# Resolution on Burma

2007/2591(RSP) - 21/06/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a joint resolution on Burma and demanded the immediate and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Sakharov Prize winner Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who has spent 11 of the last 17 years under house arrest. The resolution was adopted by 73 votes to 1 with 2 abstentions. MEPs condemned the SPDC's unremitting oppression of the Burmese people and its persistent persecution and imprisonment of pro-democracy activists. It drew particular attention to the case of U Win Tin, a 78-year old journalist detained as a political prisoner for almost two decades for writing a letter to the UN on the ill-treatment of political prisoners and the poor conditions in which they are held. It insisted on the immediate release of U Win Tin and all political prisoners – estimated to number over 1200.

Parliament pointed out that the SPDC continued to subject the people of Burma to appalling human rights abuses, such as forced labour, persecution of dissidents, conscription of child soldiers and forced relocation, and that 30% of Burma's population, an estimated 15 million people, were subsisting below the poverty line. It urged the legitimisation of the National Convention, through inclusion of the NLD and other political parties and groups, and also urged, ASEAN, China, India and the business world, to each play their part in improving the situation.

The resolution welcomes a statement by ASEAN leaders in which they encouraged Myanmar to make greater progress towards national reconciliation but regretted that the ASEAN has not yet opted for more robust measures against the military junta in Burma and also that the Burmese Foreign Minister, Nyan Win, was permitted to attend the eighth ASEM Foreign Ministers' meeting in Germany this year.

China and India are urged to use their considerable economic and political leverage with the Burmese regime in order to bring about substantial improvements in the country and, in any case, to cease the supply of weaponry and other strategic resources. Parliament regretted that China and Russia, supported by South Africa, vetoed a UN Security Council draft resolution on Burma on 12 January 2007.

Businesses which invest in Burma must ensure that their projects are carried out in a manner which respected genuine human rights and, if human rights abuses do occur, to suspend their activities in Burma. Parliament expressed disappointment that some countries had seen fit to increase substantially their investments in Burma, regardless of the dire human rights situation there.

The renewal of EU targeted sanctions was welcomed but it was recognised that they have failed to achieve the desired impact. MEPs therefore called on the Council to expand the scope of the sanctions and to enlarge the list of those targeted. Meanwhile, the Council must ensure that all Member States rigorously apply existing restrictive measures. Under the EU Common Position 2006/318/CFSP, support is limited to humanitarian aid and assistance for those most in need. MEPs insisted that all aid destined for Burma must be delivered through genuine NGOs and must reach the people for whom it is intended, with the least possible involvement of the SPDC. All possible efforts must be made to enhance contacts and to design programmes focusing on Burmese civil society, notably women's groups and ethnic minorities.