BURMA BULLETIN

A month-in-review of events in Burma

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

Issue 19 **July 2008**

- **ASEAN/UN/SPDC Nargis assessment complete: 138,366 dead or missing (61% female); 79% of survivors have less than a week's food; 800,000 homes damaged; GDP growth projected to lose 2.7%; US$1 billion needed for recovery.**
- **SPDC steals US$10 million in humanitarian aid funds.**
- **Cyclone survivors face eviction and disease.**
- **Seventy percent of farmland in the Irrawaddy delta misses the planting season because of cyclone damage and shortages.**
- **SPDC arrests eight NLD members, nine monks and sentences ten students to jail terms.**
- **Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh relocated, four die. Five-hundred Karen villagers flee to Thailand. Thailand deports 35 others.**
- **ASEAN expresses disappointment over the extension of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest and calls for the release of all political prisoners in Burma.**
- **SPDC ratifies ASEAN Charter but objects to human rights monitoring body.**
- **UN Special Advisor on Burma Ibrahim Gambari briefs Security Council members and announces he will return to Burma in August.**
- **Foreign investment in Burma falls 77% over the past year.**

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KEY STORY

Cyclone Nargis damage assessed

On 10 July, the UN updated their cyclone Nargis appeal to US$481.8 million in humanitarian aid for Burma over the next three years. The appeal been 39.6% funded.[1] The updated appeal was based on the findings of the Post-Nargis Joint Assessment (PONJA) assessment.[2] Many key findings in the PONJA report – death toll, infrastructure damage – match what has already been reported by the SPDC and UN.

- 84,530 people dead, with a further 53,836 still reported missing. Sixty-one percent of those that were killed were female.
- Thirty-four percent of households reported having no food, and a further 45% reported having less a weeks' supply of food.[3] Thirty-eight percent of households reported obtaining food from humanitarian agencies.

[1] UN office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs (21 Jul 08) OCHA Situation Report No. 41
[2] Tripartite Core Group (Jul 08) Post-Nargis Joint Assessment
[3] If those surveyed reflect the 2.4 million affected by the cyclone, 2.14 million people did not have enough food to last them a week.

- Floods inundated over 600,000 hectares of agricultural land and killed nearly half of all draught animals. Fourteen thousand hectares of mangrove swamps were destroyed.
- Over 450,000 homes were destroyed and an additional 350,000 houses were damaged.
- Sixty percent of public schools and 75% of the health facilities were destroyed or severely damaged.
- 2008 GDP growth has been revised to show a 2.7% decrease because of cyclone-related losses. The adverse impact on the GDP will continue through 2009.
- Twenty-three percent of people reported psychological problems since the cyclone, while only 11% reported receiving any treatment.

TCG? PONJA?

The Tripartite Core Group (TCG) was formed by ASEAN, UN, and the SPDC in May. The TCG aims to act as an ongoing ASEAN-led mechanism that will "monitor, coordinate and facilitate the flow of international relief aid into the cyclone-hit areas." The TCG is comprised of three members each from ASEAN, UN, and the SPDC. In June, TCG conducted its first activity - the Post Nargis Joint Assessment (PONJA) of cyclone affected areas. 350 officials and volunteers from ASEAN, UN, and the SPDC, and supported by the World Bank, ADB, and local and international NGOs carried out the survey. PONJA aimed to assess current needs of survivors, damage done by the cyclone, and losses of income to affected communities. The next task of the TCG will be to address the ongoing relief and recovery efforts.

Significantly, the report put a price tag on many cyclone related losses – US$1.7 billion in damage and $2.3 billion in lost income. The report estimated Burma will need at least US$1 billion over the next three years for recovery and rehabilitation.[4]

SPDC US$10 million aid windfall

On 28 July, the UN admitted that the SPDC has pocketed an estimated US$10 million from UN aid funds intended for cyclone Nargis recovery because of the regime's manipulation of currency exchange rates.[5]. The UN estimate is based on a currency conversion loss of 15% on about $66 million spent for aid in Burma.[6] The UN estimate is conservative because after cyclone Nargis currency exchange losses reached as high as 25%.[7]

