People's Assembly MPs said they needed more time to conduct a thorough review of the legislation.³² The bill gives the Information Ministry the power to issue, suspend, and revoke publishing licenses [See *August 2013 Burma Bulletin*].³³

23 January: The National Assembly approved the Anti-Terrorism Bill.³⁴

23 January: The People's Assembly approved the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Bill.³⁵ The bill specifies the appointment process for new commission members and reduces the minimum number of members from nine to seven.³⁶ It also amends the procedures for handling complaints about human rights abuses, including setting a 30-day time limit to respond to abuse complaints.³⁷ It provides for stronger involvement of civil society organizations in the commission, by requiring two members of the committee to be from NGOs or civil society organizations.³⁸

27 January: The People's Assembly's Resources and Environmental Conservation Committee (aka Natural Resources and Environmental Preservation Committee) introduced the draft Electricity Bill.³⁹

Bid to get off money laundering blacklist

The Anti-Terrorism Bill and Anti-Money Laundering Bill, designed to get Burma off a money-laundering blacklist, were prioritized by Parliament Speaker Shwe Mann, who pledged to ensure their enactment as soon as possible.⁴⁰ President Thein Sein had earlier urged legislators to enact the bills ahead of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Plenary and Working Group meetings set for mid-February in Paris.⁴¹

On January 20, regime Home Affairs Deputy Minister Brig Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun, who submitted the Anti-Terrorism Bill, warned of the possibility of sanctions if Burma does not demonstrate adequate legal changes before the meeting.⁴² While the threat of sanctions is unlikely, Burma could be subjected to FATF counter-measures if it does not comply, according to Regime Home Affairs Deputy Minister

²⁷ Myanmar Times (20 Jan 14) Govt wants control over protests, says USDP rep

²⁸ Myanmar Times (20 Jan 14) MPs reject SEZ Law change

²⁹ Myanmar Times (20 Jan 14) MPs reject SEZ Law change; EMG (19 Jan 14) Parliament rejects President's remark on economic zone bill; NLM (18 Jan 14) Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves Myanmar Special Economic Zone Bill, Bill amending Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law

³⁰ Myanmar Times (20 Jan 14) MPs reject SEZ Law change; EMG (19 Jan 14) Parliament rejects President's remark on economic zone bill; NLM (18 Jan 14) Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves Myanmar Special Economic Zone Bill, Bill amending Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law

³¹ NLM (21 Jan 14) Enactment of anti-money laundering and combating financing of terrorism bills urgently needed in Myanmar; Myanmar Times (26 Jan 13) Government pushes hluttaw on money laundering law

³² Irrawaddy (21 Jan 14) Burma's Parliament Delays Controversial Publishing Bill; NLM (22 Jan 14) Printing and Publishing Bill needs more coordination, comprehensive discussions before seeking Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's approval

³³ Irrawaddy (21 Jan 14) Burma's Parliament Delays Controversial Publishing Bill

³⁴ NLM (24 Jan 14) Mol no plan to publish Book on Panglong Conference- Two sent to prison for banned sexual stimulant tablets sales

³⁵ Irrawaddy (24 Jan 14) Lower House Approves Human Rights Commission Bill

³⁶ Irrawaddy (24 Jan 14) Lower House Approves Human Rights Commission Bill

³⁷ Irrawaddy (24 Jan 14) Lower House Approves Human Rights Commission Bill

³⁸ Irrawaddy (24 Jan 14) Lower House Approves Human Rights Commission Bill

³⁹ EMG (29 Jan 14) Draft electricity law 'in public interest' goes to parliament

⁴⁰ DVB (23 Jan 14) Burma pushes finance bills in bid to get off blacklist

⁴¹ DVB (23 Jan 14) Burma pushes finance bills in bid to get off blacklist

⁴² DVB (23 Jan 14) Burma pushes finance bills in bid to get off blacklist

Brig Gen Kyaw Zan Myint.⁴³ The FATF has, for many years, maintained Burma on a blacklist of states that have failed to comply with anti-money laundering guidelines.⁴⁴

Constitution review leads to...no change

On 31 January, the Parliamentary constitutional review committee submitted its report on constitutional reform. The committee received 28,247 suggestions proposing more than 300,000 amendments.⁴⁵ However, the report failed to propose any real changes to contested articles, including Article 59(f), which bars Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from the presidency; Articles 109 and 141, which reserve 25% of seats for military MPs; and Article 436, which requires an approval of more than 75% in Parliament for constitutional amendments.⁴⁶

The committee also retained the clause granting immunity to military personnel who commit crimes while carrying out their duties.⁴⁷ The committee made recommendations to change Chapters 1-5 of the constitution, which would allow greater power sharing between the regime and ethnic groups.⁴⁸ However, no amendments were proposed regarding Article 338 which requires all armed forces to fall under the command of the regime Defense Services,⁴⁹ quashing any hope of a federal army system.

