



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
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Statement by the President on Burma

The people of Burma have long awaited the opportunity to live in a true democracy. The referendum vote scheduled for May 10, 2008 could have been that opportunity. However, Than Shwe and his regime are ensuring that the referendum vote will be on a dangerously flawed constitution, and will not be free, fair, or credible. They continue to ignore calls from the Burmese people and the international community for a genuine process that could result in a legitimate constitution reflecting the will of the people, and they continue to carry out a campaign to intimidate voters, and to arrest those who dare speak out against the flaws of the referendum and draft constitution.

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The regime has not acted on any of the measures called for by the United Nations Security Council and does not cooperate with Special Advisor Ibrahim Gambari. We have called for the early release of all political prisoners; implementation of measures to address the political, economic, humanitarian, and human rights issues that are of concern; and the creation of necessary conditions for a genuine dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all concerned parties and ethnic groups in order to achieve an inclusive national reconciliation. Furthermore, the regime has refused offers from Mr. Gambari to provide technical assistance or international monitors for the pending referendum.

Laura and I are committed to work for the people of Burma and help in their struggle to free themselves from the regime's tyranny. I have signed a new Executive Order that will block all property and interests in property of designated individuals and entities determined to be owned or controlled by, directly or indirectly, the Government of Burma or an official or officials of the Government of Burma. This Executive Order expands existing authorities that allow the United States Government to target those who are responsible for supporting, empowering, and enriching the Burmese regime - a regime that exploits and oppresses the people of Burma.

The United States will continue to pressure Burma's rulers until they respond to the legitimate calls of the Burmese people for a genuine dialogue leading to a democratic transition.

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