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***** Defend the people of Burma *****
26 September 2007

Thousands of Buddhist monks, artists, and people in all walks of life are flooding the streets of Burma today. There is a nationwide general strike called by the All Burma Monk Alliance as they peacefully trooped to about twenty-six (26) cities and towns across the country. Knowing the way Burmese junta handles situation like this---there is a massacre waiting to happen.

More than 200 people have already been arrested and detained, with fear of being tortured and people from the media covering the events are facing left and right harassments including confiscation of cameras from the authorities.

This wave of protests inside Burma started August 23 in a quiet march of about 40 demonstrators led by members of the opposition National League for Democracy to denounce the draconian fuel price hike that is 500% arbitrary increase in diesel and gasoline prices.

The spark of protests inside Burma turned big and has now turned into something close to a people power revolt. This reminds the international community of the 1988 national uprising in Burma and the bloody memory of violence that was the reaction of the junta killing the people's aspirations for genuine democracy and social justice.

Again, the people of Burma are now in the period of a very crucial struggle. Very crucial because this recent struggle will change their lives. They are fighting for more than the oil price increase---they are fighting for their lives and their basic right to live in a democratic and peaceful society.

We, members of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) are one with the people of Burma in their quest for justice, peace and democracy. We urge the international community to be vigilant in these trying times in Burma.

We also like to echo support to the following demands of the people who are currently protesting even under heavy rains inside Burma:

- 1) For the government of Burma to address the basic needs of the people;
- 2) Release of all political prisoners including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi; and
- 3) For genuine national reconciliation to take place in Burma.

For the international community, but specifically the UN and the ASEAN, we believe that the time is ripe to directly engage the Burmese military regime and convince the ruling junta to initiate substantial and genuine reforms starting from genuine tri-partite dialogue where all parties will be included. This is the best time that ASEAN can prove that it is sincere in building a truly caring and sharing ASEAN community. The UN on the other hand, especially Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, should personally work on bringing back the issue of Burma on the formal agenda of the UN Security Council.

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The junta already announced that it will take action against the protesters. It is also alarming that people from the media are being prevented from covering the recent events. World leaders should now take immediate action to warn the Burmese regime from carrying out this plan of violent crackdowns on the peaceful protesters.

The people of Burma are tired not just of their daily economic struggles but more so, of the way the ruling military regime govern their country. There is no rule of law in Burma. What prevails instead is the law of the rulers who are unelected and unwanted by the people.

We challenge the regime to sit down in a dialogue and listen to the legitimate demands of the people of Burma. We strongly urge the military regime not to employ brute force in dealing with protesters.

The international community can no longer afford to see another massacre in Burma. The international community are watching and all democracy-loving states and peace advocates are closely monitoring the next move of the military regime. We urge the SPDC to choose dialogue as a resolution to resolve the crisis in Burma. Failure to do this will leave people of Burma and their supporters around the world no other option but to call for a REGIME CHANGE.

For further information, please see www.iidnet.org