The committee secretary announced earlier in the month that they would not vote on any of the proposed amendments, but would submit them directly to the National Parliament.⁵⁰

Regime to enjoy more money in 2014-2015 proposed budget

On 13 January, regime National Planning and Economic Development Minister Kan Zaw submitted the proposed budget for the 2014-15 fiscal year to the National Parliament.⁵¹

On 14 January, regime Defense Minister Lt Gen Wai Lwin proposed a 2.36 trillion kyat (US\$2.36 billion) defense budget.⁵² The proposed military budget, if approved, would be an increase of 120 billion kyat (US\$120 million) compared to the 2.24 trillion kyat (US\$2.5 billion) allocated to military expenditure in the 2013-14 fiscal year [See *March 2013 Burma Bulletin*].⁵³ While the military budget would take up a slightly smaller percentage of the budget (12.26%) compared to the previous year (13.4%), it would still continue to constitute the largest proportion of national spending.⁵⁴

National Ceasefire Talks postponed, ethnic armed groups hold conference

In January, the national peace talks between the regime and ethnic armed groups, scheduled for mid-January in Hpa-an, Karen State, were postponed for the second time until February, at the request of the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT).⁵⁵ The NCCT said more time was needed for the ethnic armed groups to finalize their collective position on the nationwide ceasefire agreement.⁵⁶

⁴³ Myanmar Times (26 Jan 14) Government pushes hluttaw on money laundering law

⁴⁴ DVB (23 Jan 14) Burma pushes finance bills in bid to get off blacklist

⁴⁵ EMG (03 Jan 14) Parliamentary committee receives public input on constitutional amendments; Mizzima News (08 Jan 14) Five groups appointed to study 300,000 charter amendment suggestions; Myanmar Times (11 Jan 14) 'We can't leave the army behind' says Suu Kyi

⁴⁶ Irrawaddy (31 Jan 14) Burma Parliament Committee: Keep Main Points of Constitution

⁴⁷ Irrawaddy (31 Jan 14) Burma Parliament Committee: Keep Main Points of Constitution

⁴⁸ Irrawaddy (31 Jan 14) Burma Parliament Committee: Keep Main Points of Constitution

⁴⁹ Irrawaddy (31 Jan 14) Burma Parliament Committee: Keep Main Points of Constitution

⁵⁰ Myanmar Times (17 Jan 14) Constitution committee will not vote on suggestions

⁵¹ NLM (14 Jan 14) Parliament responsible to fulfill hopes of people: Thura U Shwe Mann; Xinhua (13 Jan 14) Myanmar's two Houses begin 9th sessions in Nay Pyi Taw

⁵² Irrawaddy (15 Jan 14) Burma Defense Ministry Puts Forward Budget Request

⁵³ Irrawaddy (15 Jan 14) Burma Defense Ministry Puts Forward Budget Request; Mizzima News (15 Jan 14) Government plans to reduce military spending

⁵⁴ EMG (15 Jan 14) Military announces Ks 2.2 trillion budget; DVB (15 Jan 14) US\$1.2 billion proposed for Burma's Defence budget

⁵⁵ Irrawaddy (15 Jan 14) Latest Nationwide Ceasefire Talks Delayed Once Again; Myanmar Times (16 Jan 14) Hpa-an ceasefire talks postponed; DVB (16 Jan 14) Hpa-an peace talks postponed until February; EMG (16 Jan 14) Hpa-an peace talk for nationwide ceasefire postponed until late February; Myanmar Times (20 Jan 14) Ceasefire talks put off until February

⁵⁶ Irrawaddy (15 Jan 14) Latest Nationwide Ceasefire Talks Delayed Once Again; Myanmar Times (16 Jan 14) Hpa-an ceasefire talks postponed; DVB (16 Jan 14) Hpa-an peace talks postponed until February; EMG (16 Jan 14) Hpa-an peace talk for nationwide ceasefire postponed until late February; Myanmar Times (20 Jan 14) Ceasefire talks put off until February

On 20 January, leaders and representatives from 17 ethnic armed groups attended the first day of a conference in KNU-controlled Lawkheela, Hlaingbwe Township, Karen State, to discuss the regime's nationwide ceasefire proposal.⁵⁷

On 25 January, at the conclusion of the six-day conference, 16 of the 17 ethnic armed groups who attended signed an 11-point agreement, stipulating that political dialogue must start immediately following the signing of the final nationwide ceasefire agreement.⁵⁸ During the 'political dialogue' stage, issues such as the formation of a federal army will be discussed.⁵⁹

Despite ethnic armed groups' calls for recognition of rights and greater autonomy, the regime's behavior has called into question whether it will be achieved. On 14 January, state media published a speech made by Commander-in-Chief Sr Gen Min Aung Hlaing who said the regime made peace agreements with ethnic armed groups, "but that doesn't mean we are afraid to fight. We are afraid of no one. There is no insurgent group we cannot fight or dare not to fight."⁶⁰ The Sr Gen was addressing a group of officers in Naypyidaw on 29 November.⁶¹

Fighting continues in Kachin, Northern Shan, and Karen States

In January, no formal talks took place between the regime and ethnic armed groups. However, Tatmadaw troops continued military offensives against the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) in Kachin and Northern Shan States, and against the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) in Karen State.⁶²

