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Statement on International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
25 November 2008

Burma's military Constitution condemns women to a continuing cycle of violence

The CEDAW Committee confirmed the systematic use of rape against the women of Burma, particularly ethnic women, by the Burma Army in their Concluding Observations to the review of the country report submitted by the Burmese military regime on the 3rd of November 2008.

The regime is continuing to refuse to solve Burma's problems by political means, and is using their army to oppress the people of Burma and retain their grip on power. This has caused systematic state violence against the women of Burma. The regime's treatment of women political activists, nuns, monks and other peaceful demonstrators, has been completely unjust, and the recent long prison sentences meted out to these innocent people are an outrageous parody of justice.

WLB denounces the Burmese military regime's refusal to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, ethnic national leaders, and all political prisoners, which is urgently needed as a first step for national reconciliation and the building of a peaceful and flourishing democratic system in Burma. The regime's recently approved constitutional provisions have not considered the representation of women within the state executive, legislative and judicial branches, and have failed to promote gender equality; women will thereby be condemned to a continued cycle of violence. Therefore, on this International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, we wish to state our strong opposition to the upcoming 2010 election of the military regime.

WLB would like to call on the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women to carry out an investigation into the state-sanctioned sexual violence against the women of Burma. Moreover, WLB will work cooperatively with international judicial bodies, legal organizations and other supporters around the world and the pro-democracy movement to refer General Than Shwe and other top leaders of the regime to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for the war crimes and crimes against humanity for which they are accountable, in order to bring justice for the women of Burma.

WLB also urges ASEAN governments to recognize that the Burmese military regime will continue its violations against the women of Burma as long as they continue with their policy of 'Non-interference' toward the regime. We would therefore like to request the ASEAN governments to review their policy towards the SPDC and to seriously listen to the requests of all the women of Burma in accordance with the ASEAN Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women in ASEAN regions.

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