

To Burma's regional neighbours, including members of ASEAN:

- On the basis of the signed Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the ASEAN Region, to publicly raise their concerns with the SPDC and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls nationwide;
- To block SPDC from chairing ASEAN in 2006;
- To pressure the regime to immediately implement a nationwide ceasefire and begin tripartite dialogue;
- To suspend all trade and investment with Burma, and stop any form of loans to the regime, until there is genuine democratic reform;
- To give protection to people from Burma seeking refuge, particularly from sexual violence, by allowing them access to refugee camps and humanitarian aid and services;

To the international community:

- To call for the UN Security Council to place Burma on their agenda;
- To call for UN bodies to authorize comprehensive sanctions against the regime, including an arms embargo, until genuine democratic reform takes place in Burma;
- To demand that the SPDC military regime immediately implements a nationwide ceasefire, withdraws its troops stationed in the ethnic states, and begins tripartite dialogue;
- To urge all UN agencies and international NGOs operating in Burma to bear witness publicly to the atrocities committed by the SPDC and demand immediate democratic reform in Burma.

For further information please contact us at:

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Still Licensed to Rape



Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN)

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Still Licensed to Rape

In 2002, SWAN and the Shan Human Rights Foundation published a report "Licence to Rape" exposing the use of rape as a strategy of war in Shan State by the troops of the Burmese military regime. The report, detailing 173 cases involving rape of 625 women and girls, triggered an international outcry.

Yet, despite this publicity, and annual UNGA resolutions since 2002 raising the issue of military rape in Burma, there has been no improvement on the ground for women in Shan State.

The war is continuing, and political repression is worsening. The regime has continued to pour troops into Shan State, building more military bases, seizing local people's land, extorting funds, and conscripting forced labour. In February 2005, Shan political leaders who had been attempting to negotiate with the regime were arrested.

Despite the regime's persistent denials of the prevalence of military rape and its efforts to block flows of information, reports of sexual violence have continued to reach SWAN from inside Shan State, including areas where international agencies such as ICRC are operating.

During the past 3 years, since the publication of Licence to Rape, SWAN and other organizations have documented rape by the regime's troops of a further 188 women and girls in Shan State.

The rapes were committed by soldiers from 43 battalions, mostly in the central and southern areas where armed conflict is continuing. Of these women,

- 65% were gang-raped
- 58% were raped by ranking officers
- 26% were detained as sex slaves
- 18% were killed after rape, some brutally tortured
- at least 30% were under 18; the youngest was 8 years old

In no cases were the perpetrators prosecuted. **Complainants were threatened, punished and sometimes killed.**

"When Lung Zin-Ta and some relatives and fellow villagers went to look for Naang Kham the next morning, they saw her naked body lying dead with a fracture wound in her head. She had apparently been beaten to death after being raped and sexually tortured, and a dry cell battery was still stuck in her sex organ."

(SHRF monthly report, January 2005)

Clearly, these rapes are not individual acts of violence, but are being committed systematically by the military as a strategy to subjugate the peoples of Shan State.

These atrocities must stop. SWAN reiterates that only an end to military rule will protect women in Shan State from this systematic sexual violence.

SWAN therefore makes the following demands:

To Burma's military regime, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC):

- To immediately implement a nationwide ceasefire, and withdraw all Burma Army troops stationed in the ethnic states; and to immediately begin tripartite dialogue with the National League for Democracy and genuine representatives of the ethnic nationalities, to begin a meaningful process of political reform.