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## BURMA - news round-up #49 29 October – 10 November 2008

### Inside Burma

**Burma & Bangladesh send troops & warships in Bay of Bengal gas dispute** - Bangladesh has deployed troops along its border with Burma and sent warships due to tensions between the two countries over a disputed stretch of water in the Bay of Bengal. Talks between the two countries have failed to resolve the dispute, which began six days ago when Burma instructed the Korean company Daewoo to begin drilling in a disputed mineral-rich area.

[Myanmar removes rig from disputed waters: Bangladesh](#) - AFP – 9 November 2008

[Bangladesh ups watch along Myanmar border](#) - AP – 9 November 2008

**Post Nargis recovery incomplete 6 months on according to aid groups** - Aid groups say once-lagging relief efforts after Cyclone Nargis have picked up pace but the task of rebuilding and recovery is far from finished. The U.N. said in a statement issued on behalf of the Tripartite Core Group that "there is a continued need for emergency relief, as well as support for early and long-term recovery efforts." Only 53.3 percent of the \$484 million in relief money sought by a U.N.-coordinated appeal has been raised. The official death toll is 84,537, with 53,836 others listed as missing. Some 2.4 million people were severely affected by the storm, with the total damage estimated as high as \$4 billion. A major pressing issue is how survivors will be able to support themselves. [AP](#) – 3 November 2008

[Farmers in cyclone-hit delta face bleak future](#) - Reuters – 5 November 2008

[Water Shortage Threatens Thousands in Delta](#) - Irrawaddy – 31 October 2008

[Six months after cyclone, Burmese junta tightens grip](#) - The Independent - 2 November 2008

[The way forward in Burma](#) – The Guardian – 1 November 2008

**Rice export ban lifted** – Burma's government has lifted a rice export ban it imposed after Cyclone Nargis devastated the country's main rice-growing areas in the Irrawaddy Delta and south of Yangon in May. Rice exports will resume with 60,000 tons being sold by private companies. In the 1950s, Burma was the world's top rice exporter, selling more than 1 million tons a year, but exports have dropped significantly since then. [IHT/AP](#) – 8 November 2008

**NLD lawyers representing student activists jailed** - Burma's High Court has sentenced two lawyers from Aung San Suu Kyi's pro-democracy NLD party to four months each in prison for contempt of court. The US State Department has condemned Burma for charging lawyers who defend student activists. [AFP](#) – 8 November 2008

### **Of interest:**

[What's the NLD Strategy for 2010 Election?](#) - Irrawaddy -29 October 2008

[New Myanmar constitution published in English](#) - AP/ Chicago Sun Times – 1 November 2008

[Burma's pro-democracy movement in crisis](#) - Mizzima - 6 November 2008

**Restrictions on independent media continue** – Reporters Without Borders and the Burma Media Association have obtained a copy of a directive which the military government's censorship office recently sent to the Burmese media spelling out 10 rules for editors and the sanctions they will incur for not respecting them. "The directive is a paragon of news control inasmuch as editors are threatened with punishments ranging up to imprisonment if they do not follow the rules for prior censorship." In addition, a young blogger has been sentenced to more than 20 years in prison due to posting a cartoon depicting junta leader Snr-Gen Than Shwe on his blog site. [Reporters Without Borders](#) – 4 November 2008 & [Irrawaddy](#) – 10 November 2008

**Internally displaced persons increase along Thai-Burma border** - The Committee for the Internally Displaced Karen People (CIDKP), a group helping displaced persons along the Thai-Burmese border, has said more than 500 Karen villagers were forced to flee their homes as a result of fresh clashes between rebel groups and Burmese Army soldiers. [Mizzima](#) - 6 November 2008

**Doctor visits Aung San Suu Kyi** - A doctor visited Aung San Suu Kyi two months after her refusal of food supplies sparked concerns that she was malnourished. There was no information about the nature of the visit, but a spokesman said she was given a clean bill of health after the doctor's last visit in October. [AFP](#) – 6 November 2008

### Outside Burma

**US Burma Policy under Obama** - Barack Obama has indicated that he is also for change in Burma, having issued strong statements both during the Saffron Revolution and after Cyclone Nargis. In addition, Vice President-elect Joe Biden has been a longtime supporter of Burma's democracy movement. [Mizzima](#) - 5 November 2008

See also: [Myanmar's military leader congratulates Obama](#) - AP – 8 November 2008

**Burma, China consolidating military relations** - Signs are evident that Burma and China are stepping up military cooperation after Burma's top three generals met with high ranking officials of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA). Snr-Gen Than Shwe, who frequently snubs visiting UN envoys, reportedly offered a warm welcome to Gen Zhang Li, whose trip to Burma was a means of strengthening cooperation between the two armed forces according to sources. - [Irrawaddy](#) – 29 October 2008

See also: [China's footprint in Myanmar expands](#) - *Asia Times* – 1 November 2008

**CONTRIBUTOR: India's Burma Policy Built on Shifting Sands** - [Irrawaddy](#) - 3 November 2008

**Pope not averse to Burma visit** - His highness Pope Benedict XVI has told the Burmese Archbishop Charles Maung Bo that he is prepared to visit military-ruled Burma if he ever undertakes an Asian tour. - [Mizzima News](#) - 5 November 2008

### UN

**Burma resolution introduced in the UN** - Forty-three nations have voted to send a resolution highly critical of the Burmese government to the UN General Assembly for a vote, probably in December. The resolution, which will be debated in committee before it is taken up in the general assembly, urged the governing junta to ensure full respect for human rights and to take steps for the restoration of democracy through a free and fair elections, in addition to calling for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and the release of all political prisoners. - [Irrawaddy](#) – 10 November 2008

See also: [Junta Invites Gambari to Visit Burma Again](#) - [Irrawaddy](#) – 3 November 2008

**Burmese women's rights – Junta and women's groups before CEDAW committee** – The Burmese ambassador to the UN has told the Convention on Elimination of all kinds of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) committee in Geneva, that the government had done enough to protect the rights of women. However, a report by a group of Burmese women's groups, highlights that women in Burma continue to suffer severely and are hardest hit by military rule. [Mizzima](#) - 3 November 2008 & Report: [In the Shadow of the Junta - CEDAW Shadow Report by women of Burma](#) – 27 October 2008

#### **Recent additions to website:**

- Council Conclusions on Burma (General Affairs Council meeting - 10/11/08) – [EN](#) & [FR](#)
- Conference: Burma/Myanmar - Prospects for the Future (29/10/08, Brussels) – [Programme](#) & [Intervention by Harn Yawng hwe](#)
- [Burma/Myanmar Day: civil society and future prospects](#) - European Commission press release - IP/08/1596 - 29/10/2008
- [7th Asia-Europe People's Forum \(AEPF-7\)](#), (13-15 October 2008, Beijing) – [Programme](#) & Workshop report: [Democratization -- national policies and options for joint Asia -- Europe strategies](#)
- [Multi-Party Talks On Burma: Overseeing a transition from military rule – Speech by Harn Yawng hwe](#) at Between Isolation and Internationalization: the State of Burma, Swedish Institute of International Affairs, 8-9 May 2008, Stockholm

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