

International Responses: What We Achieved Together

By Asia Pacific Peoples' Partnership on Burma (APPPB)

For decades the people of Burma have suffered from social and economic hardship as well as severe oppression of human rights by its brutal military regime. The last months' popular uprising, sparked by a steep hike in fuel prices, was an expression of long felt desperation and strong will for change among the Burmese people, but once more the military regime showed its unwillingness for democratic change by brutally killing and arresting the peaceful protesters.

Although the suffering of the people imposed by its regime is everything but new, this time it did not go unnoticed by the eyes of the world. Thanks to the brave monks, nuns, political activists, students and civilians who marched the streets all over Burma, as well as the dedicated work of exiled Burmese pro-democracy activists and solidarity groups around the world, international attention on Burma has been incredibly strong. These past months the international community, governments, civil society organizations and ordinary citizens in countries all over the globe have kept their focus on Burma, condemned the violent actions of the Burmese regime and showed their solidarity and support with the people's calls for democracy and peace.

Sadly enough, we have not yet seen much signs of cooperation by the Burmese regime. Although making efforts, the international community has not yet found the effective measures to pressure the junta into meaningful dialogue and democratic reform. While starting to take on some responsibility for pushing the Burmese regime, governments in the region have also failed to show their sincere will for change.

The purpose of APPPB providing this summary is to give readers an overview of the international responses to the recent crisis in Burma, to reflect on what we have achieved and to stimulate further analysis. It compiles the reactions we have seen from the international community, individual governments and civil society, starting with the early solidarity protests and statements in response to the initial marches and arrests of political activist, continuing with worldwide reactions to the large scale monk-led demonstrations and the following violent crackdown.

Early responses: solidarity protests and statements

Already the first silent marches in August initiated by the '88 Generation Students group and the arrests of its leaders that followed, **immediately sparked Burmese and Burma Solidarity groups all over the world to take action** in support of the brave protestors. Many organizations within the Burmese democracy movement instantly issued statements of their position on the SPDC's violent attacks on the demonstrators, called for the release of detainees, and started to push for action on international level. Throughout the last week of August, demonstrations were held outside the Burmese Embassies in many countries worldwide, including United States, United Kingdom, Thailand, Malaysia, and Korea.

Responses from western governments and the UN also came fairly quickly. On August 22, the U.S. department of State and UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office issued strong statements condemning the SPDC's repression of the protesters and calling for the immediate release of all detained activists and political prisoners. Within days similar statements were issued by Denmark, Czech Republic, Canada, France, Ireland, Sweden and Japan. The office of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon made its first announcement on August 23, somewhat vaguely stating that the UN viewed the events on the ground with concern and called for constructive dialogue towards national reconciliation.

Furthermore, the **Presidency of European Union** issued a declaration, dated August 28, on behalf of the EU condemning the SPDC's decision to detain people for exercising their basic right to peaceful demonstrations, urging the regime to immediately release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, detained opposition leaders and other political prisoners, and "to engage with all different components of the society of Burma/Myanmar in the sort of open and inclusive dialogue which is indispensable to long-awaited political reform".

However, as the EU failed to take concrete action in response to the Burmese regime's suppression of the peaceful protest, European Burma campaign groups announced August 31 as a **Day of Action for Burma, especially targeting the EU Presidency** to increase pressure on the military regime. On this day protests took place in at least 15 countries across Europe, including UK, France, Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Czech Republic, Ireland, Denmark, Austria, Poland, Slovakia, Norway, Italy, Netherlands, and Romania. The protesters called for EU Foreign Ministers, who were soon to meet in Portugal, to put Burma on the agenda and discuss strengthening of the EU Common Position.

Although still not much concrete action by the **international community** by late August and early September, more support for the protestors and condemnations of the arbitrary arrests were expressed through **statements** from Members of Parliament in Sweden, Japan and Australia, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus and U.S. Senators. Furthermore, U.S. President Bush described the Junta's action as "inexcusable tyrannical behavior" and First Lady Laura Bush asked UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to personally intervene. Similar statements condemning the SPDC's attempt to silence the demonstrations were issued by a **wide range of organizations** such as International Trade Union Confederation, Human Rights Watch, Burmese American Democratic Alliance, South African Communist Party, Australian Burma Council, Front Line, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Asian Human Rights Commission, Asia-Pacific Solidarity Coalition, Reporters without Borders, Amnesty International, and Freedom House. **Notable individuals and celebrities** such as Czech President Václav Havel, Hollywood actor Jim Carrey and a group of 28 Hollywood celebrities also joined the outcry by issuing letters and statements.

