



EURO - BURMA OFFICE  
Square Gutenberg 11/2, Brussels, B-1000, Belgium  
Tel: +32 2 280 0691 Fax: +32 2 280 0310

## BURMA - news round-up #69 22 April – 6 May 2009

### Inside Burma

**Cyclone Nargis: Anniversary of Cyclone Nargis** – Emotional survivors gathered in Burma to remember the 138,000 people left dead or missing by Cyclone Nargis, despite authorities largely ignoring the storm's first anniversary. No official ceremonies were planned and state media made no mention of the deadly storm, which lay waste to large swathes of the country on May 2-3 last year and drew worldwide criticism for Burma's military rulers. Only the Burmese language daily newspaper *Myanma Ahlin* made any reference to the 2.4 million people affected by the cyclone, with photographs of the new houses authorities have built for some of the survivors. Cyclone Nargis hit Burma with wind speeds reaching 240 kilometres (150 miles) an hour and storm surges up to four metres high. Thousands of homes were swept away, rice fields were flooded with saltwater and schools and hospitals were ravaged in the storm. A year later aid agencies say half a million people remain without adequate homes, while at least 250,000 people will require food handouts until the end of 2009 at the earliest. [AFP](#) – 3 May 2009

[A year later, Myanmar remembers Cyclone Nargis](#) - AP – 2 May 2009

[Burma cyclone misery one year on](#) - BBC – 2 May 2009

[Hope among the ruins of Burma](#) - *TheStar.com* – 2 May 2009

[Video footage - one year after Cyclone Nargis](#) - *Mizzima* - 2 May 2009

[Cyclone trauma haunts survivors in Myanmar](#) - *Reuters* - 1 May 2009

[A Year After Storm, Subtle Changes in Myanmar](#) - *The New York Times* – 30 April 2009

[Myanmar's Cyclone Nargis, a year later](#) - *Associated Press* – 29 April 2009

**Cyclone Nargis: Survivors continue to struggle with trauma, lack of shelter, food & water, debt and pests, meanwhile Junta announces food surpluses** – A year after Cyclone Nargis, paddy fields remain bare and tens of thousands of survivors live in makeshift shelters. With rice yields down nearly a third due to soil salinity and heavy rains affecting the harvest in early April, many farmers will have to sell what rice they have at low prices to try to pay off some of their debts. Clean drinking water is scarce for most villages in the region, especially those close to the sea. Fishermen are also struggling, but they grumble more about local corruption than a lack of boats or nets. - [Reuters](#) – 30 April 2009

[Trauma and anxiety hampers cyclone recovery](#) - *Mizzima* - 4 May 2009

[No Land, No Home, No Hope](#) - *Irrawaddy* – 1 May 2009

[Learning the Hard Way](#) - *Irrawaddy* – 1 May 2009

[Burma's Own Potemkin Village](#) - *Irrawaddy* – 29 April 2009

[Cyclone Fears Still Stalk the Villages](#) - *Irrawaddy* – 28 April 2009

[Cyclone Survivors Still Suffering from Shortages](#) - *Irrawaddy* - 23 April 2009

**Food:** There are thousands of families in the cyclone-affected townships of Rangoon and Irrawaddy divisions who still have been unable to earn enough food for their families, even though one year has already passed since the category-four cyclone destroyed their livelihoods. The storm devastated the agricultural, fisheries and small-sale livestock sectors, which are the main livelihoods of the delta people, making most of the cyclone-affected people solely dependent on food aid for the past year. According to a survey conducted in February in the worst-hit Laputta and Bogalay townships by the United Nations World Food Program (WFP), 51 percent of households reported that they are still relying on food aid from humanitarian agencies, while only 25 percent said they could feed themselves. The [report](#), titled the Rapid Food Security Assessment (RFSA), also said about 83 percent of households said they have been in debt through the purchase of rice. - [Irrawaddy](#) – 5 May 2009