UN humanitarian chief John Homes described the loss as a "significant problem" and said that it would be addressed immediately.[8] However, before the true extent of the SPDC's diversion of aid funds was revealed by the media, Holmes said that the issue was "not a significant problem."[9] On 10 July, UN humanitarian coordinator for Burma Dan Baker insisted that the regime had "not benefited" and that aid dollars were being exchanged for kyat "at the market rate".[10]

UNDP operations in Burma have been affected by currency conversion losses for 14 years.[11] UN agencies and other humanitarian aid organizations have attempted to minimize losses by importing aid in goods and paying international staff outside of the country.[12] The SPDC has thwarted these attempts by imposing restrictions on the import of aid items. This has forced UN agencies to make local purchases of aid at inflated prices from state-owned enterprises.[13]

Survivor camps close but many still without food and water

SPDC camp officials summoned the 7,000 remaining survivors in the three camps in Labutta, Irrawaddy Division, and told them to return to their villages by 5 August. SPDC officials told the survivors that they would not receive assistance after that date and threatened to set fire to the camps. Camp members, who agreed to relocate, received a 10-day food ration.[14] Despite the inducements and

[4] In May, the SPDC requested $11.7 billion in reconstruction assistance
[5] AFP (29 Jul 08) Myanmar aid losses 'unacceptable:' UN aid coordinator.
[6] Irrawaddy (30 Jul 08) UN's lost aid may be tip of the iceberg
[7] Inner City Press (23 Jul 08) In Myanmar, UN loses 25% of aid in currency exchange, up from 15% pre-cyclone
[8] Irrawaddy (29 Jul 08) Currency Loss Unacceptable, but UN Aid to Continue: Holmes; Mizzima News (29 Jul 08) UN loses US $ 10 million in distorted Burmese official exchange rate
[9] Mizzima News (17 Jul 08) Burmese junta profiting from aid funds
[10] Telegraph (UK) (29 Jul 08) UN aid disappearing in Burma cash scam
[11] Irrawaddy (30 Jul 08) UN's lost aid may be tip of the iceberg
[12] Financial Times (26 Jul 08) Burma cyclone aid cash lost to regime, says UN
[13] Inner City Press (16 Jul 08) Myanmar Exchange Rate Is "Difficult," UN's Holmes Will Review in Yangon, Council July 24
[14] Bernama (09 Jul 08) Myanmar Plans Resettlement For 7,000 Cyclone Victims

threats, the SPDC's strategy of forcing cyclone survivors to return to their homes has failed. Hundreds of cyclone survivors the SPDC evicted from camps in June have not returned to their homes but are sheltering in monasteries.[15]

The UN announced that it would be ending aid flights on 10 August.[16] However, by their own estimates, 1.1 million survivors have still not received any assistance. Aid agencies warned that millions still lacked food and water in some of the most inaccessible parts of the delta.[17] On 25 July, a WFP spokesperson described the situation as "dire", and said that the vast majority of families simply didn't have enough to eat.[18]

Reconstruction

As part of its cyclone survivor resettlement plan, the SPDC awarded 18 private companies contracts for building 4,000 permanent houses in Bogale, Phyapon, Dedaye, and Labutta Townships, Irrawaddy Division.[19] The SPDC told survivors that they would have to pay 1.5 million kyat (about US $1,265) for the houses.[20] Most people have only received a plastic sheet to use for shelter.[21]

Confiscations and forced donations continue

SPDC officials and soldiers have also continued to profit from humanitarian aid donations at the village level.[22] In Dedaye Township, Irrawaddy Division, and Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, local authorities reportedly demanded contributions and held donation ceremonies but donated items were never delivered to survivors.[23]

Health of survivors

The WHO said that cyclone survivors are now suffering from malaria, measles, dengue fever, and acute jaundice.[24] Medical staff in Rangoon report that dengue fever has broken out in the city. Children are particularly affected by the outbreak. A nurse at a private clinic in Rangoon's Yankin Township complained that public storm drains are still clogged by cyclone debris.[25]

Child survivors

According to the SPDC, all schools in the Irrawaddy delta have resumed classes.[26] However, many students are attending school in temporary buildings. Fifty-seven percent of schools do not have toilets.[27] Monasteries in the Irrawaddy delta opened their doors to orphaned children but monks reported children as young as 10 had remained in their communities to work or had moved into cities to find work.[28]

