

**DEMOCRACY FORCES WILL CHALLENGE
THE CREDENTIALS OF THE MILITARY JUNTA
AND OBJECT ITS RIGHT TO REPRESENT BURMA IN THE
2008 UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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The democratic movement of Burma will be challenging the credentials of the Burmese military junta at the 2008 United Nations General Assembly session and object to its right to represent Burma at the United Nations. Since the endeavor is aimed at prompting reforms in the country as well as protecting the people of Burma from the ruthless suppression of the junta, we call upon the nations of the world to cooperate with us and to extend their active support for the effort.

For decades, the people of Burma have been peacefully endeavoring for political reforms in the country but the successive military regimes been resorting to murder, intimidation, and oppression to overcome these endeavors and maintain their power through brute force. The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), formerly known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), is commonly recognized to be one of the most repressive and secretive governments in the world. The SPDC refused to honor the results of the last legitimate elections in 1990, when Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy won 80% of Parliamentary seats. Despite years of work by activists from both inside and outside Burma, efforts to foster a peaceful negotiated transition to a democratic civilian government have made little headway. To date, the junta's leadership has failed to honor any promises made with respect to democratic change and has instead increased measures to silence pro-democracy groups.

Over the last year, the international community has witnessed numerous demonstrations of the brutal and callous tactics the SPDC uses to maintain power, including the ruthless crackdown on peaceful monks and citizens calling for democratic reform in the Saffron Revolution; the disregard for human suffering in refusing international assistance following Cyclone Nargis; the illegal extension of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's confinement; and the fraudulent constitutional referendum conducted just days after Cyclone Nargis, even before the government assessed the damage from the storm. The injustice of these latest crimes is compounded when viewed in light of the junta's past atrocities, such as its violent repression of 1988 protests, its refusal to honor the 1990 elections, and its murder of NLD members in the 2003 Depayin massacre.

The most fundamental principle of democracy is that sovereignty rests with the people. Although the military junta has brutally oppressed the Burmese people and scoffed at the requests and demands of the international community, United Nations Member States have continued to extend the junta the privilege of illegally representing the people of Burma at the United Nations. Because the SPDC does not and cannot legitimately represent the state or people of Burma, it is now time to revoke its privilege of representing Burma to the United Nations.

The pro-democracy movement for Burma, united in coalition throughout the world, calls upon the Member States of the United Nations to stand up for the principles of democracy and human rights and reject the credentials of the SPDC's delegation to the United Nations during the upcoming session of the General Assembly.

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