[Family Survives by Trapping Rodents](#) - *Irrawaddy* – 5 May 2009

[Fishing license affects lives of Nargis victims](#) - *Mizzima* - 30 April 2009

[Nargis Anniversary: Nargis Survivors Burdened by Debt](#) - *Irrawaddy* - 30 April 2009

[Small-scale Livestock Farmers Struggling in Delta](#) - *Irrawaddy* – 29 April 2009

[Cyclone hit farmers face new plague – pests](#) - *Mizzima* - 28 April 2009

**Water:** Lack of drinkable water also continues to pose a problem. After the cyclone, wells and ponds, traditional sources of fresh water, were contaminated by the inflow of seawater, and water containers, typically large ceramic jars or clay pots, were smashed in the devastation. Long lines of survivors, carrying whatever containers they had in order to get water, became a familiar sight immediately after recovery efforts began. In hindsight, the cyclone highlighted the delicate balance between man and water in the delta. The fertile soil, availability of water and ample supply of labor once made this area the rice bowl of the world. The waters of the delta

also supported rich fish and shrimp farms as well as natural salt farms. But over the years, human habitation gradually changed the topography of the delta and weakened the environment's ability to resist cyclone-induced strong waves and winds. This transformation accelerated over the past two decades, as mangrove forests were cleared for charcoal production and shrimp and fish farming. *Dhani* (nipa palm) trees were even more intensively felled to provide thatch for the roofs of traditional village homes. Today, survivors have been given new containers, filters have been distributed, ponds have been cleaned, but apparently seepage of saltwater into groundwater sources has increased and clearing is therefore of little avail. Digging of new wells may therefore not be an option. As a result, the Delta will most likely struggle with proper access to clean water for years to come. - [Irrawaddy](#) – 27 April 2009

**Shelter:** A plan by Burma's military government to build disaster shelters in the Irrawaddy delta has apparently made little progress as another cyclone season approaches, leaving many residents wondering why. Hundreds of shelters would be needed to offer minimum protection from another cyclone of the magnitude of Cyclone Nargis. However, the government plan calls for 20 shelters to be constructed. Local residents say a minimum of one shelter, which can hold about 500 people, should be built for each village tract, which usually has at least three villages. The government has apparently awarded contracts to numerous companies, but residents say only a few projects are starting while others appear to be in the early planning stages. - [Irrawaddy](#) – 3 May 2009

[Tarpaulins for Cyclone Nargis affected being sold by authorities](#) - *Kachin News Group* - 30 April 2009

**Surplus:** Meanwhile, the junta has claimed the country has almost tripled its rice production over the past two decades, boasting a food surplus despite the destruction of Cyclone Nargis and reports of famine conditions in Chin state, state newspapers have reported. Burma's current annual rice production has reached 1.6 billion baskets (with one basket equaling about 33 kilograms), Senior General Than Shwe announced, claiming that Burma 'had not only reached self-sufficiency but also a surplus in food.' Although apparently enjoying a food surplus, the government has done little to relieve the famine-like situation for the Chin, a minority group, a human rights group charged. Burma's military rulers have also been faulted for not supplying sufficient rice seed and fertilizer for replanting fields devastated by Nargis - [DPA / M&C](#) – 5 May 2009

[Did the cyclone change Burma's junta?](#) - *BBC News* – 4 May 2009

[Cyclone Nargis survivors face new battles under General Than Shwe](#) - *The Times* – 2 May 2009

**Cyclone Nargis: Junta Censors Nargis Anniversary Reports, 21 volunteers and journalists continue to languish in jail** – Burma's Press Scrutiny and Registration Division (PSRD) has severely restricted Rangoon weekly journals publishing reports marking the anniversary of Cyclone Nargis. According to several editors and reporters, the notoriously draconian censorship board did not allow reports to carry any criticism of the Nargis recovery effort by the military government, United Nations' organizations, International NGOs and local NGOs. In the weeks after the deadly cyclone struck Burma last year, 21 volunteer aid workers, including journalists, were arrested for assisting victims of the cyclone. More recently, two journalists—Myat Tun and Ko Khin Maung—of the exiled media group Narinjara Independent Arakan News Agency, were arrested in Arakan State, according to Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners-Burma (AAPP). At least 50 Burmese journalists currently languish in Burmese prisons, according to AAPP. - [Irrawaddy](#) – 4 May 2009