Farmers

[15] Irrawaddy (02 Jul 08) 7,000 Laputta refugees told to return home
[16] AP (18 Jul 08) UN to end Myanmar aid flights on Aug. 10; AP (18 Jul 08) Groups worried about end to Myanmar relief flights; AP (18 Jul 08) Aid groups: Ending Myanmar flights 'will hurt'; CNA (24 Jul 08) Myanmar victims still struggling as emergency aid winds down
[17] AP (18 Jul 08) Aid groups: Ending Myanmar flights 'will hurt'; CNA (24 Jul 08) Myanmar victims still struggling as emergency aid winds down
[18] Mizzima News (25 Jul 08) Food top priority for Burma's cyclone victims
[19] Bernama (09 Jul 08) Myanmar Plans Resettlement For 7,000 Cyclone Victims
[20] Irrawaddy (16 Jul 08) Nargis refugees offered low-cost housing
[21] AFP (07 Jul 08) Myanmar PM promises better homes for cyclone victims
[22] Narinjara News (01 Jul 08) Relief Rice Piles Up in Min Bya
[23] DVB (15 Jul 08) Donated fishing equipment taken back from villagers; Narinjara News (07 Jul 08) Local Authorities Borrow Rice and Medicine to Show as Cyclone Relief
[24] WHO (24 Jul 08) Myanmar: Health cluster situation report no. 37; UN office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs (21 Jul 08) OCHA Situation Report No. 41
[25] AP (13 Jul 08) Experts say Myanmar survivors now deal with mental trauma
[26] Xinhua (04 Jul 08) All schools in Myanmar cyclone-hard-hit delta region reopened
[27] Tripartite Core Group (Jul 08) Post-Nargis Joint Assessment
[28] Irrawaddy (08 Jul 08) Cyclone orphans take low-paid work to survive

According to both farmers and the FAO, July was the last opportunity for farmers to plant paddy for the next harvest. According to villagers, at least 70% of farmland in the Irrawaddy delta remained uncultivated as a result of cyclone damage, lack of paddy seed, draught animals, or farm supplies and equipment.[29]

- The international community donated tillers but SPDC-imposed bribes and bureaucratic hurdles meant that most farmers never received them. Those that did receive tillers complained that there was no fuel or that they could not afford to purchase fuel on the black market. Farmers complained that tillers broke down almost immediately.[30]
- Other farmers received paddy seeds but said that the amount was insufficient because much of the seed had been diverted by bribes to SPDC officials before it reached them.[31] Farmers in Bogale Township reported paying SPDC officials 1,000 kyat per basket of rice seeds that failed to sprout.[32]
- Even in areas where farmers managed to plant their paddy, fertilizer shortages are projected to decrease yield by as much as 40%.[33]
- Some farmers abandoned their farms to search for other work or were unable to work because of cyclone related trauma.[34]

INSIDE BURMA

Martyrs' Day

On 19 July, about 300 NLD members gathered in front of the party headquarters in Rangoon to commemorate Martyrs' Day. Foreign diplomats and journalists attended the event. The NLD reiterated its call for the immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners.[35] In Magwe and Mandalay Divisions, the NLD held activities to mark the anniversary despite SPDC authorities' warning not to hold any commemoration.[36]

At the monasteries

Ahead of Buddhist lent and the return to monastic studies, reports emerged that the SPDC had ordered Rangoon monasteries to send monks back to their hometowns.[37] Monks believed that the measures were intended to reduce the number of monks in Rangoon before 8 August.[38] Additionally, it was reported that some abbots in Rangoon and Pegu did not accept students who participated in the Saffron Revolution.[39]

Monks in Tenasserim, Magwe, and Mandalay Divisions reported that they continued their boycott against SPDC members and their families despite pressure and scrutiny from authorities.[40]

Bombs

- **1 July**: A small bomb exploded near the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) office in the Northern Rangoon suburb of Shwepyithar. No casualties were reported.[41] The underground group Vigorous Burmese Student Warriors (VBSW) claimed responsibility for the bomb blast.[42]