- **4 January:** Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA forces in Kyaukme Township, Shan State according to two separate reports. Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA Brigades 717, 506, and 502 at 4am,⁶³ and Tatmadaw troops from LIBs 504 and 506 clashed with joint KIA Battalion 34 and TNLA Battalion 717 forces from 10am-4pm.⁶⁴
- **4 January:** Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA Battalion 2 forces in Kutkai Township, Shan State.⁶⁵
- **4 January:** Tatmadaw troops clashed with joint TNLA/KIA forces in Namhsan Township, Shan State.⁶⁶
- **5 January:** Tatmadaw troops from LIB 290 clashed with Kachin People's Militia (aka Mungshawa Hpyen Hpung (MHH)) near Nam Ngawn Village, Mansi Township, Kachin State.⁶⁷
- **6 January:** Tatmadaw troops from IB 56 clashed with KIA Battalion 12 forces at Mungding Pa Village, Mansi Township, Kachin State.⁶⁸
- **6 January:** Tatmadaw troops clashed with KNLA Brigade 5 forces, after Tatmadaw soldiers advanced into KNLA territory.⁶⁹
- **30-31 January:** Tatmadaw troops from Battalion 276 attacked Nam Gau and Nam San Villages, Mansi Township, Kachin State, capturing 18 villagers.⁷⁰
- **31 January:** Tatmadaw troops attacked KIA forces in and around Nam Gau, Gawng Run, and Nam Hkan Villages, Mansi Township, Kachin State.⁷¹

⁵⁷ Irrawaddy (20 Jan 14) Conference of Burma's Ethnic Armed Groups Begins in Karen Territory; Xinhua (21 Jan 14) Second Myanmar ethnic leaders conference underway in Kayin state

⁵⁸ Irrawaddy (24 Jan 14) Ethnic Rebels Move Closer to Ceasefire – With Strings Attached; Xinhua (25 Jan 14) Myanmar ethnic armed groups agree to sign ceasefire accord with gov't; DVB (30 Jan 14) Nationwide ceasefire draft submitted to gov't peace team

⁵⁹ Myanmar Times (26 Jan 14) Ethnic meeting enters sixth day

⁶⁰ Irrawaddy (14 Jan 14) Military Chief Blames Ethnic Groups for Conflict, Says Army 'Afraid of No One'

⁶¹ Irrawaddy (14 Jan 14) Military Chief Blames Ethnic Groups for Conflict, Says Army 'Afraid of No One'

⁶² EMG (06 Jan 14) Skirmishes break out between Palaung, Ta'ang ethnic armed groups and gov't army; Kachinland News (07 Jan 14) Battles Rage in Southern Kachin and Northern Shan State; Kachin News Group (08 Jan 14) KIA releases two Tatmadaw soldiers following clashes; Karen News (14 Jan 14) Burma Army Violates Ceasefire

⁶³ EMG (06 Jan 14) Skirmishes break out between Palaung, Ta'ang ethnic armed groups and gov't army

⁶⁴ Kachinland News (07 Jan 14) Battles Rage in Southern Kachin and Northern Shan State

⁶⁵ Kachin News Group (08 Jan 14) KIA releases two Tatmadaw soldiers following clashes

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⁶⁸ Kachin News Group (08 Jan 14) KIA releases two Tatmadaw soldiers following clashes

⁶⁹ Karen News (14 Jan 14) Burma Army Violates Ceasefire

⁷⁰ FBR (01 Feb 14) Burma Army Attacks Kachin Villages, Capturing 18 Villagers; Bodies of Torture Victims Discovered

⁷¹ Kachin News Group (31 Jan 14) Burma army captures KIA post, heavy fighting continues in southern Kachin state

- **31 January:** Tatmadaw troops attacked and captured a KIA post in Momauk Township, Kachin State, resulting in the death of one KIA soldier.⁷²

Tatmadaw troops continued to target civilians during military operations, violating past ceasefire or peace agreements. On 7 January, Tatmadaw troops from LIB 401 fired artillery shells into civilian areas in Northern Papun Township, Karen State, in violation of the 2012 agreement between the KNU and the regime.⁷³

On 31 January, Free Burma Rangers Relief teams reported the discovery of three tortured bodies of victims who had been killed by the Tatmadaw in November 2013.⁷⁴

Daw Suu's tour of ethnic states

On 6 January, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi began a tour of Chin, Karen, and Shan States and Sagaing Division to garner support for constitutional reform.⁸⁵

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said the 2008 constitution is “preventing national reconciliation” between ethnic groups and the regime which she said was necessary for Burma’s democratic development.⁸⁶ On 10 January, Daw Suu said that the main purpose of changing the constitution was to give all citizens equal rights, and that “Burma’s powerful military should not stand in the way of these changes”.⁸⁷

During her tour, local authorities in Chin and Shan States tried to disrupt Daw Suu’s plans to meet with local residents.

