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Burma

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

Tabled by ***Frithjof Schmidt, Raül Romeva i Rueda***

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

The European Parliament,

 having regard to its previous resolutions on Burma

 having regard to Council Conclusions on Burma/Myanmar of 29 April 2008 and Council Common Position renewing restrictive measures against Burma,

- having regard to the report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana, of 3 September 2008

 having regard to Rule 115(5) of the Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas Aung San Suu Kyi's latest term of house arrest was illegally extended in May 2008 for another year and she has spent more than 13 years of the past 19 years confined to her home;

B. whereas at the beginning of October an official appeal against the latest extension of her house arrest was formally handed to the military government;

C. whereas international sources estimate that the number of political prisoners in Burma has nearly doubled in the past year to over 2100, despite the high profile dissident releases on 23 September 2008;

D. whereas last week a number of closed trials of 37 political activists and dissidents began including several leaders of the 1988 student uprising who have already spent almost 20 years in prison;

E. whereas the constitutional process promoted by the Burmese regime seeks to perpetuate and legitimise its continuing human rights abuses and to ensure impunity for past and future violations;

F. whereas, since the September 2007 brutal crackdown on anti-government protesters, repressions in Burma have escalated and the military junta has failed to deliver on promises made to the international community in the aftermath of the Saffron revolution;

G. whereas for the last 2.5 years the Myanmar army has been waging a military offensive against ethnic Karen populations that involved widespread and systematic violations of human rights and humanitarian

law which constitute crimes against humanity;

H. whereas the Burmese military government has paralysed access to free online media severely restricting access to independent sources of information and two cyber-dissidents are currently in prison for using their right to freedom of expression online;

1. Strongly appeals to the military government of Burma to immediately release all political prisoners and to put an end to the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi;

2. Denounces the arbitrary charges behind the arrests of many dissidents and the harsh conditions of detention of political prisoners including widespread use of torture and hard labour;

3. Urges the Burmese government to uphold its pledges made last year to the UN representatives to engage in a genuine dialogue with the opposition, to revoke the constitution adopted in a process lacking legitimacy and to create conditions for an inclusive participation of political parties in the electoral process;

4. Calls on the Council to maintain the EU targeted sanctions against the Burmese junta currently in place and calls on other democratic countries to undertake similar actions in order to prevent the junta from thriving at the expense of a suffering nation;

5. Strongly condemns the ethnic cleansing directed against the Karen minority including those seeking refuge in the neighbouring Thailand; calls in this respect on the international community to exert stronger pressure on the junta to stop military actions against civilians;

6. Fully supports the work of Ibrahim Gambari, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Burma andPiero Fassino, EU Special Envoy for Burma towards the democratisation of the country; deeply regrets that SPDC promises of an open dialogue with the opposition, a free and fair constitutional process, an inclusive electoral process and a roadmap to democracy have not been kept;

7. Calls on the Burmese government to progressively implement the four core human rights elements requested by the UN Special Rapporteur Tomás Ojea Quintana: freedom of expression, assembly and association; release of prisoners of conscience; transition to a multiparty democratic and civil government; an independent and impartial judiciary;

8. Calls on the French Presidency to use the opportunity of the upcoming ASEM summit in Beijing to raise concerns about ongoing human rights abuses in Burma and urge the military regime to immediately stop persecution of political dissidents, put an end to crimes against humanity in the eastern part of the country and to overhaul the current constitutional and electoral process as deprived of legitimacy;

8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States, the governments of the ASEAN nations, the National League for Democracy, the State Peace and Development Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

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