Several of the statements **urged for UN action** and these calls were strengthened by Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who on September 2 explicitly urged the UN Security Council and UN General Assembly to address the grave situation in Burma, gave his full support to the efforts of the UN Secretary-General's good offices mission and stressed that "it is time for the UN human rights bodies to give this alarming situation the attention it so patently deserves". Burma Campaign UK immediately welcomed these concrete calls by Prime Minister Brown as both Burmese and Burma solidarity groups had been urging for such actions since the violent crackdown on the protestors started. Several actors, ranging from Asian Human Rights Commission to high-ranking legislators in the U.S., now urged on immediate strategy meetings within the UN including an emergency session of the UN Security Council. On September 6, the European Parliament adopted a resolution which encourages a binding Security Council resolution on Burma.

The UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Burma, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, **defended the UN's lack of strong response** to the increasing violence against peaceful demonstrators by highlighting the importance of maintaining his ability to hold face-to-face dialogue with the generals. He called the junta's crackdown a "setback" for the country, saying it calls into question the SPDC's commitment to democratization, and emphasized that the UN is "moving very systematically to line up the support of the international community" to make sure key countries work together in encouraging progress. Previously, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Louise Arbour, as well as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Mr. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, had both called on the SPDC to immediately release the detained protestors and to engage in consultation and dialogue with the demonstrators. However, they both failed to commit the UN to any concrete action.

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In the fourth week after the protests began, we saw **some more initiatives from the UN**. The UN investigators on freedom of opinion and expression, the independence of judges and lawyers, and human rights in Burma, together released a statement calling on the authorities to immediately release the peaceful protestors who had been detained following demonstrations against the fuel price hike. High Commissioner for Human Rights Ms. Arbour also issued another statement saying “there will be no progress in Myanmar’s political transition unless people have space to express their views openly and peacefully”, and repeated her call for the Burmese government to release all political prisoners. Perhaps more importantly, on September 10 UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon announced that UN Special Envoy Mr. Gambari was to visit Burma in mid-October to pursue UN efforts to support democracy and human rights.

However, there were still no signs of advancement on a UN Security Council resolution on Burma, and most analysts identified China to be the main stumbling block. Pressure was building on the Chinese government to recognize their own interest in supporting Security Council involvement in Burma. At this point we had **not yet seen particularly strong responses from China and other government in the region**. The 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) had voiced concern over unrest in Burma, but not made any statement to condemn the arrest of peaceful protesters. Indonesian President had admitted that ASEAN’s diplomatic efforts to prod Burma to rapidly democratize have failed so far. He also joined in increasing pressure on China by saying China and India should do more to help convince the Burmese regime to improve its dismal human rights record. China’s reaction so far had been to express hopes for the regime to push for a democracy process “appropriate for the country”, restore internal stability and actively promote national reconciliation. China had also made clear it would welcome international efforts to help stabilize the situation in Burma, provided such efforts would be made with a “constructive attitude and on the basis of mutual respect”.

September 18 marked the 19th anniversary of the coup by the military regime following the nationwide democracy uprising in 1988, and this year it again became an historical date for Burma as thousands of Buddhist monks began an alms boycott against the ruling regime. At least 11 monk-led peaceful demonstrations were staged in different parts of the country. The same date was announced internationally as **Global Day of Action for Burma specifically targeting China’s passivity**. The U.S. Campaign for Burma had called on all Burmese and supporters of democracy and human rights in Burma throughout the world to organize demonstrations at Chinese embassies and consulates. The protests were a bid to pressure China into altering its stance and support for the military regime in Burma, and took place at least in Korea, Thailand, India, the U.S., New Zealand, United Kingdom, and the Philippines.