Daw Suu's tour
Sagaing Division
6 Jan: Kalaymyo, Kale Township ⁷⁵
Chin State
7 Jan: Tiddim Township ⁷⁶
8 Jan: Falam Township ⁷⁷
8/9 Jan: Haka Township ⁷⁸
Sagaing Division
10 Jan: Kalaymyo, Kale Township ⁷⁹
Karen State
18 Jan: Hpa-an Township; Hlaingbwe Township ⁸⁰
19 Jan: Katpali Village, Hlaingbwe Township ⁸¹
Shan State
24 Jan: Heho, Kalaw Township ⁸²
25/26 Jan: Nansang Township; Mong Nai Township; Langkho Township ⁸³
26 Jan: Taunggyi Township ⁸⁴

- **8 January:** It was reported that regime authorities in Falam Township, Chin State tried to deter civil servants and students from attending Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s speech.⁸⁸
- **24 January:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s flight was rerouted 150 kilometers from Nansang, where she was scheduled to speak on 25 January, to Heho airport, Kalaw Township, Shan State after Tatmadaw

⁷² Kachin News Group (31 Jan 14) Burma army captures KIA post, heavy fighting continues in southern Kachin state; Kachin News Group (01 Feb 14) Burmese Army Seized KIA's Dagaw Mada Post

⁷³ Karen News (14 Jan 14) Burma Army Violates Ceasefire

⁷⁴ FBR (01 Feb 14) Burma Army Attacks Kachin Villages, Capturing 18 Villagers; Bodies of Torture Victims Discovered

⁷⁵ Irrawaddy (06 Jan 14) Thousands Welcome Suu Kyi's Chin State Visit. DVB (07 Jan 14) Thousands greet Suu Kyi in Kale, en route to Chin State

⁷⁶ DVB (08 Jan 14) 2008 Constitution was undemocratic, says Suu Kyi

⁷⁷ Irrawaddy (08 Jan 14) Chin Govt Allegedly Keeps Supporters Away From Suu Kyi Speech

⁷⁸ DVB (07 Jan 14) Thousands greet Suu Kyi in Kale, en route to Chin State; Irrawaddy (10 Jan 14) Suu Kyi Wraps Up Constitutional Reform Tour in Northwest Burma; Chinnews (06 Jan 14) Suu Kyi's Chin State visit to include Hakha Featured

⁷⁹ Irrawaddy (10 Jan 14) Suu Kyi Wraps Up Constitutional Reform Tour in Northwest Burma

⁸⁰ DVB (20 Jan 14) Suu Kyi rallies Karen State, says charter hinders peace process

⁸¹ EMG (20 Jan 14) Suu Kyi highlights Myitsone, constitutional amendment issues on trip to Kayin

⁸² RFA (24 Jan 14) Myanmar Military Bars Suu Kyi From Airport, Rally Site on Shan State Tour

⁸³ SHAN (27 Jan 14) Suu Kyi's Shan state trip aimed to get support to amend 2008 constitution

⁸⁴ DVB (27 Jan 14) Suu Kyi rally in Taunggyi moved to vacant lot; Mizzima News (27 Jan 14) Venue ban forces NLD leader to address crowd from truck

⁸⁵ RFA (06 Jan 14) Suu Kyi to Drum Up Support for Charter Change in Ethnic States; RFA (24 Jan 14) Myanmar Military Bars Suu Kyi From Airport, Rally Site on Shan State Tour

⁸⁶ DVB (20 Jan 14) Suu Kyi rallies Karen State, says charter hinders peace process; Irrawaddy (10 Jan 14) Suu Kyi Wraps Up Constitutional Reform Tour in Northwest Burma

⁸⁷ RFA (10 Jan 14) Suu Kyi Says Myanmar Should Amend Charter For Equal Rights; Irrawaddy (10 Jan 14) Suu Kyi Wraps Up Constitutional Reform Tour in Northwest Burma

⁸⁸ Irrawaddy (08 Jan 14) Chin Govt Allegedly Keeps Supporters Away From Suu Kyi Speech; Mizzima News (09 Jan 14) Aung San Suu Kyi condemns rally ban on public servants, students; DVB (10 Jan 2014) Civil servants, students urged to boycott Suu Kyi rallies in Chin State, says NLD; Chinland Guardian (14 Jan 14) Suu Kyi disappointed over ban on public rallies in Chin State

officials and Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Sr Gen Min Aung Hlaing denied her permission to land at the Nansang military airbase, Nansang Township, Shan State.⁸⁹

- **24 January:** Shan State Security and Border Affairs Minister Col Aung Thu told NLD officials that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi could not use the Ayawwa hot air balloon field in Taunggyi Township, Shan State, for her speech because it was owned by the military.⁹⁰ Daw Suu ultimately had to hold her rally in a vacant lot and speak to her supporters from a stage erected on a 10-wheel truck.⁹¹
- **24 January:** It was reported that Daw Suu also planned to meet with a local ethnic militia group in Homong, Mongpan Township during her stop in Shan State, but Tatmadaw officials from Mong Nai Township, Shan State, pressured the group to call off the meeting.⁹²

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was met with a huge number of supporters at each of her rally sites, with crowds numbering, at times, in the tens of thousands.⁹³

HUMAN RIGHTS

Common prisoners freed, political prisoners still behind bars

In January, political prisoners remained imprisoned despite President Thein Sein's promise to free all political prisoners by the end of 2013. On 2 January, President Thein Sein issued an order that commuted the death sentences of prisoners to life in jail, and reduced prison terms of other inmates to mark the 66th anniversary of Independence Day.⁹⁴ As a result of the order, on 3 January the regime released 13,274 prisoners from jails across the country.⁹⁵ However, as in previous mass releases, nearly all of those freed were common criminals. Only three (or 0.02%) of those released were political prisoners.⁹⁶