[Myanmar should release aid workers: rights groups](#) - *AFP* – 2 May 2009

[Burma tops list of worst places to be a blogger](#) - *CNN* – 4 May 2009

**Opinion: The lessons of Cyclone Nargis** - *By Brad Adams* - *Bangkok Post* – 3 May 2009

**Commentary: Crossing the Great Divide** - *By Aung Zaw* - *Irrawaddy* – 29 April 2009

**Commentary: When Good News Goes Bad** - *By Yeni* - *Irrawaddy* – 27 April 2009

**Cyclone Nargis: Global support for cyclone victims not sufficient: UN** – Nargis survivors say they received food and other assistance after the cyclone but that it stopped coming months ago and they desperately need more. Foreign governments and charities provided \$315 million for food aid and emergency assistance in the months after the storm. But aid agencies say hundreds of millions of dollars more are still needed to rebuild the delta's severely damaged infrastructure and help farmers rebuild their lives. - [AP](#) – 3 May 2009

Although the Burmese military government initially banned aid groups from entering, humanitarian assistance has been led by the UN for the past year. In February, the UN along with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Burmese government came up with a recovery plan called the Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP), which would be carried out for the next three years, and would require US\$ 691 million. Bishwo Parajuli, the UN resident and humanitarian coordinator in Burma, said securing those funds

would not be easy, as even during the emergency phase, only 66%, or US\$ 315 million of the UN appeal was raised, out of a total appeal of US\$ 477 million. According to him, out of the nearly US\$ 700 required funds, so far only about US\$ 100 million had been pledged by donor countries, warning that the lack of support by the international community could slow down the reconstruction work in Burma. Particularly important currently is the US\$ 16.6 million requested for seeds, fertilizers, animals and agricultural tools, to allow farmers to plant in time for the upcoming rainy season. Even as Parajuli praises the Burmese military government for its cooperation, saying "Humanitarian cooperation with the Government is still smooth," relief workers in the fields said, the junta's restrictions on aid flow as well as the ban on foreign journalists, had made the situation worse. A relief worker with an INGO working in the Irrawaddy Delta said that the momentum had been lost as there was no widespread media coverage to highlight the immense needs in recovery and reconstruction work. - [Mizzima](#) - 2 May 2009

**Cyclone Nargis: Aid for Cyclone Nargis only a fraction of aid for tsunami** – World aid for Burma's Cyclone Nargis has amounted to \$300 million, or 2.5 per cent of what was spent on the 2004 tsunami, according to aid agencies. 'The total tsunami support was \$12 billion while the response to Nargis, which was very similar to the tsunami, was \$300 million,' according to David Verboom, spokesman for the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office. The December 26, 2004, tsunami killed an estimated 220,000 people in 11 countries rimming the Indian Ocean and left 500,000 people homeless alone in Aceh, Indonesia, the area worst hit by the tidal wave triggered by an earthquake off the coast of northern Sumatra. Cyclone Nargis killed 140,000, mostly in the Irrawaddy Delta, where 500,000 people continued to live under tarpaulins one year after the storm hit. In the tsunami in Indonesia, we got in-kind donations double the number we actually asked for,' said Bernd Schell, Myanmar officer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. In Nargis, a family got two tarpaulins, but for the tsunami, victims got five to six tarpaulins because we had so many in stock,' said Schell, who worked for the federation in Aceh before moving to Burma. Indonesia and Thailand, two of the countries hardest hit by the 2004 tsunami, had good infrastructure, logistics, public utilities, dynamic economies and a lot of goodwill from the international community. Burma has none of these.

