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## BURMA - news round-up #59 28 January - 2 February 2009

### Inside Burma

#### **Gambari Visit**

**Gambari arrives in Burma on seventh visit** - The United Nations special envoy to Burma Ibrahim Gambari arrived in the military ruled Southeast Asian country on Saturday for the seventh time to push for political reconciliation. [Mizzima](#) - 31 January 2009

**UN envoy meets Myanmar's Suu Kyi** - The United Nation's special envoy to Myanmar has met Aung San Suu Kyi, the country's detained opposition leader, on the third day of his visit to the Southeast Asian country. [Al Jazeera](#) - 2 February 2009

**Junta summons Aung San Suu Kyi's lawyer to Naypyitaw** - Detained pro-democracy icon Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's lawyer said he was summoned to the attorney-general's office in Burma's new jungle capital, Naypyitaw, for a discussion on his client's appeal against house arrest. [Mizzima](#) - 28 January 2009

#### **2010 elections**

**UN envoy should push junta for free and fair polls in 2010: KIO** - A senior leader of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) said, the United Nations (UN) envoy to Burma, Ibrahim Gambari should push the ruling junta to hold free and fair elections in 2010, during his visit to the country soon. [Kachin News Group](#) - 27 January 2009

**Shan leader Shwe Ohn to contest 2010 election** - Shan leader Shwe Ohn has said he will stand for election in 2010, despite his opposition to the State Peace and Development Council's national convention and 2008 constitution. [DVB](#) - 2 February 2009

**Karenni: Burmese junta prepares for 2010 election** - The Burmese military regime has started getting organized for the 2010 general elections in Karenni state, an ethnic state in Burma. [Kantarawaddy Times](#) - 30 January 2009

**Victorious Mon party from 1990 election supports NMSP refusal to compete in 2010** - The Mon National Democratic Front (MNDF) supports the New Mon State Party's (NMSP) recent announcement that it will not participate in the 2010 election, say sources in Burma and Thailand. Their reluctance to participate, however, raises questions about who will represent Mon people in Burma's soon-to-be-formed parliament. [Independent Mon News Agency](#) - 26 January 2009

**Junta speaks of possible split in NLD** - In a major development the minutes of a leaked secret meeting of Burma's Army Commanders said the leadership of the main opposition party – the National League for Democracy – is likely to split and that a faction is likely to emerge to contest the ensuing 2010 general elections. [Mizzima](#) - 29 January 2009

**First ever political journal to be published soon** - This 'Northern Star' journal will focus on political views, political issues at a time when the 2010 general elections are due. The editor-in-chief of this new journal will be army veteran and former government mouthpiece daily paper 'New Light of Myanmar' Vice Editor-in-Chief U Thiha Aung. [Mizzima](#) - 26 January 2009

**NLD holds lecture on Law Affairs in Rangoon** - The fortnightly lecture on Law Affairs was held this afternoon at the National League for Democracy (NLD) HQ in Rangoon. [Mizzima](#) - 27 January 2009

### ***Conflict in Border Areas***

**Tensions Between Wa, Junta Continue to Rise** - Tensions between the Burmese military and the United Wa State Army (UWSA) have been mounting since a 30-member Burmese delegation led by Lt-Gen Ye Myint, the chief of Military Affairs Security, was forced to disarm during a visit to Wa-held territory in Shan State on January 19, according to sources in the area. [Irrawaddy](#) - 28 January 2009

**Armed forces becoming more corrupt and inefficient: Regional Commander** - In the minutes of a leaked secret meeting, a leading military commander admitted that the Burmese armed forces are becoming more indisciplined and corrupt besides being inefficient. [Mizzima](#) - 29 January 2009

### ***Relations with neighboring countries***

**Watch out for Bangladesh and Thailand: Military commander** - Burma's military generals in a secret meeting warned commanders and officers to beware of Bangladesh in the wake of a maritime dispute between the two countries in November. [Mizzima](#) - 30 January 2009

**Construction of army airbase in progress in North Arakan** - An army airbase is being constructed by the military junta in Buthidaung Township in northern Arakan, near the Bangladesh border, aiming to strengthen the military check post on the western border, according to a reliable local source in the area. [Narinjara](#) - 27 January 2009

**Artillery Battalion Shifter to Northern Arakan from Burma Proper** - An artillery battalion was recently moved to northern Arakan from Burma proper to provide reinforcement of military forces on the western Burmese border, said a military source. [Narinjara](#) - 28 January 2009

### ***Nargis / Humanitarian Crisis***

**Danish Minister Visits Burma** - Danish Development Minister Ulla Toraes was in Burma last week—the highest ranking member of the European Union to visit military-ruled Burma in two decades. [Irrawaddy](#) - 28 January 2009

