

2 October 2007

HRC Special Session 5: Statement on Human Rights Situation in Myanmar

WILPF welcomes the Special Session on the human rights situation in Myanmar prompted by the military regime's brutal repression of peaceful protest.

WILPF firmly believes in the right of freedom of expression, of association and organization, and in the right of citizens to participate in the decision making that concerns their wellbeing and that of their community. These rights have been denied for too long by the military regime in Myanmar and women have suffered in terrible and specific ways.

We call on the regime to refrain from further use of violence against the non-violent protesters and instead to enter into dialogue with them and all political parties to bring about a just solution to the turmoil. We are convinced that political freedom for all and the release of Aung San Suu Kyi from detention would be important steps in this direction.

WILPF is gravely concerned by the use of force and direct violence on the part of Security Forces against non-violent opposition protesters. Furthermore, WILPF is concerned that communication by internet, landline and mobile phone, already restricted, has been further suppressed to the extent of a blackout.

WILPF calls for the re-establishment of the Special Procedure on Myanmar and the implementation of the Special Rapporteur's recommendations, who must be given access to the country. In a previous report to the General Assembly, the Special Rapporteur, noted that, "the culture of impunity remains the main obstacle to the efforts in view to safeguarding and securing respect for human rights in Myanmar and creating a favourable environment for their realization" (A/61/369, para. 27). He also noted that, "Grave human rights violations are committed by persons within the established structures of the State Peace and Development Council and are not only perpetrated with impunity but authorized by law" (A/HRC/4/14).

Impunity at the highest level, a lack of human security, access to food, healthcare and denial of fundamental human rights all impede Burma's development and undermine peace and security in South East Asia region as a whole.

WILPF welcomed the appointment of a Special Envoy to Myanmar by Secretary General Kofi Annan. WILPF welcomes the agreement by Than Shwe to meet with Mr. Gambari and urges him to use the Envoy's good offices to resolve the conflict peacefully. We call on neighbouring governments and all other States that enjoy close trading and diplomatic relations with the regime to take steps that will accelerate this process.

WILPF demands that UN humanitarian actors be given access to provide needed assistance to the estimated 500,000 internally displaced persons and any potential sanctions not affect the urgently needed assistance required by an impoverished population.

We request that Member States consider how a lack of condemnation and silence towards the military regime also serve as an obstacle to the realization of human rights for Burmese, including women's human rights as well as the rights of minority and indigenous groups.