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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
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HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS THAT REQUIRE THE COUNCIL'S ATTENTION

Written statement* submitted by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), 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.

[20 February 2008]

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom urges the military regime, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) currently ruling Burma, to continue its co-operation with the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar and to work with UN agencies and other humanitarian actors to help bring unity and stability to the country.

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

As the last 46 years have shown, military regimes and military security concepts do not and cannot bring lasting unity and stability, no matter what the intention. Indeed, military solutions have become the problem, particularly the Tatmadaw's Four Cuts policy, which directly targets civilians in an effort to reduce the support base of ethnic armies, resulting in forced relocations, property confiscation, extortion, forced labour, torture, rape and the extra judicial execution of civilians.

To date, ceasefire agreements that have been reached have allowed narco-armies to hold arms and to manufacture and traffic drugs with impunity¹, entrenching the power of criminal networks, which will prove a hindrance to the future implementation of the roadmap to democracy, particularly in Shan and Wa areas.

Compounding problems of unity and stability in cities and townships is the development of paramilitary civilian organisations such as the USDA (Union Solidarity Development Association) and the SAS (Swan Ah Shin) that operate with violent means outside of the rule of law at the behest of the SPDC, serving to divide civil society and prevent meaningful dialogue at the community level.

The SPDC has dismissed international requests for tripartite dialogue, an inclusive and transparent National Convention and the release of political prisoners including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, as western cultural imperialism, ignoring the calls for the same from its own citizens and Sangha (the Order of Buddhist Monks and Nuns).

WILPF welcomes the ASEAN human rights treaty as a legal instrument that enshrines human rights as "Asian values" and anticipates an accompanying body set up to investigate abuses in the region.

The special rapporteur confirms that "grave human rights violations are committed by persons within the established structures of the SPDC and are not only perpetrated with impunity but authorized by law". WILPF calls on member states that have profited from the SPDCs disproportionate spending on military hardware, to cease this trade until the SPDC has stopped its deployment against civilians.

WILPF urges the SPDC to allow UN agencies and humanitarian actors access to the estimated 500,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who are in grave need of assistance in Kayin, Mon, Shan Kaya and Northern Rahkine states and in the eastern Bago division. Additionally we support the Special Rapporteur's call for the SPDC to finalise its report to CEDAW, overdue since 2002, with a view to ending the systematic sexual violence against women and girls perpetrated by its forces.

WILPF believes that genuine political solutions, generated through tripartite dialogue are the starting point towards lasting stability, unity, peace and development to Burma, and urges the SPDC to pursue such negotiations in good faith.

¹ Lintner, Bertil. "Drugs and Economic Growth in Burma Today," in *Burma Myanmar: Strong Regime, Weak State?*, Morten B. Pederson, Emily Rudland and Ronald J. May (eds) (Adelaide: Crawford House) 2000. Ball, Desmond. *Burma and Drugs: The Regime's Complicity in the Global Drug Trade*, Canberra: the Strategic and Defense Studies Centre, Australian National University, Working Paper No. 342, Nov. 20, 1999. US Drug Enforcement Agency, <http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/pubs/states/newyork2006.html> (para 8)