**Six million Burmese need food** - The United Nations has warned of acute food shortages in parts of Burma, despite a better than expected rice harvest over the past year. [BBC](#) - 28 January 2009

**3-D fund help NGOs in Myanmar fight diseases this year** - The Three-Diseases (3-D) Fund has provided nine non-governmental organizations in Myanmar with a total of 630,000 U.S. dollars to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria this year, the local Flower News reported Monday. [Xinhua](#) - 27 January 2009

**At least four years for full recovery from Nargis devastation: UN** - It will take at least four years for Cyclone Nargis affected people to recover despite the large sum of funds planned, according to the country head of the United Nation in Burma. [Mizzima](#) - 27 January 2008

**HIV/AIDS patients driven out from Rangoon** - HIV/AIDS patients being treated in Rangoon have alleged that the Health Department has restricted their stay in the former capital Rangoon. [Mizzima](#) - 29 January 2009

### ***Drugs***

**Burma's Drugs Trade Unaffected by Global Slowdown** - A series of recent raids in Rangoon has again thrown the spotlight on the narcotics trade and the roles played by high profile businessmen and members of the Burmese military regime. [Irrawaddy](#) - 2 February 2009

**Yaba from Burma Continues Entering Bangladesh** - Stimulant tablets, or yaba, from Burma are still being smuggled to Bangladesh through border points along the Naff River by drug traffickers in search of high profits, said an official report. [Narinjara](#) - 28 January 2009

## ***Trade / Business***

**EU experts to help improve Myanmar marine products export quality** - Experts of the European Union (EU) will examine Myanmar's marine products to help improve quality of export products for the European market, the local Yangon Times quoted the Myanmar Fisheries Products Producers and Exporters Association as reporting Thursday. [Xinhua](#) - 29 January 2009

**China slow down hits Burmese mining** - Like most other sectors that earn Burma hard currency, the mining sector is likely to crash given the slow down in China, which has dramatically brought down mineral and metal prices. [Mizzima](#) - 28 January 2009

## ***Human Rights***

**Monk U Arnanda dies in detention** - Monk U Arnanda, 61, of North Okkalapa township's Thitsa Tharaphu monastery has died in detention in Insein prison, according to a relative of another political prisoner. [DVB](#) - 30 January 2009

**Human Rights Watch Calls for Aid to Burma Refugees in India** - Human Rights Watch, is calling for India to provide access to the United Nations to assist up to 100,000 Burmese ethnic Chin who have fled persecution and poverty in Burma. Human Rights Watch accuses Burma's military government of wide-ranging rights abuses in Chin state. [VOA](#) - 28 January 2009

**CNF denies abusing rights documented by HRW** - The Chin National Army, the armed wing of ethnic the Chin rebel group – the Chin National Front - on Wednesday vehemently denied accusations of abusing the rights of Chin people, who are already vulnerable to Burmese military persecution. [Mizzima](#) - 28 January 2009

**Mandalay NLD members submit appeal to central court** - Lawyer Myint Thwin submitted an appeal to the central court yesterday on behalf of Mandalay National League for Democracy member Win Mya Mya and her five colleagues. [DVB](#) - 30 January 2009

**Student and lecturer arrested in campus raid** - A student and a university lecturer were arrested last Wednesday on Hlaing University campus in Rangoon by government officials who raided their dormitory and seized documents. [DVB](#) - 2 February 2009

## ***Burmese refugees***

**Ordeal at Sea Described by Rohingya Survivors** - The bearded farmer wept in his hospital bed as he recounted a harrowing six-month journey that brought him from the isolated country of Burma to this remote island in the Indian Ocean. [Irrawaddy](#) - 29 January 2009

**More Rohingya land in Thailand, allege Burma abuse** - More Rohingya migrants from Myanmar have arrived in Thailand but are being held by police rather than the army, which has towed hundreds of others far out to sea before abandoning them, police said on Tuesday. [Reuters](#) - 27 January 2009

**Rohingyas beg not to be sent back to Myanmar** - Sobbing in an Indonesian hospital, a Rohingya migrant from Myanmar said Thursday he faced certain death if forced home, piling more pressure on countries in the region to treat the Muslim minority as refugees. [International Herald Tribune](#) - 29 January 2009

**Thailand Detains More Muslim Migrants, Invites UN to Talks** - Thailand arrested 78 Muslim migrants in a fishing boat off its southern coast and took them into police custody as it seeks to quell allegations previous detainees died after they were pushed out to sea. [Bloomberg](#) - 27 January 2009

**Thai FM Meets with UNHCR to Discuss Rohingya** - A spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said that there were "positive indications" that Thailand would respond soon to a request for access to detained Rohingya boat people following a meeting on Thursday between the Thai foreign minister and a representative of the UN agency. [Irrawaddy](#) - 29 January 2009