Although as of yet little action by the UN, as well as lack of clearly condemning statements from the governments in the region, the strong responses by the global civil society provided tremendous moral support for the people demonstrating inside the country. By the third week of September the people of Burma scaled up the protests to another level.

Increased attention and more action as monks start marching

As the monks took to the streets in the third week of September, soon followed by nuns, students and civilians, international attention on Burma increased remarkably. Reporting in mainstream media globally was extensive and the eyes of the world were watching as the military regime most brutally cracked down on the peaceful protests on September 26 and 27. Pictures of the beating and killing, even of holy men, chocked the world and condemning reactions became stronger, all the way from grassroots movements to the high-level political scene.

United Nations

As world leaders gathered in New York to attend the 62nd Session of the **UN General Assembly** just days after the crackdown, wrath was tangible. The Burma issue was raised during the General Assembly debate and during meetings on the sidelines. Several leaders, ranging from the U.S. President to the Thai Prime Minister, strongly condemned the action taken by the military junta. In a statement on October 5, the President of the General Assembly reiterated the Assembly's most recent resolution on the human rights situation in Burma, Resolution 61/232, calling on the Burmese regime to without further delay resume a dialogue with all political actors and permit all political and ethnic representatives to participate in the political transition process without restrictions. He also expressed his full support for the continuation of the good offices efforts of the UN Secretary General.

As a result of the violent crackdown, the UN Secretary General soon announced he would urgently send his **Special Envoy to Burma**, and the SPDC agreed for Mr. Gambari to enter the country on September 29. Mr. Gambari had meetings with representatives from the ruling junta including Acting Prime Minister Thein Sein, as well as opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. After four days of waiting and shuttling between Naypyidaw and Rangoon, he was finally allowed to meet top General Than Shwe for a talk on the current situation in the country. In his briefings to the UN Secretary General and the UN Security Council, Mr. Gambari made clear that the opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is keen to have dialogue with the regime's leaders and see the results that reflect on the will of the people of Burma. However, the UN Chief said Mr. Gambari's trip could not be considered successful, while Mr. Gambari seemed hopeful that his next visit to Burma in November would spur dialogue between the generals and the opposition.

Meanwhile, both UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Arbour and UN Special Rapporteur Mr. Pinheiro, spoke up strongly at an emergency session of the **Human Rights Council** on October 2, applauding the brave demonstrators, calling on the regime to give full account of those killed, injured and arrested, and explicitly urging for effective and concerted action by international actors, including the UNHRC. During the session the UN Human Rights Council also passed a resolution which called Burmese authorities to cooperate with Special Rapporteur Pinheiro in his quest to assess the current human rights situation, including an urgent visit to the country planned before the middle of November. Mr. Pinheiro claimed he would use the visit to try to inquire the situation of abuses during the recent crackdown on peaceful demonstrators, determine the numbers and whereabouts of those detained or killed, and collect testimony. He also stressed that unless the Burmese junta cooperates fully with him during his visit he will immediately leave the country. The Burmese authorities announced an invitation to Mr. Pinheiro, who began his country visit on November 11.

On September 26, as the junta had started its brutal crackdown, the UN **Security Council** held an emergency meeting, but could only agree to express "concern" over the violence and "strong support" for Mr. Gambari's urgent visit to the country. The following week the U.S., Britain and France circulated a draft statement on Burma for agreement in the Security Council. After rounds of negotiation, where China pressed for softer language, all 15 members of the Council finally approved a formal censure on October 11, reprimanding the junta for its suppression of peaceful protests, demanding the release of all political prisoners, and calling for genuine dialogue with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. This censure marked the first time that China agreed to UN criticism of the Burmese regime, although demands for the junta to account for the situation of the detainees as well as a call for transition to democracy, had to be dropped before Beijing could approve. In early November, the presidency of the Security Council described the situation in Burma as "a subject matter that is of interest" and noted it could be brought up during the Council's November meeting.