[29] Irrawaddy (04 Jul 08) Delta Farmers' Woes Continue
[30] Mizzima News (01 Jul 08) Farmers find it difficult to procure fuel and seeds; DVB (01 Jul 08) Daydaye farmers lack means for rice cultivation; DVB (11 Jul 08) Villagers' woes continue in Bogalay
[31] Mizzima News (01 Jul 08) Farmers find it difficult to procure fuel and seeds; DVB (01 Jul 08) Daydaye farmers lack means for rice cultivation; DVB (11 Jul 08) Villagers' woes continue in Bogalay
[32] Mizzima Mews (19 Jul 08) Junta sells seeds which do not sprout to farmers in Irrawaddy
[33] Irrawaddy (28 Jul 08) Farmers Face Fertilizer Shortage
[34] Mizzima News (18 Jul 08) Rice plantation season nearing end, farmers at a loss
[35] AFP (19 Jul 08) Suu Kyi banned from Myanmar Martyrs' day gathering
[36] DVB (18 Jul 08) NLD warned not to celebrate Martyrs' Day
[37] Kaowao News (03 Jul 08) Monks forced home from Rangoon
[38] Kaowao News (03 Jul 08) Monks forced home from Rangoon
[39] IMNA (04 Jul 08) Monks return to Rangoon for Buddhist lent and further studies; IMNA (09 Jul 08) Ngwe Kyar Yan monastery continues
[40] DVB (16 Jul 08) Monks continue regime boycott; IMNA (28 Jul 080 Wiping tears of monks with more pass figures
[41] AP (01 Jul 08) Blast hits pro-junta office in Myanmar; AFP (01 Jul 08) Small bomb explodes near Myanmar's main city: police
[42] Mizzima News (02 Jul 08) 'Warriors' claim responsibility for Rangoon blast

- **14 July**: A bomb exploded on a bus near the town of Daik-U in Pegu Division, killing a 55-year-old man.[43]
- **30 July**: A bomb exploded near the SPDC Central Agriculture Research and Training in Mudon Township, Mon State. No casualties were reported.[44]

Food shortages in Chin and Arakan States

On 9 July, the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) released a report on the ongoing food crisis in Chin State. The report warned that people in 200 villages in Chin State were facing starvation. The report also said that more than 600 people fled to India in search of adequate food supplies.[45]

In Arakan State, flooding and landslides forced the closure of major roads that adversely affected trade and commerce. In Maungdaw Township, the price of rice, chili, and onions increased between 15 and 30%.[46]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Arrests and sentencing

- **1 July**: Police in Rangoon arrested Shwepyithar Township NLD executive member Khin Maung, apparently in connection with the bomb blast near the USDA office in Rangoon on the same day.[47] [See above *Bombs*]
- **15 July**: SPDC authorities arrested nine monks at Rangoon railway station and detained them at Insein prison.[48]
- **17 July**: Special Branch police and SPDC authorities in Rangoon arrested NLD members Thi Han, Htet Htet Oo Wai, Myint Htay, Thein Myint Htun, and Win Myint Maung. They were released on 20 July.[49]
- **18 July**: SPDC authorities in Rangoon arrested NLD members Aung Pe and Kyaw Zeya. They were released the next day.[50]
- **Late July**: A court in Rangoon's Kyauktada Township sentenced 10 students to two years' prison terms with hard labor. The students were arrested on 20 October 2007 for participating in anti-junta demonstrations.[51]

Detention conditions

- On 18 July, 46-year-old political prisoner Khin Maung Tint died of tuberculosis in Mandalay prison. Khin Maung Tint was the second political prisoner to die in prison in 2008 [See *March 2008 Burma Bulletin 2008*], and the 137th since 1988.[52]
- Veteran journalist and NLD member Win Tin continues to suffer from respiratory problems and severe asthma attacks.[53] On 4 July, 79-year-old Win Tin marked 19 years in jail.[54]
- On 5 July, labor activist and NLD member Su Su Nway was put in solitary confinement following an argument with Insein prison officials.[55] Su Su Nway suffers from heart problems and prison authorities refused her request for regular medical checkups.[56]

