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Statement on The Burmese Military Regime's Brutal Crackdown on Peaceful Demonstrators in Burma 24 August 2007

WLB strongly condemns the SPDC for their violent attacks and unlawful arrests of protestors peacefully demonstrating against the regime's steep increases in fuel costs which have driven up the prices of transportation and commodities. We demand that SPDC immediately stop these attacks using the USDA (Union Solidarity and Development Association) and special police, and immediately release all the 88 Generation students including and other peaceful protestors.

WLB particularly condemns SPDC for letting USDA members and special police carry out attacks and harassment with impunity. On August 22 and 23, they punched and beat women protestors leading peaceful demonstrations in different areas in Rangoon. We are outraged at the use of gender-based violence and verbal abuse as weapons against women leading the protests.

Women in Burma have a long history of active participation in the forefront of resistance movements during times of crisis, and again women are now taking a leading role to show their defiance against the regime's unlawful acts and injustice. WLB is deeply concerned that SPDC will use sexual violence as a weapon through its USDA and "special forces" in cracking down now on women political activists inside Burma.

WLB would like to call on the international community to closely monitor the situation in Burma and express your concerns publicly.

WLB admires and respects the tremendous courage and determination of the 88 Generation students, the members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and women political activists who are leading the non-violent demonstrations under this hostile and oppressive environment. These public expressions are lawful and constitute a basic democratic right. We fully support them and stand together with the people of Burma in their struggle to overcome these hardships.

WLB believes that the regime's claims to be building a "*discipline-flourishing democratic nation*" and their use of violence to silence the voices of the people by cracking down on peaceful protests are derailing the process of genuine peace and democracy in Burma. Moreover, ignoring people's voices and forcibly holding the "National Convention" will not provide any solution to the hardships people are facing today.

In light of this, WLB would like to urge India and China, Burma's neighbouring countries, to stop callously ignoring the abuses committed by the regime and join the international community's efforts to improve the political, social and human rights situation in Burma. In particular, we would like to appeal to China, which vetoed the UNSC resolution on Burma in January, to support UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's effort to back plans for a tripartite national reconciliation dialogue, which will bring genuine stability and sustainable, equitable development in Burma.

Women's League of Burma

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