Before returning to Burma on November 3, UN **Special Envoy** Mr. Gambari went on a consultation tour in the region, visiting the capitals of Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, China and Japan. During his **second country visit** Mr. Gambari again met with detained pro-democracy leader Aung

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San Suu Kyi in Rangoon, after spending several days in Naypyidaw holding talks with government officials and other parties, representatives of opposition party NLD, the country's ethnic minority groups and representatives of the Red Cross, while refused a meeting with top General Than Shwe. After Mr. Gambari's briefing on his return to New York on November 12, UN Secretary General welcomed the willingness of both the Burmese regime and opposition to work with the UN and said "a process has been launched that will hopefully lead to a meaningful and substantive dialogue with concrete outcomes within an agreed timeframe". He also reiterated his statement that the return to the status quo that existed before the crisis is not sustainable, and encouraged the all relevant parties, including the SPDC, to redouble their efforts towards achieving national reconciliation, democracy and full respect for human rights.

In the wake of Mr. Gambari's visit, **Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was allowed to meet with NLD** spokesman and three senior members of the party for the first time in more than three years. On the same day she also had a second meeting with the junta's labour minister Aung Kyi, recently appointed by the SPDC to liaise with the opposition leader. According to NLD spokesman Nyan Win, she was optimistic after the meeting saying she believes it is time for the "healing process" to start. "Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said she believed the ruling authorities have the will for national reconciliation" and the discussion was "more optimistic and more workable" this time, Nyan Win announced after the meetings. Details from the discussions could not be disclosed, but Nyan Win said "We will continue to work with Major General Aung Kyi from now on".

The optimism expressed by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is a sign of hope, although we can not yet claim to have seen concrete results from Gambari's visits. The generals' rejection of three-way negotiations calling such procedure interference in the countries sovereign internal affairs, is a huge disappointment which once again calls into question the regime's will for change. The UN seem determined, however, that the **Special Envoy's third visit** to the country in the next few weeks will promote further steps in the process towards substantive dialogue and national reconciliation.

Governments in the region and ASEAN

As protests grew in the streets of Burma, **ASEAN** started using a sharper voice towards the Burmese regime, first urging the SPDC to avoid violence against demonstrators, while after the brutal crack-down demanding the junta to stop its violent force, even expressing "revulsion" at the killings. Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, currently ASEAN Chairman, have expressed deep concerns with the grave situation in Burma and several times assured that Singapore fully backs UN Special Envoy's mission to Burma, hoping Mr. Gambari will be given full access to all parties and cooperation from the regime in finding ways forward. These statements could be seen as signs of ASEAN taking its first long-awaited steps away from the policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of members, although little action have been taken to follow up on the verbal pressure. Strong statements have been made by Parliamentarians in the region through the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC), calling for international sanctions including a UN Security Council resolution on an arms embargo. Not surprisingly, however, the ASEAN countries have announced they will not impose sanction against Burma.

In the **Philippines**, the strongest critic of the Burmese regime was raised by the Senate which passed a resolution on September 27, calling for Burma's suspension from ASEAN and asking the UN Security Council to "take decisive action" to stop the violence. Furthermore, the Philippine delegation to the 117th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) General Assembly in Geneva successfully pushed through a resolution, unanimously adopted by the 500 legislators on October 11, strongly criticizing the Burmese regime's repression of peaceful demonstrations and asking the United Nations and the UN Security Council to "take appropriate measures to end the violence".

Japan reacted strongly to the junta's brutal crackdown, in which a Japanese journalist was shot dead point blank. The Japanese government urged the regime to respond to the international community's concerns over the brutal violence against protesters and started to consider sanctions to pressure the regime to make progress toward democratization. Still demanding an answer to the death of its national, Japan stopped its extensive overseas development aid to Burma.

Thailand have expressed grave concern over the Burmese government's use of violence against demonstrators and called on it to exercise the utmost restraint and resume efforts to end street protests through peaceful means. By mid-October Thailand also proposed that the United Nations to organize multiparty talks between the Burmese junta and its neighboring countries for discussions on resolving the nation's crisis.