[43] Reuters (15 Jul 08) Man killed in bomb blast on Myanmar bus; AFP (15 Jul 08) One killed, one injured in Myanmar bus blast; Irrawaddy (14 Jul 08) Bomb explodes on bus in Pegu
[44] IMNA (31 Jul 08) Bomb explodes in Telecommunication Office in Mudon
[45] Chin Human Rights Organization (Jul 08) Critical point: Food scarcity and hunger in Burma's Chin State
[46] Kaladan News (15 Jul 08) Famine-like situation in Maungdaw; Narinjara News (07 Jul 08) Commodity prices on border increase after road block; Narinjara News (16 Jul 08) Life in Arakan Challenged by Rains
[47] Irrawaddy (04 Jul 08) A NLD Member Arrested after Tuesday Blast
[48] DVB (29 Jul 08) Nine monks arrested in Rangoon
[49] Mizzima News (18 Jul 08) Four NLD members arrested; DVB (21 Jul 08) Seven NLD members released after Martyrs' Day
[50] DVB (21 Jul 08) Seven NLD members released after Martyrs' Day
[51] Irrawaddy (25 Jul 08) Ten Students Sentenced to Hard Labor; Mizzima News (25 Jul 08) Junta sentences 10 student activists to labour camps
[52] DVB (21 Jul 08) Political prisoner dies in Mandalay prison
[53] AFP (01 Jul 08) Jailed Myanmar journalist in ailing health: media watchdogs
[54] DVB (07 Jul 08) U Win Tin marks 19 years in prison
[55] DVB (08 Jul 08) Su Su Nway held in isolation

- 88 Generation Student Myo Yan Naung Thein's health has deteriorated in Insein prison. Myo Yan Naung Thein can no longer walk and has been denied access to a specialist.[57]

Forced labor incidents continue

- **17 July:** It was reported that the SPDC was forcing cyclone survivors in temporary camps in Labutta, Bogale, Pyapon, and Dedaye Townships in Irrawaddy Division to perform work as porters, cut bamboo and trees, and clear roads. Some had also been forced to work on construction sites.[58]
- **Since 9 July:** The SPDC has forced over 500 prisoners from Buthidaung jail to do work on the rain-damaged Buthidaung-Maungdaw road in Arakan State.[59] On 10 July, SPDC Western Command Commander Maj Gen Thaung Aye, requested people in Maungdaw to "donate" their labor to help reconstruct the road. As a result, SPDC authorities in Maungdaw Township have been forcing at least 50 people from each Township ward and village near the road to do road reconstruction every day.[60]

DISPLACEMENT

New Rohingya camps in Bangladesh

On 2 July, Bangladeshi authorities began moving Rohingya living in makeshift camps to a new refugee camp in Nila Township. The new camp reportedly has better facilities and camp residences will be given to UNHCR recognized refugees along with a food ration book.[61] Despite opening the new camp, between 2 and 19 of July, four refugees died of starvation.[62]

Karen offensive

Renewed fighting between the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the regime-sponsored Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) resulted in more displacement in Eastern Burma.[63] In early July, 200 Karen villagers fled and took refuge at a local school in Tak Province, Thailand.[64] Later in the month, 300 Karen villagers fled to Thailand after DKBA and SPDC Army units invaded their villages.[65]

Safety in Thailand?

In July, Thailand again demonstrated the limits to the security it offers to refugees seeking shelter in Thailand. On 17 July, the Thai Army deported 35 Karen, mostly women and children, from refugee camps in Mae Hong Son Province to the Ei Tu Hta camp in Burma.[66] The refugees arrived in Thailand earlier in 2008 after fleeing from fighting between SPDC and Karen National Union troops.[67]

Refugees are not the only Burmese being deported from Thailand. In the first half of 2008, 298,847 Burmese nationals crossed from Myawaddy into Mae Sot, Thailand, and 86,517 have not returned. In the same period, Thai authorities deported 72,124 Burmese who entered Thailand without proper documents.[68]