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), more than 40 political prisoners, facing a mix of political and criminal charges, remained imprisoned in Burma.⁹⁷ AAPP also said that 100 activists and human rights defenders, including farmers who protested land confiscation, were still awaiting trial.⁹⁸

More charged under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law

In January, the regime charged four activists under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law.⁹⁹

- **4 January:** Police in Naypyidaw's Pyinmana Township said that they would charge local NLD official Tha Cho (aka Kyaw Moe Zaw) because he had staged a solo protest that called for amendments to the 2008 constitution and the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law.¹⁰⁰ He was subsequently charged and released on bail.¹⁰¹

⁸⁹ DVB (24 Jan 14) Suu Kyi Shan trip rerouted; RFA (24 Jan 14) Myanmar Military Bars Suu Kyi From Airport, Rally Site on Shan State Tour

⁹⁰ RFA (24 Jan 14) Myanmar Military Bars Suu Kyi From Airport, Rally Site on Shan State Tour

⁹¹ DVB (27 Jan 14) Suu Kyi rally in Taunggyi moved to vacant lot

⁹² DVB (24 Jan 14) Suu Kyi Shan trip rerouted; RFA (24 Jan 14) Myanmar Military Bars Suu Kyi From Airport, Rally Site on Shan State Tour

⁹³ Irrawaddy (06 Jan 14) Thousands Welcome Suu Kyi's Chin State Visit. DVB (07 Jan 14) Thousands greet Suu Kyi in Kale, en route to Chin State; DVB (8 Jan 14) 2008 Constitution was undemocratic, says Suu Kyi; Irrawaddy (08 Jan 14) Chin Govt Allegedly Keeps Supporters Away From Suu Kyi Speech; Irrawaddy (10 Jan 14) Suu Kyi Wraps Up Constitutional Reform Tour in Northwest Burma; DVB (20 Jan 14) Suu Kyi rallies Karen State, says charter hinders peace process; DVB (20 Jan 14) Suu Kyi rallies Karen State, says charter hinders peace process; SHAN (27 Jan 14) Suu Kyi's Shan state trip aimed to get support to amend 2008 constitution

⁹⁴ AP (02 Jan 14) Myanmar commutes death sentences, jail terms; NLM (06 Jan 14) 13,274 prisoners released under pardon

⁹⁵ Xinhua (03 Jan 14) Over 1,600 prisoners released in Myanmar; Xinhua (06 Jan 14) Over 13,200 inmates released in Myanmar under pardon order; NLM (06 Jan 14) 13,274 prisoners released under pardon

⁹⁶ DPA (04 Jan 14) Myanmar releases about 2,000 prisoners

⁹⁷ DPA (04 Jan 14) Myanmar releases about 2,000 prisoners; Myanmar Times (17 Jan 14) Despite amnesty, political prisoners remain

⁹⁸ DVB (03 Jan 14) I beg your pardon – amnesty for political prisoners?

⁹⁹ AI (22 Jan 14) Myanmar: Fresh charges under draconian anti-protest law

¹⁰⁰ EMG (05 Jan 14) Solo protest against charter change in Nay Pyi Taw

¹⁰¹ NLD (03 Feb 14) email

- **8 January:** Police in Magwe, Magwe Division charged Buddhist monk U Rakkha Wuntha,¹⁰² for beginning a march from Chauk Township, Magwe Division¹⁰³ to Akyab [Sittwe], Arakan State to call for the release of remaining political prisoners.¹⁰⁴
- **20 January:** It was reported that police in Rangoon's Kyauktada Township charged activists Nay Myo Zin and Win Cho from local NGO, the Myanmar Social Development Network, for organizing a protest against land confiscation in Rangoon.¹⁰⁵ On 18 January, about 500 farmers from across Burma called for the return of land confiscated by the former military regime during a demonstration in Rangoon.¹⁰⁶

Violence against women continues

On 14 January, the Women's League of Burma (WLB) released a report titled "Same Impunity, Same Patterns".¹⁰⁷ The report, which documented the Tatmadaw's use of rape as a weapon of war, detailed more than 100 cases of sexual violence and rape perpetrated by Tatmadaw soldiers against women since the 2010 elections until October 2013, almost solely in ethnic areas.¹⁰⁸

Most cases of sexual violence were linked to military offensives that occurred in Northern Shan State (since March 2011) and Kachin State (since June 2011) [See *Burma update: Serious Crimes Continue September 2013 Briefer*].¹⁰⁹ In January, more cases of rape and sexual violence involving Tatmadaw soldiers continued to be reported:

- **2 January:** The commander of Tatmadaw IB 31 tried to cover up the rape of a 13-year-old Mon girl from Kyun-nye Village, Ye Township, Mon State, in December 2013, by threatening the girl's family and giving them 500,000 kyat (US\$507) to not report the case.¹¹⁰
- **8 January:** Tatmadaw soldiers from LIB 298 pulled a Kachin woman off a bus and gang-raped her on Myitkyina-Sumpra Bum Road, near Myitkyina, Kachin State.¹¹¹
- **13 January:** Police sexually assaulted and murdered a woman in Du Chee Yar Tan Village, Maungdaw Township, Arakan State during the Anti-Rohingya violence [See above *Anti-Rohingya violence continues*].¹¹²
- **25 January:** A Tatmadaw soldier from Battalion 315 beat and attempted to rape a 43-year old Mon woman, who was taken to a hospital as a result of her injuries in Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State.¹¹³