Some of the initial efforts to assist the Nargis victims, such as the US dispatching of its 7th Fleet to deliver relief aid, were rebuffed by Burma's ruling generals, who downplayed the seriousness of the disaster - the worst to hit Burma in decades. Much of the initial assistance to the devastated delta region, where 2.4 million people were left homeless and without food, was provided by the Burmese people themselves. A full-scale international relief effort did not get under way until two weeks after the cyclone hit as the junta eased up on issuing visas for aid workers and logistics were put in place to get assistance out to the countryside. A United Nations flash appeal for emergency aid announced shortly after the cyclone was 67% funded. Many donors balked at giving aid that might find its way into the hands of the military although aid agencies assured donors that all emergency aid would go directly to the victims. 'It is clear that the political environment was a hindrance for many donations,' Verboom said. The European Union, which provided €39 million (\$51.54 million) in aid for Nargis has proven to be the largest single donor to the disaster relief effort. The EU is also taking a lead in providing funds for the post-Nargis recovery. It has committed €33 million to a trust fund designed to help people in the Irrawaddy Delta develop their own livelihoods and income-generating activities in the aftermath of the cyclone. The target is to raise \$100 million for the fund in the next few months. - [DPA / M&C.com](#) – 30 April 2009

[U.N. calls for increased support to Myanmar cyclone survivors](#) - *Xinhua* – 30 April 2009

[US Praises Asean, UN for Facilitating Cyclone Nargis Aid](#) - *Irrawaddy* – 30 April 2009

[Nargis: A year on, Nargis victims still lack adequate support](#) - *Mizzima* - 29 April 2009

[Global Fund re-allows Burma to apply for aid](#) - *Mizzima* - 21 April 2009

**Opinion: Asking for more aid for coffer of generals** - by [Moe Myint](#) - *Mizzima* - 5 May 2009

[The big challenge - how to help the Burmese, not the junta](#) - *The Nation* - 4 May 2009

[Editorial: A Nation in Need](#) - *Irrawaddy* – 2 May 2009

[Contributor: Time for Humanitarian Dialogue?](#) - By [Htet Aung](#) - *Irrawaddy* – 1 May 2009

[Donor in the Delta – Interview with Andrew Kirkwood, Save the Children](#) - *Irrawaddy* – 29 April 2009

**Cyclone Nargis: Report on Burmese civil society response to Cyclone Nargis released to mark anniversary.** - Reports of the humanitarian response to Cyclone Nargis tend to emphasize the restrictions placed on Burmese civil society and international humanitarian actors by the Burmese authorities. This fails to recognise the widespread and concerted response of local civil society organisations and individuals to the disaster, and reflects a broadly held misconception of the operating space available to civil society organisations in the country. *Listening to Voices from Inside: Myanmar Civil Society's Response to Cyclone Nargis*, published by the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, documents the involvement of local

organisations and civil society leaders in the Cyclone response. Drawing on in-depth interviews undertaken in November 2008 with 15 local civil society organisations and individuals involved in the humanitarian response, the report identifies positive developments within civil society in Burma in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis. Space for civil society action increased in the aftermath of the Cyclone. Previous capacity building within the sector enabled co-operation between organisations in order to take advantage of this increased civic space. The report details how participation in the Cyclone response has further developed and integrated the sector through the formation of new networks, significant trust-building across ethnic and other divides, and greater contact with external funders and partners. Burmese civil society actors are concerned that this increased space may be closed down. As policy makers in Europe and North America re-consider their position on engagement with Burma this report outlines how donors and other external organisations can further strengthen and support Burmese civil society. - [CPCS Press Release - 3 May 2009](#)

**Report:** [Listening to Voices from Inside: Myanmar Civil Society's Response to Cyclone Nargis](#)

**Aung San Suu Kyi: Burmese junta rejects appeal for release** – Burma's junta has rejected an appeal to free Aung San Suu Kyi, whose most recent period of detention will expire May 27. The Nobel Peace Prize laureate has spent more than 13 of the last 19 years, including the past six, under house arrest in Rangoon despite international pressure for her release. National League for Democracy spokesman Nyan Win said the country's military authorities summoned the assistant to Suu Kyi's lawyer to the administrative capital of Naypyitaw last Friday (1/5) and handed over a letter rejecting the appeal for her release. Suu Kyi's lawyer, Kyi Win, in October last year filed an appeal with the military government against her detention based on nine reasons, including one asserting that "she was never a threat to the security of the state." - [AP/The Times of India - 5 May 2009](#)