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[56] Irrawaddy (08 Jul 08) Labor Activist Gets Solitary as Prison Conditions Worsen
[57] DVB (03 Jul 08) 88 Generation Student's health deteriorates; DVB (09 Jul 08) 88 generation student leaders still in poor health
[58] Irrawaddy (17 Jul 08) Charges of forced labor emerge in cyclone-hit areas
[59] Kaladan News (14 Jul 08) Prisoners forced to construct Maungdaw-Buthidaung Road
[60] Narinjara (11 Jul 08) Western Command Commander Asks for "Manpower Donation"
[61] Narinjara News (04 Jul 08) Burmese Refugees Moved to Better Camps in Bangladesh
[62] Kaladan News (20 Jul 08) Three more Rohingya refugees die of starvation in Lada camp
[63] Irrawaddy (28 Jul 08) Karen villagers flee Burmese forces
[64] Irrawaddy (01 Jul 08) Fighting between KNLA and DKBA Continues
[65] Irrawaddy (09 Jul 08) Thousands of Karenni IDPs hide in jungle
[66] HRW (18 Jul 08) Thailand: Stop Forced Returns of Karen Refugees to Burma
[67] Nation (Thailand) (17 Jul 08) Thai Army pushes back Karen refugees
[68] Bangkok Post (07 Jul 08) Third of Burmese fail to return home

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ASEAN "disappointed"

At the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Singapore, ASEAN Foreign Ministers broke with their longstanding custom of appeasing the SPDC by not referring to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi by name in any of their statements or communiqués. After a dinner meeting on 20 July, ASEAN FMs expressed "deep disappointment" over the SPDC's extension of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's detention and called for all political prisoners in Burma to be freed.[69]

SPDC ratifies ASEAN Charter but objects to HR body

On 21 July, the SPDC ratified the ASEAN Charter – which includes a provision for the creation of a human rights body. Following the ratification, ASEAN FMs issued a statement that urged the SPDC to take bolder steps towards a peaceful transition to democracy. The statement also reiterated the previous calls for the release of all political detainees, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, to pave the way for meaningful dialogue involving all parties concerned.[70]

In order to implement the Charter's provisions for a for a human rights body, a high-level panel began to draft the terms of reference for its composition, role, and powers. The terms of reference will be presented the ASEAN summit in December. During the panel's deliberations, it was reported that the SPDC does not want the body to have any investigative or enforcement powers. SPDC FM Nyan Win told his counterparts that the rights body should uphold ASEAN's principle of non-interference in each other's affairs.[71]

US Congress passes sanctions on Burma

On 15 July, the US House of Representatives unanimously passed the JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act.[72] On 22 July, the US Senate unanimously approved the bill. The legislation will block US companies from importing gemstones from Burma through "third party" countries and impose financial sanctions on the SPDC, SPDC-controlled companies, and companies controlled by junta cronies.[73]

On 24 July, the US Congress voted to renew the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act which was first enacted in 2003. The legislation bans all direct imports from Burma.[74] On 29 July, President Bush signed both the JADE Act and the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act.[75]

SPDC invites Gambari to visit in August – UNSC wants results

On 15 July, a UN spokesperson said that the SPDC had extended an invitation to UN Special Advisor on Burma Ibrahim Gambari to visit the country in mid-August. Gambari had originally planned to visit Burma in May but the SPDC postponed the trip because of cyclone Nargis.[76]

On 24 July, Gambari briefed the UN Security Council on the situation in Burma and his planned visit in August. Prior to the briefing UK Ambassador to the UN John Sawyers said that the situation in Burma had gone backwards over the last six months because the SPDC had not responded to the demands of the international community. After the closed-door session with Gambari, US Ambassador to the UN Zalmay Khalilzad said that the 15-member council expected "concrete results" from the UN Envoy's

[69] AFP (21 Jul 08) Border dispute, Myanmar, top ASEAN ministers' talks
[70] Bangkok Post (21 Jul 08) Another Burma promise
[71] Mizzima (22 Jul 08) Burma pulls down ASEAN
[72] Irrawaddy (16 Jul 08) Gambari to Visit Burma in August
[73] Irrawaddy (23 Jul 08) US Senate Bans on Import of Burmese Gems
[74] AFP (25 Jul 08) US Congress renews Myanmar import ban legislation
[75] AFP (30 Jul 08) Bush signs sanctions against Myanmar into law
[76] Mizzima News (16 Jul 08) Junta invites Gambari in August

visit.[77] Khalizad urged the SPDC to cooperate on a political road map with time-bound negotiations and to release political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, or face more pressure.[78]

ECONOMY

Foreign investment falls

Foreign investment in Burma in 2007-2008 fell 77%, according to the latest official statistics. Investment in energy was $172.72 million, compared to $752.7 million the previous year.[80]

Investment April 07 to March 08[79] (US$ million)	
India (oil and gas)	137
Thailand (oil and gas)	16.2
South Korea (fisheries)	12
Singapore (mining)	5
Germany (manufacturing)	2.5

SPDC fundraisers

In July, the SPDC continued its extortion activities and wholesale-auction of the countries' resources.