Child soldiers released, one imprisoned for desertion

On 18 January, the Tatmadaw released 96 child soldiers and returned them to their respective families during a ceremony in Hlaing Township, Rangoon Division.¹¹⁴ However, not all former child soldiers have been released. On 22 January, the Bassein-based Human Rights Watch and Defense Network (HRWDN) said that on 7 January, a military tribunal sentenced a child soldier who was under the

¹⁰² AI (22 Jan 14) Myanmar: Fresh charges under draconian anti-protest law

¹⁰³ DVB reported that Rakkha Wuntha marched from Mandalay; DVB (16 Jan 14) Monk walks from Mandalay to Arakan in support of political prisoners

¹⁰⁴ Mizzima News (09 Jan 14) Police accuse monk of breaching Section 18; Amnesty International (22 Jan 14) Myanmar: Fresh charges under draconian anti-protest law

¹⁰⁵ Irrawaddy (20 Jan 14) Farmers Travel to Rangoon to Decry Land Seizures, Trespassing Charges

¹⁰⁶ AI (22 Jan 14) Myanmar: Fresh charges under draconian anti-protest law; Irrawaddy (20 Jan 14) Farmers Travel to Rangoon to Decry Land Seizures, Trespassing Charges

¹⁰⁷ AP (15 Jan 14) Myanmar army 'using rape as weapon'; Chinland Guardian (14 Jan 14) Sexual violence committed by Burma Army continues; Karen News (15 Jan 14) Burma Army 'Using Rape as a Weapon of War'; VOA (15 Jan 14) Burmese Military Accused of Committing Sexual Violence

¹⁰⁸ WLB (Jan 14) Same Impunity, Same Patterns

¹⁰⁹ WLB (Jan 14) Same Impunity, Same Patterns

¹¹⁰ IMNA (09 Jan 14) Army covers up alleged rape by giving family money; Irrawaddy (15 Jan 14) Concerns Over Impunity in Burma Soldier's Alleged Rape of 13-Year-Old

¹¹¹ Kachinland News (10 Jan 14) Burmese Army Soldiers Raping Ethnic Women With Impunity

¹¹² Myanmar Times (17 Jan 14) Violence flares in Maungdaw

¹¹³ Irrawaddy (29 Jan 14) Soldier Accused of Rape Attempt in Mon State

¹¹⁴ UN Children's Fund, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Myanmar (18 Jan 14) Mass release of children by Myanmar Armed Forces important step towards a new Myanmar; Irrawaddy (20 Jan 14) UN Welcomes Burma Army's Release of 96 Child Soldiers; EMG (19 Jan 14) Army releases 96 child soldiers; NLM (19 Jan 14) Defence Services discharges 96 minors to reunite with families

protection of the ILO and should have been released from service, to one year in prison for deserting his unit.¹¹⁵

DISPLACEMENT

Bangladesh, Thailand continue to push back, traffic Rohingya refugees

Burma's neighbors continued to fail to provide sanctuary to fleeing Rohingya. In January, Bangladesh authorities continued to push back Rohingya who attempted to flee to Bangladesh.

- **2 January:** Dum Dum Meah-based Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) personnel arrested and pushed back 21 Rohingya – 13 men, five women, and three children – who crossed the Naf River by boat at the Naitong Para entry point.¹¹⁶
- **3 January:** Teknaf-based BGB Battalion 42 personnel pushed back eight Rohingya who were entering at Bangladesh's Nayapara entry point.¹¹⁷
- **11 January:** Teknaf-based BGB Battalion 42 personnel pushed back 82 Rohingya who crossed the Naf River.¹¹⁸

Displaced Rohingya in Thailand continue to be easy prey for human traffickers. On 7 January, human traffickers trafficked 13 Rohingya women and children from a family shelter in Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province, Thailand.¹¹⁹

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Burma bars ASEAN from discussing Rohingya, Thailand, or Cambodia

Burma's role as ASEAN chair in 2014 seemed focused on preventing the discussion of key ASEAN political issues.

On 16 January, during the first day of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Pagan, Mandalay Division, the regime indicated that while ASEAN will be discussing the South China Sea during its chairmanship, other topics including Thailand's political unrest, Cambodia's crackdown on civilian protestors, and Burma's own Rohingya issue would be off the table [See above *Anti-Rohingya violence continues in Arakan State*].¹²⁰

On 17 January, after the conclusion of the meeting, President Thein Sein's spokesman Ye Htut said "the Bengali issue is our internal affair", referring to the question of Burma's Rohingya, and asserted it will not be discussed in the ASEAN meetings, "even if member countries ask for it".¹²¹ However, Indonesian FM Marty Natalegawa said that although Burma's Rohingya may be an internal matter it still impacts the region, citing "cases of terrorist activities" in Indonesia, driven by the anti-Muslim violence in Burma, that give the region cause for concern.¹²²