Likely due to heavy pressure from the international community, even **China** began to adopt a somewhat critical tone on Burma, saying it hoped the Burmese government could "properly deal with its domestic social conflicts" and seek a peaceful solution. However, as the UN Security Council members urged China and India to use their influence over Burma to work for peaceful change, China kept insisting that the situation in Burma is no threat to peace and security, and was echoed by Malaysia. Not surprisingly, India, China and Russia jointly declared on October 24 that they oppose imposing sanctions on Burma and called for the encouraging of all stakeholders to advance political reforms and national reconciliation. In his meeting with the UN Special Envoy Mr. Gambari on October 25, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister said China will play a "constructive role" in trying to end the unrest in Burma and continue to support the UN in its efforts to find "a peaceful resolution".

Although showing more concern for the Burmese people than usually, many **responses from regional governments have sadly been dissatisfactory**. India has remained remarkably silent, claiming to be talking quietly to the Burmese regime. Only through a joint statement with Germany in late October has Indian authorities officially announced the opinion that political prisoners have to be released and negotiations with the UN initiated. In Singapore, despite the unusually harsh statements against the Burmese regime made by its Prime Minister, a half-dozen demonstrators were arrested outside the presidential palace when protesting against the nations extensive trade ties with the Burmese junta. Thailand, has expressed concern for effects on its business if the protests prolong and sanctions are imposed against Burma. Indonesia opposed the idea of economic sanctions, but at least issued a warning to the regime that it is posing risk to the ASEAN charter. In Jakarta, Indonesian Defense Minister said Aung San Suu Kyi's opposition movement was not a credible alternative to the junta, warning that a rush to democracy could create "another Iraq". Other ASEAN member states, such as Malaysia and Singapore, also raised worries that isolating and pushing the Burmese military regime too hard would result in civil war. This stand must be seen as a denial of the ongoing suffering of the Burmese people, mainly ethnic nationality groups, who for decades have been waged in war in the name of integration of federal Burma by the military regime.

Western governments and the EU

Western governments have continued to show support for the pro-democracy movement and put further pressure on the junta through different measures. On October 15, the **European Union** stepped up its force with tougher sanctions which ban imports of timber, gemstones and precious metals, while also announcing there will be economic incentives and economic support for the people of Burma if the regime creates a political process involving all the parties in the country. Consequently, further sanctions will be imposed if the regime refuses to engage in such process. Adding to the 'threats coupled with incentives' politics, UK and France have publicly announced their willingness to offer economic help to Burma, given signs of democratic change. In addition, the EU has expressed support for the UN Special Envoy and further UN engagement by the Security Council, as well as verbally put pressure on China, India and other governments in the region to take further action to push for

democratic change in their neighboring country. As a further measure, Italian politician Mr. Piero Fassino has been announced as EU Special Envoy for Burma. Mr. Fassino's mission will be to coordinate the EU's efforts to bring about positive change in Burma and work in close coordination with UN Special Envoy Mr. Gambari.

Immediately responding to the Burmese regime's brutal crackdown on protestors, the **United States** House of Representatives passed a resolution on September 26, calling for an end to the violence and the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. On September 27, President Bush first announced the U.S. would impose stronger sanction against Burma. These sanctions were tightened several times in October, freezing assets on its military leaders and business associates, and targeting the country's lucrative gemstone exports. Some effects were shown on October 24 when Air Bagan Ltd. announced it will suspend flights to Singapore as a result of the economic sanctions.

The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee has also been considering measures such as an arms embargo and the prosecution of the Burmese generals in an international criminal court, and will soon present a draft legislation. U.S. lawmakers are now deliberating on a bill that would outlaw import into the United States of gems and timber from Burma and further tighten the sanctions by enforcing a travel ban on top generals and associates. The White House have also at several occasions verbally put pressure on China, India and ASEAN to take action and voiced the possibility of bringing the issue to the UN Security Council in case the Junta would not cooperate with Special Envoy Gambari. After the junta rejected Mr. Gambari's suggestion of a three-way meeting, the U.S. government expressed deep disappointment and urged the international community to step up pressure on the generals for genuine national reconciliation. A decision on further actions from the U.S. is expected after Gambari's briefing in the UN.

For the first time **Australia** has decided to impose financial sanctions on SPDC generals and their families. According to the Australian Foreign Minister, the measures would hit 418 people, including junta leader Senior General Than Shwe. Given that two-way trade between the nations is limited, the measures appear to be aimed mainly at the generals' family members studying at Australian schools and universities. Mirroring the tough restrictions imposed by the U.S., these sanctions are a rare example of a government in Asia taking concrete action against the junta.