**UN urges Thailand refugee inquiry** - The United Nations has urged Thailand to launch a full inquiry into claims their military mistreated hundreds of ethnic Rohingya migrants from Burma. [BBC World](#) - 29 January 2009

**Junta Promises to Address Rohingya Exodus** - Burma's No 2 leader, Vice Snr-Gen Maung Aye, has promised the Thai military supreme commander during an official visit to Burma that authorities will try to stem the flow of Rohingya refugees who try to reach neighboring countries illegally, according to the *Thai News Agency (TNA)*. [Irrawaddy](#) - 27 January 2009

**Burma rejects boat-people claims** - Burma says Rohingya migrants arriving in Thailand recently could not have come from its shores because they are not among its recognised ethnic groups. [BBC](#) - 30 January 2009

**Burma refuses to recognize Rohingya as citizens** - Burma on Friday, refused to recognize Rohingya - Muslim minorities, as citizens of the country and said they are not included in the multi-ethnic groups recorded by the state, the government mouthpiece, New Light of Myanmar Newspaper said. [Mizzima](#) - 29 January 2009

**Rohingyas face 'slow burning genocide': Activist** - At least a hundred Rohingya ethnics and supporters on Monday gathered in front of the Thai and Burmese embassies in London, to stage a protest demanding just treatment to fellow Rohingya boatpeople, who are allegedly being detained by Thai authorities. [Mizzima](#) - 26 January 2009

**Global Crisis Hits Burmese Overseas Workers** - The global financial crisis is affecting overseas employment agencies in Rangoon, with many agencies likely to close and thousands of Burmese workers' jobs in jeopardy, according to sources in the former capital. [Irrawaddy](#) - 27 January 2009

**Indonesia to Repatriate Burmese Migrant workers** - Indonesia says it will deport 193 Burmese minority Rohingya boat people because they are economic and not political migrants. The boat people are members of Burma's Muslim minority who claim they fled persecution in the mostly Buddhist country. [VOA](#) - 30 January 2009

**Flow of migrant workers to Thailand undaunted as Kingdom's economy flounders** - Dire economic circumstances continue to drive Burmese workers to seek employment in Thailand, in spite of the country's worsening economic situation and unusual numbers of unemployed workers leaving the Kingdom. [Independent Mon News Agency](#) - 30 January 2009

#### ***Of interest:***

**Is Burma's former Prime Minister Khin Nyunt to be freed soon?** - Rumours that Burma's military junta will soon free its detained officers above the rank of Colonel to involve them in the ensuing election, is making the rounds in military circles in Burma, a source in the military establishment said. [Mizzima](#) - 26 January 2009

**Int'l private college to provide scholarship to Myanmar students** - The TMC Educational Group, a Singapore-recognized international private college, will provide scholarship to Myanmar students to encourage them to pursue further study, according to the Asia Pacific Consultancy Ltd based in Yangon Sunday. [Xinhua](#) - 25 January 2009

**Posters of seven women human traffickers appear in Laiza** - Posters with the names and photographs of seven women wanted for human trafficking have appeared in Laiza in northern Burma on the China border. [Mizzima](#) - 31 January 2009

#### **Outside Burma**

##### ***Diplomacy***

**Government in exile urged to negotiate with opposition groups** - Burma's government in exile – the National Coalition Government of Union of Burma (NCGUB) – will need to prove its worth by encompassing all opposition forces and assume a leadership role in bringing about a breakthrough in Burma's politics, said a leader of Burmese opposition's largest alliance group – National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB). [Mizzima](#) - 26 January 2009

**Burmese Opposition Views Gambari Visit with Skepticism** - Burmese opposition politicians and commentators view with skepticism the news that UN Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari is to return to Burma at the end of this month. [Irrawaddy](#) - 27 January 2009

**Burmese opposition eyes U Lin Myaing's US visit** - Speculations abound that the visit of U Lin Myaing, who has a reputation of being flexible and diplomatic, has a lot to do with the Burmese efforts at lifting of the economic sanctions imposed by the US on Burma. However, others are of the opinion that he is on a personal tour. [Mizzima](#) - 27 January 2009

**Editorials, Op-Eds and interviews of interest:**

[Strategic Outlook of 2010 and the Role of Moderates in Burma Conflict](#) - Mizzima - 29 January 2009

[Situation in Burma critical, says exiled prime minister](#) - Irish Times - 27 January 2009

[Truth about delaying 2010 elections](#) - Mizzima - 2 February 2009

['Illegal Immigrants'? Who's Threatening Whom](#) - Irrawaddy - 29 January 2009

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