[Junta rejects appeal for Aung San Suu Kyi's release](#) - *Mizzima* - 5 May 2009

**Foreign Minister Nyan Win calls for end to sanctions at meeting of Non-Aligned**

**Movement in Cuba** - Burmese Foreign Minister Nyan Win has called for an end to sanctions on developing countries at a meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in Havana, saying some industrialized countries were taking advantage of the global financial crisis to exert political pressure on third world nations by imposing sanctions on them. Burma's state-run newspaper *The New Light of Myanmar* reported on Nyan Win's speech, in which he also said that unilateral sanctions offended international law and were counter-productive to the promotion of democracy and human rights in targeted countries. He defined democracy as "a universal value based on the will of the people to determine their own future," and that "There is no single model of democracy." Nyan Win made a similar appeal for an end to sanctions in a speech last year before the UN General Assembly. During his stay in Havana, the foreign minister met Cuba's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marcos Rodriguez Costa, and the two exchanged views on strengthening bilateral relations and mutual cooperation. - [Irrawaddy](#) – 4 May 2009 – See [more info on EU & US sanctions below](#).

**2010 Elections: NLD willing to contest elections with pre-conditions** - Burma's main opposition party – the National League for Democracy (NLD) – has said it is willing to contest the forthcoming 2010 elections if the military regime releases political prisoners (including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and others), and makes proper amendments to its Constitution. The NLD voiced its stand in the "Shwegonedine Declaration" released on 29/4, at the conclusion of a two-day plenary meeting between party leaders in Rangoon. The NLD, which won a landslide victory in the last general elections in 1990, said so far they had not prepared for the ensuing elections, but would do so once the government responded to their request of reviewing the Constitution and amending the contents that were undemocratic. The party also called on Junta head Snr. Gen Than Shwe to embark on a dialogue with detained opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Burma's ruling military junta, as part of its seven-step roadmap, approved a new Constitution in a referendum in May 2008 and declared it would hold a general election in 2010. Nyan Win, the party spokesman, said the two-day meeting had been crucial as they were able to come up with a unified stand, adding it was the fifth such meeting that the NLD had been able to hold in the past 20 years. - [Mizzima](#) - 29 April 2009

**Statement:** [NLD Statement - Shwegondaing Declaration](#) – 29 April 2009

[NLD Holds First General Meeting in a Decade](#) - *Irrawaddy* – 28 April 2009

[Burma's opposition discusses 2010 poll](#) - *Mizzima* - 29 April 2009

[NLD meeting under surveillance by junta](#) - *Mizzima* - 27 April 2009

[Attack on NLD Leader Raises Questions](#) - *Irrawaddy* – 21 April 2009

[Junta arrests two opposition members for praying](#) - *Mizzima* - 21 April 2009

[KNU urges governments not to support junta's elections](#) - *Mizzima* - 27 April 2009

[Junta to form Village Councils with military supporters for 2010 elections](#) - *Narinjara News* - 27 April 2009

[USDA prepares list of possible election candidate](#) - Mizzima - 22 April 2009  
[SPDC backs USDA candidates for forthcoming general elections](#) - Khonumthung News - 21 April 2009  
**Opinion:** [Commentary: A Mature Response - By Yeni](#) - Irrawaddy – 4 May 2009  
[News Analysis: NLD in Dilemma - By Wai Moe](#) - Irrawaddy – 29 April 2009  
[Will NLD plenum provide a breakthrough? - by Ko Wild](#) - Mizzima - 24 April 2009  
[Where is UDP heading? \(Interview\)](#) - Mizzima - 5 May 2009  
[Regime Faces Crushing Defeat if Election is Free and Fair - By Kyaw Zwa Moe](#) - Irrawaddy – 24 April 2009  
[Commentary: Than Shwe's Empty Well - By Aung Zaw](#) - Irrawaddy – 22 April 2009

