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NGO calls on Asean not to recognize Burma

 Wednesday, 21 September 2011 11:54 **Mizzima News**


Chiang Mai ([Mizzima](#)) – The Global Justice Center has called on the Asean heads of state not to recognize Burma and block the country from taking the Asean chair in 2014.

In a letter sent on Monday from Janet Benshoof, president of the New York-based center, the NGO urged Asean states to uphold the law of nations and treat Burma's new constitution, which removes from the president and all branches of "civilian" government any sovereign power over the military, as "null and void."

Benshoof said in her letter that "Asean states are under a legal imperative not to recognize Myanmar/Burma's constitution or elections as they violate the UN and Asean Charters and to take immediate action to stop the military's ongoing war crimes including genocide and military rape of ethnic women used as a weapon of war."

Burma has submitted a request to chair the Association of South-East Asian Nations (Asean) in 2014.

The NGO, as experts on law, said this was "a bold act by criminals to use Asean as a shield for its criminal enterprise including pursuing unfettered nuclear ambitions and rule by crime with impunity. Burma's latest ploy must be denounced by Asean for what it is, a threat to the region and the world and one for which Burma will be held to legal consequences."

Asean said it will weigh the opinion of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi as it considers whether to invite Burma to chair the regional grouping in 2014, Indonesia's foreign minister told the *Associated Press*.

Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa also said Indonesia's own transformation from its authoritarian regime to democracy in a decade could offer lessons to Burma, one of the world's most sanctioned nations because of its poor human rights record, according to *AP*.

"I shall be keen to listen and to hear the voice of civil society, not least the voice of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi... whether this can have a multiplier effect, a pull effect in speeding up the pace of change," Natalegawa told *AP*.

It is unclear when Asean will make its decision, but it could come when its leaders hold their annual summit in November, according to the report.

[Mizzima](#) reported in July that the Burmese government has made plans to form committees, prepare buildings and other contingencies to assume the chair.

The committee chairman is Foreign Affairs Minister Wunna Maung Lwin, and his committee comprises about 20 members including Union deputy ministers.

At the 18th Asean Regional Forum in July in Bali, Dr. R.M. Marty M. Natalegawa, the Indonesian minister for foreign affairs told journalists that Asean is still waiting and observing political changes in Burma and a meeting of Asean foreign ministers would decide the question at a later date.

The Burmese government has reportedly informed the Office of the secretary-general of Asean in

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Jakarta that it is ready to take its turn to chair the 2014 Asean Summit, but the final decision is still being awaited.

In May, at the 18th Asean Summit, Laos supported Burma’s application to chair the summit, but there was international opposition to the application with many parties citing Burma’s political prisoners and human rights violations.

Burma’s turn to chair Asean came up in 2006, but it passed over the opportunity because of controversy surrounding the junta-led government and its human rights record. In fact, the 2014 Asean presidency should go to Laos, but it has agreed to swap places with Burma for the chairmanship. Officially, the Asean chair goes to an Asean country in accordance with the alphabetical order of the member countries. In 2012, Cambodia will chair Asean; in 2013, Brunei.

In addition to the application for Asean chair, the Burmese government has started building various stadiums in Naypyidaw to host the Southeast Asian Games in 2013.

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





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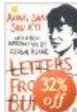
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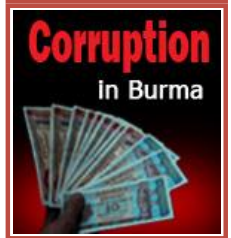
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