Although not yet taking such concrete measures against the military regime, the **Canadian government** has shown solidarity with the Burmese democracy movement by conferring honorary citizenship on opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. By the end of October Canadian Parliamentary Friends of Burma (PFOB) proposed a 10-point action plan to their Foreign Minister, suggesting multilateral action by the International Community, including an international arms embargo and targeted economic and investment sanctions against Burma.

Solidarity actions and campaigns world wide

Due to the brutal crackdown of the monk led demonstrations and the inability of the international community to take on effective action, we saw an **incredible increase in solidarity actions** around the globe. Burmese people living in exile continued to join hands and lend the moral support for their fellow citizens and courageous people who marched for freedom and justice, and they were now joined by tens of thousands of friends from a broad range of civil society groups, as well as concerned individuals from all walks of life. During the month that followed, an incredible number of civil society organizations and networks all over the world expressed their support through statements, press releases, letters to officials, manifestations, petitions, demonstrations and candle light vigils. Protests have been held in front of Burmese, Chinese, Indian and Russian embassies, consulates, the UN and other historical sites or gathering points, periodically even on a daily basis.

Statements in support of the marching monks and nuns in Burma were soon issued by several **Buddhist communities** around the world, including a message from his holiness the Dalai Lama expressing appreciation and admiration to his fellow monks for advocating democracy and freedom in Burma and praying for the success of the peaceful movement. Other prominent persons, such as Reverend Desmond Tutu and Nobel Laureate in Literature Nadine Gordimer, joined in expressing their deepest concern with the brutal oppression of the Burmese people, their strong support for the courageous protestors and urging for the UN to take action.

With time, the solidarity actions have become more organized and synchronized between different countries and groups. Burma campaign **websites and blogs**, developed by Burmese activists inside and outside the country as well as by Burma solidarity groups internationally, have played an important role in collecting information, spreading campaign messages and sharing pictures. Bloggers inside Burma have provided the Burmese community worldwide with pictures and news updates on an instant, while Burmese exiles and international solidarity groups have spread the message on to the rest of world. Together these blogs and sites provide a fantastic pool of information that help connect and mobilize concerned groups and individuals in different countries into a global Burma solidarity movement. Notably the Facebook group “Support the Monks’ Protest in Burma”, set up as an information sharing channel for Burma solidarity actions, gained more than 400,000 members in a months time. The **APPPB** also established its own blog (www.apppb.blogspot.com) with daily updates, highlights from the media, a collection of statements and other local, regional and global responses.

Solidarity protests worldwide likely peaked on October 6, which was announced as a **Global Day of Action** for Burma by campaign groups including Amnesty International UK, Burma Campaign South Africa, European Burma Network, ‘Support the Monks in Burma’ Facebook group, FIDH, ITUC and U.S. Campaign for Burma. Manifestations were held in nearly 100 cities in at least 26 countries from all continents of the world, in many cases with several thousands of participants. At this point the brutal crackdown and arrests of brave monks, activists and civilian protester had clearly outraged ordinary citizens all over the globe. To sustain international attention on Burma, despite the slowly decreasing media reporting, campaigners called for yet another day of action on the UN day, October 24, announced as Aung San Suu Kyi Day. Campaigners marked twelve years of Aung San Suu Kyi’s incarceration by protesting outside Chinese embassies around the world. In 12 cities, including London, Paris, Berlin, Brasilia, Bangkok, Washington DC and Toronto, protestors wore Aung San Suu Kyi masks and dressed in the white cloth of Burmese political prisoners, while in the evening time candle light vigils took place in many cities.