**Armed Ceasefire Groups to be 'Border Guard Force'** – The Burmese military plans to incorporate armed ethnic ceasefire troops into the Tatmadaw (armed forces) to provide security along the border after the 2010 general election. The plan would give greater control of the armed ceasefire groups to the Burmese military, according to observers. Armed ethnic ceasefire groups first heard details of the plan during meetings with Burmese military officers on April 28. Under the constitution, the military, dominated by the commander-in-chief, can assign duties relating to security and border affairs in self-administered zones (ceasefire areas). One-quarter of the administrators of self-administered zones (ceasefire areas) will be made up of military officers appointed by the commander-in-chief of the Tatmadaw. - [Irrawaddy](#) – 4 May 2009  
[Junta sets deadline for ceasefire groups to transform](#) - Mizzima - 6 May 2009  
[KIA told to change to border force by junta](#) - Kachin News Group - 4 May 2009  
[Junta meets leaders of ethnic ceasefire groups](#) - Mizzima - 29 April 2009  
[Junta Commanders Court Ceasefire Groups](#) - Irrawaddy – 29 April 2009  
[Kachin ceasefire group leaders to meet Burma's ruling junta](#) - Kachin News Group - 28 April 2009  
[Junta to Wa: Ceasefire days are over](#) - S.H.A.N. - 4 May 2009  
[Junta renews pressure on Wa, allies](#) - Shan Herald Agency for News - 28 April 2009  
[KNLA officer killed in battle](#) - Mizzima - 27 April 2009  
[Temporary ceasefire between KNU and DKBA](#) - Network Media Group - 21 April 2009  
**Opinion:** [Twenty Years on, the Wa-Burmese Cease-fire looks shakier - By Tom Kramer](#) - The Nation – 24 April 2009  
[Twin-Track Talks in Burma Raise Peace Hopes - By Russ Wellen](#) - Huffington Post – 22 April 2009

**Junta trying to "erase" ethnic nationalities - policies cause food, water shortages, & instability according to report** – A new report called “*Holding Our Ground*” decries that the Burma’s military junta’s dual policy of expanding militarization and land confiscation has been causing people to face widespread problems such as food and water shortages and instability. The report particularly focuses on three ethnic areas of Burma: Arakan State, Mon State and Pa-O region of southern Shan State, documented by three grassroots organizations: All Arakan Students and Youth Congress (AASYC), Mon Youth Progressive Organization (MYPO) and Pa-O Youth Organization (PYO). Most people from those areas are rural people who engage in many kinds of agriculture and farmers who live off their land. The report says the reason for land confiscation is the need to feed and financially support increasing troop numbers whose top generals have imposed a policy of self reliance where the Army must produce its own food and obtain basic materials, but also every unit has to raise funds by itself. The dual policy has also resulted in the forced relocation of an estimated 600,000 to 1 million internally displaced people (IDPs), many of whom have fled to neighboring countries such as Thailand, China, Malaysia and Bangladesh to seek a better life. - [Shan Herald Agency for News](#) - 21 April 2009  
The report also noted that the junta is carrying out a policy of “Burmanization” in areas under its control, using land confiscation and intermarriage, sometimes by force, to dilute ethnic identities. In some cases, the report claims, ethnic women are pressured to marry soldiers as a means of escaping destitution. Other measure including laws that ban teaching ethnic languages “in order to promote Burmese as the only language” are part of the junta’s ongoing efforts to dilute the culture of ethnic minorities and spread the influence of the majority Burman race. - [Irrawaddy](#) – 21 April 2009

**Report:** [Holding Our Ground: Land Confiscation in Arakan & Mon States, and Pa-O Area of Southern Shan State](#)  
[Locals Used as Army Porters on Western Border](#) - Narinjara News – 6 May 2009  
[Karen Refugee Testifies to Junta Crimes](#) - Irrawaddy – 24 April 2009  
[UNDP supplies relief for famine victims in Chin State](#) - Khonumthung News - 29 April 2009  
[PM's visit throws administration, locals into tizzy](#) - Shan Herald Agency for News - 4 May 2009  
[Poison found in refugee camp water supply](#) - Mizzima - 24 April 2009  
[Ground control: militarization and the theft of Burma's land](#) - DVB – 23 April 2009