- The SPDC announced that they would open motorcycle registration from July to October in some areas after a ban of almost five years. Registration fees were quoted up to 500,000 kyat for registration, plus 20,000 kyat for "cyclone relief". Most believe the registration drive and "contribution" were simply an income drive by the SPDC.[81]
- In Rangoon, SPDC soldiers began selling wood from trees that fell during the cyclone to residents to use as firewood.[82]
- On 15 August, SPDC authorities in Maungdaw Township announced they would force farmers to sell their paddy to the SPDC at a price that is 15% below the market price.[83]
- On 28 July, China Non-Ferrous Metal Group Company Ltd and the state-run No. 3 Myanmar Mining Enterprise signed a production sharing contract to produce nickel in Mandalay Division.[84]
- The SPDC granted permission to 12 local and foreign IT companies to invest in the Yadanabon Cyber City, Mandalay Division.[85]

OTHER BURMA NEWS IN JULY

1	One DKBA soldier and two SPDC Army soldiers killed during a two-day offensive on the KNLA.
1	SPDC officials require over 100 villagers from N'Jang Dung village, Myitkyina Township, Kachin State, work at a physic nut plantation near the village.
1	UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-moon pledges to press the SPDC to bring "genuine freedom" to its people.
3	All Kachin Students Union members begin a poster campaign against castor oil tree plantations in Myitkyina, Kachin State.
3	Eleven ethnic Padaungs go missing from Huay Py Ke and Huay Suu Htauk villages, Mae Hong Song District, Northern Thailand.
3	SPDC Army soldiers beat three villagers from Kunhing, Southern Shan State, for denying they know the whereabouts of Shan State Army-South soldiers.
4	SPDC calls for more donations of fishing and farming equipment and building supplies.
5	SPDC Eastern Region Commander Maj Gen Ya Pyae tells representatives of the United Wa State Army and Shan State Army that all ceasefire and non-ceasefire groups must comply with the new constitution.
5	SPDC authorities in Mongyai, Northern Shan State, arrest a 30-year-old SPDC Army soldier from Infantry Battalion 67 for robbing the local Myanmar Economic Bank.
6	State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar says that the NLD 1990 election victory is "no longer legal"

[77] AFP (25 Jul 08) Cooperate with UN or face more pressure: US tells Myanmar
[78] Irrawaddy (25 Jul 08) US Wants Results in Burma; China Wants Patience
[79] AFP (25 Jul 08) Foreign Investment In Myanmar Falls 77% On Year – Government
[80] AFP (25 Jul 08) Foreign Investment In Myanmar Falls 77% On Year – Government
[81] Irrawaddy (03 Jul 08) Motorcycle licenses introduced in most of Burma; Kachin News Group (05 Jul 08) Junta set to earn thousands of million Kyat from motorcycle licenses; DVB (07 Jul 08) Motorcycle owners face travel and fuel restrictions; Khonumthung News (09 Jul 08) Sale of motorcycles go up in northwestern Burma; IMNA (15 Jul 08) Motorcyclists without license on the rise
[82] Irrawaddy (22 Jul 08) Charcoal Price Hike Leads to More Firewood Use
[83] Narinjara News (18 Jul 08) Junta to buy rice from farmers
[84] Xinhua (28 Jul 08) China, Myanmar sign nickel production sharing contract
[85] Irrawaddy (29 Jul 08) Junta approves investment in Cyber City