Meanwhile, several regional and international organizations joined cause and made **collective appeals and statements** in support of the Burmese people. Asian Human rights organizations urged for Asian governments to act, targeting in particular the Asian members of the Human Rights Council; international civil society organizations from 48 countries, gathered at the Nonviolent Peaceforce International Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya, issued a statement which affirmed its commitment to nonviolent civilian peacekeeping to deter violence; Democracy Coalition Project based in Washington, DC and Brussels put out an urgent action alert calling on the UN Human Rights Council to take stronger actions against human rights violations in Burma; a coalition of five Japanese Human Rights organizations released the concerted NGOs’ joint statement denouncing the violence by Burmese junta and calling Japanese government to take immediate action; the Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee, a coalition of 23 NGOs, appealed to the Cambodian government, the UN Security Council and particularly the ASEAN to take urgent action to stop the Burmese junta’s grave breach of human rights; Human Rights organizations in the Asia region, through Solidarity Actions for People Advocacy network, submitted a joint statement to Human Rights Council in Geneva; and six of the seven living female Nobel Peace Laureates together delivered a statement calling for the immediate release of their sister Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, urging for an arms embargo against Burma and for the UN

Security Council to pass a strong resolution demanding national reconciliation and an end to the violence.

At least 15 **online petitions** have been issued, targeting different actors such as the UN, China and EU, as well as Chevron, Total and Daewoo, companies which continue to do business in Burma. All of them have been signed by thousands of people, the most supported one so far being Avaaz's petition urging the UN and Chinese President Hu Jintao to oppose the violent crackdown on the demonstrators, and to support genuine reconciliation and democracy in Burma, with more than 800,000 signatures. Another petition called for the Norwegian Nobel Committee to nominate the Sangha (the monks) in Burma for the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.

Burma solidarity groups in the region have played a major role in increasing attention on the Burmese people's struggle in the neighboring countries. Groups such as Free Burma Coalition-Philippines, Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma, Indonesian Civil Society Coalition for Burma, Burma Campaign Korea, Peoples' Forum (Japan), and Women's Agenda for Change (Cambodia) have initiated demonstrations and other manifestations throughout September and October, gaining strong support from a broad range of civil society groups in the region.

Other campaigns gaining supporters worldwide include "Boycott the Olympics" aimed at pushing China into action; "Panties for Peace" campaign encouraging critics of the regime to bombard embassies with packages containing women's underwear to make the superstitious regime believe their power will be reduced; Burma Campaign UK's "Burma Dirty List" displaying all companies doing business in Burma; the general call to "wear red in solidarity with the brave monks" which started through a text message campaign while the monks were marching the streets and soon developed into a common practice at demonstrations worldwide; "Red band for Burma" encouraging people to wear a red wristband to show support for the people of Burma, and many more.

Words of appreciation and hope for continuous support!

Although attention on Burma in international media may be declining, continuous campaigns and new initiatives by Burmese and Burma solidarity groups around the world show lasting support for the people of Burma in their calls for freedom, democracy and peace. We would like to express our appreciation to all **solidarity groups and devoted individuals around the world** for your determined actions. We have been overwhelmed to witness your support and please know that it is deeply appreciated by the people of Burma both inside and outside the country.

We also want to highlight and thank all hardworking **Burmese activists on the Thai-Burma border**, in particular the FDB, AAPPB and NLD-LA. Without the strong devotion of individuals in these organizations, as well as their will to work together for change, the momentum created by brave protestors inside Burma would not have been kept nearly as much as it has. Burmese media such as the DVB, VOA, RFA, BBC Burma service, The Irrawaddy and Mizzima News have also done a fantastic job in providing the world with accurate information and keeping the Burma cause in the spotlight.

Our deepest appreciation and admiration to **the incredibly brave people in Burma** who marched the streets throughout August and September, putting their life at stake by calling for democracy, justice and peace in the country. Despite the unbelievably high price already paid by many, small scale protests are still held at different locations in Burma. However, with sharpened security and more than a thousand protesters detained, including leading democracy activists, it is now extremely difficult for the democratic forces inside the country to continue their defiance in the open. We, as actors on the outside, must take on responsibility for continuing their struggle and not let the situation in Burma return to status quo.

Finally, we want to show our sincere appreciation for the efforts made by **the international community** to support democratic change in Burma, and at the same time urge the UN, ASEAN, EU and all governments of the world to stay committed with the cause, to continue to find new ways to pressure the military regime in Burma and to never again turn their back on the suffering of the Burmese people. Let us together continue our work for democracy and peace in Burma and keep international attention on the crisis at this very critical moment in time.