

# **BURMA**

# **HUMAN RIGHTS YEARBOOK**

# **2006**

**Human Rights Documentation Unit**  
of the  
**National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma**

**25 June 2007**

# Burma Human Rights Yearbook 2006

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The Human Rights Documentation Unit (HRDU) is indebted to all of the sources cited throughout this report. The HRDU would like to thank all of the organizations and individuals for their valued contributions that led to the production of the *Burma Human Rights Yearbook 2006*. Last, but by no means least, the HRDU would like to express its sincere gratitude to the indebted team of volunteers who assisted in the production of the 2006 edition of the *Burma Human Rights Yearbook*, the production of which would not have been possible without your generous support. This report represents the thirteenth annual edition of the *Burma Human Rights Yearbook*.

**Cover photo:** An internally displaced Karen villager sheltering his son from the rain in northern Karen State of eastern Burma in April 2006. This man is one of approximately 25,000 civilian villagers driven from their homes as a direct result of the SPDC army offensive in northern Karen State. Under the offensive, thousands of SPDC army soldiers have intentionally targeted civilian villages in a concerted attempt to bring the region under direct military control. Gross violations of human rights have been perpetrated with impunity. Civilian food supplies have been deliberately destroyed and entire villages have been razed; forced labour has been employed extensively and fundamental freedoms have been all but abolished; antipersonnel landmines have been deployed in their thousands in areas frequented by civilians and villagers have been shot-on-sight. With his home destroyed and food supplies running out, this villager, and thousands of others like him, face an uncertain future.  
[Photo: FBR]

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Though the HRDU retains copyright of the *Burma Human Rights Yearbook*, it does not belong to one organization alone, but to all the many varied and diverse peoples of Burma who have lived too long under the oppressive weight of military rule. The *Burma Human Rights Yearbook* is thus dedicated to the people of Burma who have sacrificed their homes, freedom, and lives to lifting the veil of terror that shrouds the truth in Burma today.

The Human Rights Documentation Unit (HRDU) is the research and documentation department of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB). This, and all previous editions of the *Burma Human Rights Yearbook* may be viewed online on the NCGUB website at [www.ncgub.net](http://www.ncgub.net) or on the Online Burma Library at [www.burmalibrary.org](http://www.burmalibrary.org). Questions or comments can be submitted to HRDU at [enquiries.hrdu@gmail.com](mailto:enquiries.hrdu@gmail.com).

# Preface

During the United Nations Summit in 2005, the international community came to recognize its collective responsibility to protect the world's populations against the grossest violations of human rights when the states themselves are either unwilling or unable to do so.

By adopting the principle of the Responsibility to Protect, the world's leaders took a step of fundamental ethical and legal importance, but only if they can now turn this emerging norm from rhetoric into action. Burma's peoples are waiting for the world to heed their plight. It is becoming urgent.

For the 13<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, the Human Rights Documentation Unit is bringing out the annual *Burma Human Rights Yearbook*. Ever since the first yearbook was published, the human rights situation in Burma has steadily and consistently deteriorated, and the living conditions for the population have grown progressively worse. Sadly, the year 2006 became no different, as this latest *Burma Human Rights Yearbook* reveals.

Across the country, Burma's peoples continued to be subjected to forced labour, forced relocation, the burning of villages, rape and other forms of sexual violence, recruitment of children as child soldiers, trafficking of women and children, confiscation of land and property, extortion, religious persecution and discrimination against ethnic minorities.

In non-Burman ethnic nationality areas, in particular in Karen, Karenni and Shan States, fighting continued, thereby further increasing the number of internally displaced people within the country as well as bringing new waves of refugees into Thailand and other neighbour states. Burma's troubles are increasingly becoming a threat also to human security in the region.

Burma's human rights defenders work tirelessly under extremely challenging circumstances. Throughout the year, the authorities continued to arrest and detain individuals for peacefully expressing political dissent and for engaging in efforts to promote and protect human rights. No significant releases of political prisoners took place.

The people of Burma have been denied their basic need for protection for far too long. The main obstacle to a better future for the country and its people remains the state institutions themselves.

The United Nations Security Council, in resolution 1674 (2006) emphasizes that "*the commission of systematic, flagrant and widespread violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in situations of armed conflict*" may constitute a threat to international peace and security, to which the Security Council has a duty to respond. Burma is a case in point.

The widespread and systematic human rights violations in this country are not isolated acts of misconduct by middle- and low-ranking military officers and other state officials. A culture of impunity has been allowed to develop and a system has been created in which, for far too long, individuals and groups have been allowed to breach the law and violate human rights without being called to account.

Past appeals by the international community have fallen on deaf ears. Burma continues to fail in cooperating with the outside world in order to improve its record. The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burma, Professor Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, has been denied access to the country by the military government since 2003, while the regime has consistently ignored international appeals for an impartial and thorough investigation into the Depayin incident in May 2003 and the numerous reports of rape and other forms of sexual violence in Shan State and other ethnic states.

We call on the international community to support human rights defenders in Burma by closely monitoring cases of abuses and react with the utmost urgency whenever abuses occur.

We are in dire need of a more forceful, systematic and consistent effort by the international community to end abuses in Burma. However, what could have been a step forward – a resolution on Burma, which would have called for an end to abuses, was rejected in the UN Security Council in early 2007 following negative votes by China, Russia and South Africa.

We regret such an opportunity lost. We believe it is now time for the UN Human Rights Council to respond to the challenge of the negative votes in the Security Council by intervening in Burma to bring systematic human rights violations to an end.

Time has come for the Human Rights Council and the international community to increase pressure on the military regime to respect its international human rights and humanitarian obligations, and in particular to:

1. Stop targeting civilians during military operations; end all forms of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls; implement an immediate nationwide ceasefire, and end militarization in Karen State and other ethnic areas,
2. Respect fundamental rights for internally displaced persons in ethnic and other areas in Burma; and ensure safe access for humanitarian assistance to those who need it most in all parts of the country;
3. End impunity, restore rule of law, and create a climate in which human rights defenders are able to carry out their work freely and peacefully;
4. Release all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi; restore respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, association and organization; and lift restrictions on political parties, and support efforts to empower women's participation in political processes, in order to ensure a more inclusive political process;
5. Begin a tripartite dialogue with ethnic nationalities and the democracy movement led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi;

At the same time, the United Nations should reinvigorate its efforts to establish an independent international commission of enquiry into the Depayin incident, and the many reports of and rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls.

I express my deep appreciation to the staff at the Human Rights Documentation Unit and other human rights activists who continue to work hard to ensure that injustices in Burma be

reported, recorded and brought to the world's attention. The international community should now heed its obligations towards the people of Burma. Our common humanity is at stake.

**H.E. Dr. Sein Win**

*Prime Minister*

National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma

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# Map of Burma



Source: CIA World Factbook: Burma, U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 31 May 2007.

