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WOMEN GROUPS AROUND THE WORLD CALL ON THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL TO PROSECUTE SENIOR GENERAL THAN SHWE AT THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT: IT'S TIME FOR THE UNITED NATIONS TO TAKE STRONG ACTION ON BURMA

Letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Members of the UN Security Council

7 August 2009

Your Excellencies,

The international community has a firm obligation to take concrete measures in order to cease the systematic human rights violations carried out by the military regime in Burma, specifically to end the military's widespread and systematic use of sexual violence. We implore you to urgently establish a United Nations Security Council Commission of Inquiry to investigate war crimes and crimes against humanity in Burma. The military regime has demonstrated time and time again that they act with impunity and have established a flawed judicial system only serving the junta's interest. Opportunities for national reconciliation remain impossible as long as the military continues with their sham roadmap to democracy that will only further cement militarization, ethnic discrimination, and gender inequality. There will never be sustainable peace in Burma without justice for the crimes committed against civilians by the regime.

We stand with the women of Burma who continuously act with courage in the face of decades of long brutal oppression. On all levels the military regime works to obliterate any opposition and dominate all civilians – imprisoning over 2,100 political prisoners, using people for forced labor, conscripting children as soldiers, destroying over 3,300 villages, and utilizing the horrific tools of sexual violence, extrajudicial killings, and torture. Many UN bodies have repeatedly documented and reported these actions and have called for independent investigations of the crimes. The military regime continues to ignore these calls with impunity.

The most recent example of Burma's impaled judicial system is the trial of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma's national leader and Noble Peace Laureate, who is facing a trial both substantively and procedurally flawed. Since 14 May, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been put in the notorious Insein Prison to stand trial on unfair charges by the military authority. This act by the regime provoked widespread and global outrage. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is the world's only imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize recipient and a heroic leader in the face of growing oppression by Burma's military dictator Senior General Than Shwe.

UN Security Council Resolution 1820 affirms the urgent need to end impunity and protect civilians in conflict and post conflict situations. It also recognizes that continuing systematic acts of sexual violence targeting civilian populations will only further exacerbate peace and security, as the impact of sexual violence on women has consequences on communities and entire societies. Impunity for sexual violence committed during conflict perpetuates impunity and we call on the Security Council and the Secretary General to take firm measures to uphold this Resolution.

Well-documented reports of past violations, continued systematic repression, and an incapacitated judicial system stand as solid witness to the necessity of strong international intervention. We call for the UN Security Council to start with a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the horrific campaign of terror by the military regime and to refer Senior General Than Shwe and his cronies to the International Criminal Court for all crimes including for the imprisonment of Nobel Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in violation of international law.

The Statement is endorsed by;

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