¹¹⁵ Irrawaddy (22 Jan 14) Burmese Child Soldier Imprisoned for Leaving Military

¹¹⁶ Kaladan News (04 Jan 14) Twenty-nine Rohingya pushed-back to Burma

¹¹⁷ Kaladan News (04 Jan 14) Twenty-nine Rohingya pushed-back to Burma

¹¹⁸ Kaladan News (12 Jan 14) 82-Rohingya pushed back to Burma

¹¹⁹ Phuketwan (07 Jan 14) Mystery of Flow of Thousands of Rohingya Through Thailand Deepens as Families Flee Shelter

¹²⁰ VOA (17 Jan 14) ASEAN Ministers Conclude First High-Level Meeting in Burma; Mizzima News (17 Jan 14) Myanmar-China ties to help on South China Sea issue, says presidential spokesman

¹²¹ Irrawaddy (17 Jan 14) Asean Not a Forum for Rohingya Discussion: Burma Govt

¹²² Irrawaddy (17 Jan 14) Sectarian Violence in Burma Has Regional Impact, Says Indonesian Foreign Minister

ECONOMY

“Repressed” economy, “extreme risk” market

Although Burma’s political and economic reforms have been lauded in some circles, Burma’s economy still ranks low in global risk reports.

- **8 January:** UK-based global risk analysis firm Maplecroft issued their Legal and Regulatory Environment Risk Atlas (LRERA) 2014.¹²³ The survey ranked Burma as the fifth most “extreme risk” country, out of the 173 assessed countries, in terms of dangers posed to investors.¹²⁴
- **14 January:** Heritage Foundation published its 2014 Index of Economic Freedom. The survey ranked Burma as the 162nd least economically free, out of the 178 assessed countries, falling squarely in the “repressed” economy category.¹²⁵

IMF mission to Burma leaves the regime with optimism and warnings

On 9 January, an IMF mission to Burma arrived for a 12-day trip to complete a final review of the IMF’s 12-month monitoring of the regime’s economic reform plans.¹²⁶ At the end of its mission, the IMF released a statement predicting that Burma’s GDP would rise to 7.5% in the 2013-14 fiscal year and to 7.75% in the 2014-15 fiscal year.¹²⁷ Despite this positive outlook on Burma’s economy, the IMF voiced several concerns, including:

- Rising inflation – estimated to reach 6% at the end of the 2013-14 fiscal year and remain high through the 2014-15 fiscal year due to pressures from the money supply, increase in credit, currency depreciation, and possible electricity price increases.¹²⁸
- Lack of capacity for supervising and regulating the developing financial sector.¹²⁹
- Low tax revenue and narrow tax base due to limited tax compliance.¹³⁰

OTHER BURMA NEWS IN JANUARY

1	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi says the regime must “take responsibility” for the Myitsone dam project and deal with the project decisively.
2	88 Generation Students Group call for former junta leaders to be held accountable for atrocities committed against political prisoners during their rule.
5	President Thein Sein and Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Sr Gen Min Aung Hlaing meet a KNU delegation led by KNU Chairman Gen Mutu Say Poe to discuss the nationwide ceasefire process and future political dialogues in Naypyidaw.
5	Local police in Mandalay deny permission to journalists and activists to protest against the detention of Eleven Daily reporter Naw Khine Khine Aye Cho, aka Ma Khine.
6	Japan announces plans to give up to 10 billion yen (US\$98 million) to Burma for the next five years conditional on the progress made in the peace process between the regime and ethnic minorities.
7	About 150 journalists and activists stage a protest in Rangoon denouncing threats to press freedom and call for the release of Eleven Media group journalist Ma Khine.
8	The Kachin Development Networking Group releases a press statement criticizing state-owned Chinese Power Investment’s “Irrawaddy Dams Corporate Responsibility Report” released last month.
9	IMF mission to Burma begins a 12-day visit to the country.

¹²³ Myanmar Times (08 Jan 14) Myanmar still a risky prospect for investors: report

¹²⁴ Maplecroft (08 Jan 14) Legal and Regulatory Environment Risk Index 2014

¹²⁵ Irrawaddy (14 Jan 14) Economic Freedom Index Deems Burma Most Improved

¹²⁶ IMF (21 Jan 14) Statement by the IMF Mission to Myanmar for the Second Review of Staff-Monitored Program

¹²⁷ EMG (22 Jan 14) Myanmar needs to build more financial institutions, says IMF; IMF (21 Jan 14) Statement by the IMF Mission to Myanmar for the Second Review of Staff-Monitored Program

¹²⁸ Reuters (21 Jan 14) IMF raises Myanmar forecasts, praises reforms

¹²⁹ Xinhua (23 Jan 14) IMF underscores Myanmar’s economic reform efforts; EMG (22 Jan 14) Myanmar needs to build more financial institutions, says IMF; IMF (21 Jan 14) Statement by the IMF Mission to Myanmar for the Second Review of Staff-Monitored Program

¹³⁰ Myanmar Times (22 Jan 14) Risks loom as inflation concerns remain; Xinhua (23 Jan 14) IMF underscores Myanmar’s economic reform efforts

