



Media Note
Office of the Spokesman
Washington, DC
January 24, 2008

Democracy and Human Rights in Burma

The following is a joint statement by the U.S. Secretary of State and the foreign ministers of the United Kingdom and France issued at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Begin Text:

The Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum at Davos is a unique event. No other occasion brings together so many of the world's leaders from all fields. For over three decades now, these meetings have provided a global platform for collaboration and action to address international priorities of concern to us all.

One such priority is the urgent need for progress towards a transition to democracy and improved human rights in Burma. The fact that we have chosen to write about this issue, with so many competing priorities, should underline the strength of our governments' determination to support the people of Burma in their pursuit of a peaceful, prosperous and democratic future. We have repeatedly made clear that the situation in Burma cannot continue, and that we remain committed to helping the people of Burma.

It is now more than four months since the world was horrified by the violent repression of peaceful demonstrations in Burma. The dramatic pictures seen around the world of the brutality directed against peaceful protestors, including monks and nuns, were truly shocking. We cannot afford to forget. We must convince the Burmese regime to meet the demands of the international community and respect the basic rights of Burma's people.

The UN Security Council in October spelled out its expectations and reiterated those expectations on January 17. First, the early release of all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi, and the creation of conditions for a genuine dialogue between the Government and the opposition. Second, full co-operation and constructive engagement with the UN. Third, the need for the regime to address the economic, humanitarian and human rights concerns of the Burmese people. Several months on, however, we find the regime has met none of these demands.

The regime claims to be moving ahead with its roadmap to civilian rule. However the process, already 14 years old, is open-ended, and many key political actors, not least Aung San Suu Kyi, are excluded. There can be little doubt that only genuine and inclusive dialogue can deliver national reconciliation and stability for Burma and its neighbours.

We call on all those attending the World Economic Forum to demonstrate that, while the regime may be indifferent to the suffering of the Burmese people, the world is not.

We ask you to support the return to Burma by UN Special Adviser Gambari as soon as possible, and to urge the regime to cooperate fully with him and the UN. We call on the regime to act on the recommendations of UN Human Rights Envoy Pinheiro; to release all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi; and to launch a substantive, time-bound dialogue with democratic leaders and ethnic minority representatives, as called for in Aung San Suu Kyi's statement of November 8.

A unified call for genuine and peaceful political reconciliation and reform will be heard in Burma. We would not live up to our values if we ignored Burma's plight.

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