



**H.Con.Res. 200 – Concurrent Resolution Condemning the Violent Suppression of Buddhist Monks and Other Peaceful Demonstrators in Burma and Calling For the Immediate and Unconditional Release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi**

**FLOOR SITUATION**

H.Con.Res. 200 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Peter King (R-NY) on August 2, 2007. The Committee on Foreign Affairs agreed to seek consideration under suspension of the rules for H.Con.Res. 200, as amended, by unanimous consent on September 26, 2007.

H.Con.Res. 200 is expected to be considered on the floor on October 2, 2007.

*\*Note: An amended text for H.Con.Res 200 was introduced on October 2, 2007 which expands the resolution to include provisions relating to events that have taken place in Burma since its introduction on August 2, 2007.*

**SUMMARY**

H.Con.Res. 200 resolves that Congress:

- Condemns the despicable crackdown on peaceful protesters in the strongest possible terms and demands that the Burmese junta end its violent crackdown on dissident;
- Demands that the People's Republic of China and other countries that provide political and economic support to Burma's military junta end such support until the Burmese regime's violent campaign against peaceful protest has ceased and the Burmese Government has fully met the political demands of the Burmese opposition;
- Firmly insists that Burma's military regime begin a meaningful tripartite political dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the National League for Democracy, and ethnic nationalities toward national reconciliation, and the full restoration of democracy, freedom of assembly, freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom of press, and internationally recognized human rights for all Burmese citizens;
- Demands the immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, detained Buddhist monks, and all other political prisoners and prisoners of conscience;

- Calls on governments around the world, including nations of the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to severely tighten their sanctions regimes against Burma, including through the imposition of import bans such as maintained by the United States, with the goal of denying the Burmese ruling junta with hard currency to continue its campaign of repression;
- Calls on the United Nations Security Council to immediately pass a resolution imposing multilateral sanctions on Burma's military regime, including a complete arms embargo, and to take other appropriate action to respond to the growing threat the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) poses in Burma;
- Calls on the United States Government to work with its global partners to bring to justice those Burmese military and government leaders who have ordered or participated in any massacre during or after the protests, or who may be guilty of crimes against humanity; and,
- Calls on the members of ASEAN to immediately suspend Burma's membership in such organization as a response to the violent crackdown on political protesters.

## **BACKGROUND**

On August 15, 2007 Burma's ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), cancelled fuel subsidies resulting in the quintupling of the price of fuel which had an immediate impact on the living conditions of the Burmese people and Burma's already devastated economy.

On August 19, 2007, student and democracy leaders peacefully took to the streets in Rangoon and elsewhere to protest the actions of the military junta in Rangoon. During subsequent weeks, protests continued in Rangoon and spread to other cities and towns throughout Burma, including Mandalay, Sittwe, Pakokku, Tounggok, and Yehangyaung.

The growing number of protesters peacefully demanded democratic reforms and the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience. Buddhist monks actively participated and increasingly led these peaceful demonstrations, culminating in an estimated 100,000 people marching through Rangoon on September 24, 2007. In response to this largest protest since the 1988 demonstrations, which were brutally crushed by the Burmese military by firing on unarmed civilians, the Burmese regime imposed a 60-day curfew (9pm – 5am) and a ban on gatherings of more than five people on September 25, 2007.

On September 26, 2007, the Burmese military opened fire on protesting crowds, which led to the deaths of over 10 people and injured hundreds more. To date, an untold number of individuals have been arrested, imprisoned, or tortured as part of this violent crackdown.

On September 30, 2007 a United Nations special envoy was able to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The Burmese regime has mobilized armed soldiers to stop the protests and

has stationed them in strategic locations throughout the country, including in religious centers, making it impossible for peaceful protesters to gather. In recent years the Burmese military has destroyed more than 3,000 ethnic villages, displaced approximately 2 million Burmese people, more than 500,000 of which are internally displaced, and arrested approximately 1,300 individuals for expressing critical opinions of the government.

Burma's Recent History: In 1988, the Burmese military assumed control of Burma and established rule through a military junta called the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), and changed the name of the country to Myanmar. The United States still officially refers to the country as Burma and the State Department describes Burma as "an underdeveloped agrarian country ruled by an authoritarian military regime. The country's government suppresses all expression of opposition to its rule."

In May of 1990, multiparty elections were held in which the National League for Democracy (NLD) party won, although Burma's ruling military refused to allow the NLD's party's leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, to assume the office of Prime Minister and subsequently placed her under house arrest. For her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was released in July 1995, and was once again placed under house arrest in September 2000. Following a second release, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and several of her followers were attacked by a government-sponsored mob on May 6, 2002, and she was then imprisoned at Insein Prison in Yangon, Burma.

On May 16, 2007, more than 50 world leaders released a letter demanding the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, a demand repeated by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 14 United Nations human rights experts, the European Union, the United States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the foreign ministers of three ASEAN member states. However, her detention was extended on May 27, 2007.

On September 30, 2006, the United Nations Security Council officially included Burma on its agenda for the first time. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) denounced the ruling military regime of Burma on June 22, 2007, citing the use of detainees as porters for the armed forces and the systematic abuse and murder of both detainees and civilians. The ICRC stated that civilians, especially those residing near the Thai-Burma border, have been subjected to abuse such as destruction of their food supply and forced unpaid manual labor.

#### **STAFF CONTACT**

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