

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Myanmar: UN Security Council must act

Amnesty International yesterday wrote to all members of the United Nations Security Council, welcoming their unanimous decision to schedule a discussion of the human rights situation in Myanmar.

The organization urged that the Security Council place Myanmar on its agenda and demand that the government of Myanmar put an end to all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, and implement reforms towards improving the general human rights situation.

Amnesty International has long-standing concerns about the human rights crisis in Myanmar. Grave violations of international human rights and humanitarian law continue to be reported there and have led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, both within and outside the country. These include torture, extrajudicial executions, and forcible relocation, requirement to take part in unpaid forced labour and military portering, and the forcible recruitment of children to the military. There is widespread impunity enjoyed for these violations by state officials.

The Myanmar authorities have failed to act on recommendations aimed at rectifying this grave situation in successive resolutions passed by the United Nations General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights.

Amnesty International drew attention to its two reports of September and December 2005 that highlight the continued use of unpaid forced labour and misuse of the legal system to silence dissent. The organization expressed concern that the Myanmar authorities have stepped up the prosecution of individuals who have reported allegations of human rights violations, and have displayed an unwillingness to cooperate with the international community in protecting the fundamental rights of its population. This includes denying access to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar and to the United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy for Myanmar.

Background

The Security Council is mandated by the Charter of the United Nations with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Its decisions are binding on states. The Security Council may formally place a matter on its agenda either by a majority vote or by consensus among its members.

