



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/HRC/7/NGO/85
25 February 2008

ENGLISH ONLY

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
Seventh session
Agenda item 4

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS THAT REQUIRE THE COUNCIL'S ATTENTION

**Written statement* submitted by Human Rights First, a non-governmental
organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[21 February 2008]

-
- This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the
submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Statement on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar

Human Rights First takes the opportunity of the Seventh Session of the Human Rights Council to welcome the combined efforts of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar and of the Special Envoy for Myanmar. In its resolution 6/33 of 14 December 2007 (A/HRC/RES/6/33), the Council expressed its deep concern at the situation of human rights in Myanmar and urged the Government of Myanmar to follow up and implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Special Rapporteur and to release all political detainees, including those arrested and detained as a result of the repression of the peaceful demonstrations of last September.

Despite the announcement of a referendum and elections to be held, Human Rights First has very recently been able to obtain firsthand evidence that the political crackdown was still ongoing. While the military regime has been actively publicizing the release of some prisoners over the past month, those people never should have been arrested in the first place, and charges against them were never lodged. According to several reliable sources inside Myanmar, arrests are currently ongoing. Most of the political activists, many linked to the 88 Generation and to the recent demonstrations, have gone into hiding or have fled the country. Anecdotal reports indicate for every person released at least two people are newly jailed. Close to 2900 people and 180 monks would still currently be detained following the crackdown, most of them at Insein prison in Yangon. Although Human Rights First was not able to verify these numbers we believe that the actual figures are very close if not higher.

While the international community has been expressing outrage at the recent crackdown in Yangon, Mandalay and Bago, insufficient attention has been paid to the systematic and widespread crimes committed by the army of Myanmar against civilians in ethnic areas. Human Rights First has confirmed that this campaign of crimes against humanity is ongoing. Human Rights First has been able to document many cases of indiscriminate killings, destruction of villages, destruction or confiscation of crops and foodstocks, and forced labor having taken place over the past couple of months.

Human Rights First believes that no credible political process can take place in Myanmar while the political crackdown is still ongoing and crimes are being committed against ethnic minority groups.

Human Rights First therefore calls upon the Human Rights Council to condemn the ongoing crackdown of political activists as well as the rampant campaign of crimes against humanity led by the Myanmar authorities and committed against civilians in ethnic minority areas.

Human Rights First further urges the Human Rights Council to demand that the Myanmar authorities:

- *release immediately all political prisoners, including all civilians and monks arrested in the context of the peaceful demonstration of September 2007;*
- *stop immediately its military campaign against ethnic minorities;*
- *ensure that crimes committed by the police and army of Myanmar during the recent crackdown and crimes committed by the army against civilians in ethnic minority areas be the subject of independent and impartial investigation;*

- *ensure that those responsible for crimes committed against civilians and monks during the crackdown and in ethnic minority areas are brought to justice;*
- *offer permanent, full and unfettered access to all parts of Myanmar, including the ethnic minority areas, to the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation Myanmar;*
- *lift all restraints on peaceful political activity; and*
- *agree to participate in a meaningful tripartite political dialogue with both the NLD and representatives of ethnic minorities.*

- - - - -