10	Parliament's Judicial Affairs Committee Chairman, Aung Ko, says complaints regarding judicial service corruption account for 90% of the 10,000 complaint letters received by the Committee.
10	Local residents in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division hold a protest to demand fair compensation for their land confiscated for the Kyaysintaung and Sabeitaung copper mine projects.
10	The National Democratic Party for Development and the Democracy and Human Rights Party hold a press conference asking the regime to list their Muslim constituents in Arakan State as "Rohingya" on the census.
10	State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar announces the replacement of three National Assembly military MPs and four People's Assembly military MPs, two of which are the first female officers to be nominated.
12	About 100 local residents from Thamote, Mergui Township stage a protest against a plan to build a 50-megawatt coal power plant in Lutlut Village, Mergui Township, Tenasserim Division.
13	Regime Finance Minister Win Shein submits bills for amending the Myanmar Stamp Law, the Myanmar Tariff Law, the Income Tax Law, and the Office Tax Law.
13	The Union Election Commission approves the registration of the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party and the Rakhine League for Democracy.
13	Regime Election Commission approves the registration of the Arakan National Party – a merger between the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party and the Arakan League for Democracy.
14	The National Parliament confirms the appointments of Arakan State Chief Justice and the Deputy Electric Power Minister.
14	The National Parliament approves the formation of the Joint Planning and Budget Development Committee with Soe Tha as its Chair and Myo Myint and Aye Mauk as Secretaries.
14	President Thein Sein meets ASEAN Sec-Gen Le Luong Minh in Naypyidaw to discuss preparations for ASEAN meetings in Burma, Burma's hopes for regional peace agreements in 2014, and preparations for the 2015 ASEAN Community.
16	A fire destroys at least 39 buildings, including 34 dormitories and two school buildings, at a Rohingya IDP camps in Pauktaw Township, Arakan State.
17	The National Parliament approves an amendment to the National Parliament Law that allows the National Parliament's speaker to choose the voting method used to adopt bills (by voting with a show of hands, standing, or a computerized vote).
17	US President Barack Obama signs a spending bill that puts conditions on assistance programs to Burma through the US Economic Support Fund, requiring Burma to improve its human rights record and amend the 2008 Constitution in order to receive funding.
17	National parliament unanimously ratifies a memorandum of understanding for a Burma-India border agreement.
20	A medic at the Mine Khaung Refugee camp, Mansi Township, Kachin State, says over 50 children were diagnosed with cholera at the start of the month.
21	Environmental activists from Burma Rivers Network oppose six dam projects being planned by Asia World, IGE, and Shwe Taung in collaboration with Chinese and Thai companies on the Salween [Thanlwin] River.
21	HRW releases its World Report 2014 calling on the regime to ensure the protection of Burma's religious and ethnic minorities and cautioning the international community against believing that Burma's reforms are being implemented.
23	People's Assembly Speaker Shwe Mann tells reporters in Naypyidaw that he would welcome Daw Aung San Suu Kyi becoming president "by cooperating with her".
23	Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Sr Gen Min Aung Hlaing and UN Sec-Gen's Special Advisor on Burma Vijay Nambiar meet in Naypyidaw and pledge to work together to improve Burma's social security.
24	Burma's Department of Population Director General Nyi Nyi, at a press conference in Naypyidaw, says each person will have the opportunity to refer to themselves as whatever ethnicity they choose in the upcoming census.
24	Kachin land rights activist and the National Democratic Force (NDF) Kachin State chief, Bawk Ja, is released from Hpakant Prison, Kachin State where she had been detained since 18 July 2013.
26	World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim announces a US\$2 billion development program targeting access to electricity and universal healthcare in Burma, while in Rangoon.
27	Loikaw District Court in Karenni State dismisses Eleven Media Group reporter Ma Khine's appeal to overturn the ruling of her three-month prison sentence.
30	Regime gives Qatar's Ooredoo and Norway's Telenor the first operating licenses for telecommunications systems in Burma, finally allowing the telecom companies to begin operations in Burma.

REPORTS ON BURMA RELEASED IN JANUARY

“**World Report 2014 - Burma**”, Human Rights Watch (HRW) <http://bit.ly/1jxyd2K>

“**Doing Business 2014: Understanding Regulations for Small and Medium-Size Enterprises**”, the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC)
<http://bit.ly/1fdE7nl>

“**Anti-Muslim Violence in Burma/Myanmar and the Responsibility to Protect**”, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect <http://bit.ly/1lG8jf3>

“**Media and Conflict in Myanmar**”, United States Institute of Peace <http://bit.ly/1dl2VfF>

“**Same Impunity, Same Patterns**”, Women’s League of Burma (WLB)
<http://bit.ly/1j6uThn>

“**China, the United States, and the Kachin Conflict**”, Stimson Center <http://bit.ly/1kBblOq>

“**Training War Criminals? British Training of the Burmese Army**”, Burma Campaign UK (BCUK)
<http://bit.ly/1jjFpSz>

“**Riding the Wave of Reform**”, Oxfam <http://bit.ly/1ellwDt>

“**Legal and Regulatory Environment Risk Atlas 2014**”, Maplecroft <http://bit.ly/KJwsDW>