

**Ending Impunity, Forging Accountability:
Implementation of SC Resolution 1325 in Burma (Myanmar)**

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I would like to start with the country profile of Burma, from where we have fled.

Burma has been ruled since 1962 by a series of military regimes, one of the longest running and most brutal military dictatorships in the world. Two days ago, Burma’s democracy leader, Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, marked a total of 12 years under house arrest. Despite Burma's natural wealth, the regime's expansion of its army and excessive military expenditures, and the military stranglehold on the economy has reduced it to one of the world's Least Developed Countries.

Although there is no external threat, the regime has continued to build up its army and to expand its military presence throughout the country, particularly in ethnic areas. Over the past decade, the regime has more than doubled the size of the army to nearly half a million soldiers, and set up more battalions. Today, there are a total of over 500 battalions in Burma. The regime spends under 1% of GDP on the health and education sectors combined, while spending over 40% of the national budget on its army.

More troops mean more human rights violations throughout the country. The regime's troops have been committing systematic and widespread human rights violations including forced labor, forced relocation, torture, rape, various forms of sexual violence, arbitrary arrest, looting, forced portering and summary execution. They have been using rape as a strategy of war on women and girls particularly in the ethnic areas.

Women in armed conflict areas suffer from all kinds of human rights violations that lead to poverty, hunger, lack of education, sickness, homelessness, and both physical and mental depression.

Since 2002, women’s organizations from Burma have documented hundreds, if not thousands, of cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence being committed by government soldiers during military operations in ethnic minority areas.

Still, these cases only represent the tip of the iceberg. Such abuses are very shameful in Burma and it took a long time before women and girls were able to speak out about what has happened to them.

Our reports show that sexual and gender-based violence are happening across the country – in Shan, Karen, Mon, Chin and other ethnic areas – and under very similar circumstances. Several of the rapes were actually committed inside military camps, and with the full knowledge of military personnel as well as the local communities living near the bases.

These reports give clear evidence that rapes are routinely committed by the military officers, and these officers also sanction rapes committed by their soldiers. There have been a large number of

gang rapes. There is no way a senior SPDC commander could not know about the crime of rape. Their failure to prevent this crime and punish those responsible points to their own culpability. These facts provide overwhelming evidence that rape has become an acceptable crime within the ranks of the army and that it is sanctioned by the SPDC.

In this context, please let me tell you the story of Nang Kham, a 25 year old Shan ethnic girl from Burma and her father.

One morning, Nang Kham went out alone to gather firewood in the forest near the base of a military unit. She didn't return home that day.

Her father Lung Zin-Ta became worried and asked around if anyone had seen his daughter. The farmers who lived in the neighbourhood told him that while they were returning from their farm, they saw somebody being taken away by some soldiers. Because of the distance, they could not make out who the person was.

The next morning, Nang Kham's father, some relatives and fellow villagers went to look for her. In the area the farmers had mentioned, they found 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 sexual organ.

Her father was very sad and angry, so with the assistance of community leaders, he filed a complaint with the authorities. However, they repeatedly denied having knowledge of the incident.

He was not satisfied and did not give up. He later managed to lodge a complaint with the regime's Military Intelligence. At the same time, he was going around and telling people that his daughter had been raped and killed by the soldiers.

One night, the soldiers took him away. The next morning, he was found dead, under a bridge west of Kun-Hing town with his feet dangling in the water.

As long as the regime is in power and without a political solution to the issues of Burma's ethnic people, sexual violence and other abuses in the ethnic states will continue and women's lives will be at risk. We believe one of the main root causes of the problem is the growing militarization in Burma. If the regime is still in power the human rights situation will not improve. So let us work together to bring an end military rule in Burma.