	and urges the party to prepare for new polls in 2010.
6	US President Bush renews his call for the SPDC to free Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest.
7	Bangladesh authorities arrest six Burmese nationals and seize two thousand amphetamine tablets.
8	G8 issues a statement that calls on the SPDC to immediately release all political detainees, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and to foster a transition to a legitimate, democratic, civilian government.
9	Red Cross increases its Burma aid appeal to US$72.5 million.
9	UK announces it will provide another US$35 million for cyclone survivors.
10	UN says that the SPDC has granted between 250 and 300 people access to the Irrawaddy delta for aid efforts.
10	UN Special Advisor on Burma Ibrahim Gambari meets with UNGA President Srgjan Kerim to discuss the current situation in Burma.
11	State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar editorial challenges "powerful countries" to assist cyclone survivors.
11	Unknown assailants beat and abduct a former KNU soldier in Mae Sot, Thailand.
11	SPDC authorities force Yin Yae villagers to build a fence around their village to guard against Mon armed ethnic resistance groups.
11	ILO blasts the SPDC's Supreme Court for denying an appeal by six activists who received lengthy jail sentences for attending a Labor Day event.
11	State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar accuses Western politicians of making political capital out of cyclone Nargis.
14	The trial of junta crony Maung Weik begins in a court in Rangoon's Insein prison.
14	Four Russian defense specialists begin an inspection of the SPDC's air defense and artillery outposts in Tenasserim Division.
15	State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar reports that during June SPDC authorities seized more than 119 kilograms of opium and heroin, 2.39 kilos of marijuana, and 16,082 amphetamine tablets.
15	Navy personnel from Kyunthaya naval outpost 533 force fisherman to perform repairs at Kyunthaya naval outpost, Maybon-Kyaukpru Townships, Arakan State.
18	Singapore FM George Yeo gives ASEAN a grade "C" for its handling of Burma following the cyclone Nargis disaster in May.
20	Singapore's Foreign Minister George Yeo says that the SPDC FM Nyan Win indicated that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi could be freed from house arrest in late 2008.
21	Singapore PM Lee Hsien Loong says that ASEAN intends to foster greater trust and cooperation between the international community and the SPDC.
22	Japan pledges an additional US$21 million in cyclone recovery assistance.
22	Singapore officials say that SPDC FM Nyan Win's remarks on the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in November 2008 were misunderstood and that she can legally remain in detention until late 2009.
22	Thai Justice Ministry says that the next of kin for the 34 Burmese migrant workers who died in the back of a truck will receive 35,000 baht in compensation.
22	UN humanitarian chief John Holmes starts a three-day visit to Burma to observe post-cyclone humanitarian assistance in the Irrawaddy delta.
22	Japanese FM Masahiko Komura meets with SPDC FM Nyan Win and urges the junta to move forward with democratization.
22	Australia reiterates its calls for the SPDC to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
23	The "Group of Friends" on Burma says that Gambari's return to Burma in August must obtain progress on issues of concern to the international community.
23	A 35-year-old villager from Htantabin Township, Pegu Division, is injured in a landmine explosion.
24	Seven Burmese migrant workers and four Thais die at sea in a Thai fishing boat.
24	SPDC Army soldiers in Paletwa Township, Chin State, severely torture three local farmers for alleged ties with the ethnic opposition group Arakan Liberation Party.
24	US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice describes the SPDC's plan for a gradual restoration of democratic government as a "mockery which is going nowhere".
24	SPDC court sentences four Border Trade Administration officials from the 105-mile customs checkpoint in Muse, Shan State, to nine-month prison terms for corruption.
25	UNICEF says that 700,000 children who survived cyclone Nargis need long-term aid.
25	American actress Mia Farrow says the world should use the Beijing Olympics as a platform to demand that China end its support for the SPDC.
29	SPDC Foreign Ministry conducts helicopter tour of the Irrawaddy delta for diplomats and journalists.
30	Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry official says that Australia and Burma will be allowed to join the South Asian Association of Regional Corporation as observers.

REPORTS ON BURMA RELEASED IN JULY

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"Exploitative governance under SPDC and DKBA authorities in Dooplaya District", Karen Human Rights group (KHRG)
http://www.khrg.org/khrg2008/khrg08f8.pdf

"Attacks, forced labour and restrictions in Toungoo District", Karen Human Rights group (KHRG)
http://www.khrg.org/khrg2008/khrg08f7.pdf

"Oppression: Burma Army Militarization and the Use of Proxies in Eastern Shan State Shan State, Burma", Free Burma Rangers (FBR)
http://www.freeburmarangers.org/Reports/2008/20080723.html

"**Insuring Repression: Exposing how the insurance industry supports Burma's dictators"**, Burma Campaign UK (BCUK)
http://www.burmacampaign.org.uk/insurance.php