[Photoessay: Thai-Burma border refugee children](#) - European Commission Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) / AlertNet - 21 Apr 2009

**Swine Flu: ASEAN gears up to combat outbreak of Swine Flu, no Burmese cases -**  
ASEAN is on high alert due to the outbreak of Swine Influenza, even as it has confirmed its stock of antivirals, ready for distribution among its member states. The Association of Southeast Asian Nation Secretariats Office released a statement saying the office and member States were now intensifying surveillance, coordinating and collaborating in the sharing of pertinent information, raising public awareness and taking necessary precautionary public health measures for the outbreak, which currently the World Health Organization has declared a situation of Public Health Emergency of International Concern.- [Mizzima](#) – 28 April 2009  
[Myanmar warns against swine flu in humans, no cases in country](#) - Xinhua - 28 April 2009  
[Burma on alert over swine flu](#) - Mizzima - 27 April 2009  
[Unidentified disease kills pigs in Burma](#) - Mizzima - 29 April 2009

#### **Protest / Political Prisoners**

[Myanmar citizens' rage boils in film about 2007 protests](#) - CNN – 2 May 2009  
[Detained Burmese comedian allowed treatment](#) - Mizzima - 28 April 2009  
[Imprisoned Zarganar in Failing Health](#) - Irrawaddy – 24 April 2009  
[68 Released Burmese Prisoners Return Home](#) - Narinjara News - 29 April 2009  
[Imprisoned student leader awarded human rights prize](#) - DVB – 24 April 2009  
[Myanmar activists get 253,524 signatures to free political prisoners](#) - DPA / EarthTimes – 21 April 2009  
**Opinion:** [Can All Monks Be Trusted?](#) - By Tyler Chapman - RFA – 21 April 2009

#### **Of interest:**

[BDR pushes back 12 Rohingyas](#) - Kaladan Press - 5 May 2009  
[Weak public health care, invitation to disaster: Medical expert](#) - Mizzima - 4 May 2009  
[Environmentalists worried over impact of Mekong damming](#) - Mizzima - 27 April 2009  
[Diarrhea outbreak in Rangoon and Mandalay](#) - Mizzima - 23 April 2009  
[TB Program to Launch in Burma](#) - Irrawaddy – 22 April 2009  
[Rampant logging forever changing the face of Kachin state](#) - Mizzima - 22 April 2009  
[Naypyitaw airport to be renovated](#) - Mizzima - 21 April 2009

#### **Outside Burma & UN**

**EU Common Policy: Burma sanctions renewed, but open to ministerial level talks** – The European Union renewed its sanctions imposed on Burma's military junta for another year during its foreign ministers meet in Luxembourg on 27 April. The Council's statement called on the Burmese junta to release detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and also to take steps necessary to make its 2010 election credible, transparent, and an inclusive process based on international standards. It also noted that the EU is ready to revise, amend or reinforce the measures it has already adopted in the light of developments on the ground, reiterating that the EU stands ready to respond positively to genuine progress in Burma. Notably, the ministers indicated that they were more open to dialogue with their Burmese counterparts by stating that they were "willing to meet them at the ministerial level in the margins of the ASEM Foreign Ministers Meeting in Hanoi in May 2009".

The Council also urged the Burmese government "to engage more with the international community, to work towards a peaceful transition to democracy", and reiterated its support of the UN's efforts, especially those of UNSG Ban and Mr. Gambari. It urged the Burmese authorities to comply with Resolution 10/27 of the UN Human Rights Council and cooperate with Mr. Quintana, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, also noting that it was "concerned by the deprivation of fundamental rights of ethnic minorities in Burma/Myanmar, in particular over the situation of the Rohingya ethnic minority in Northern Rakhin State, and urges the authorities to recognize their right to citizenship, and to protect all their human rights."

Since 1996, the EU has had a common position on Burma, which includes economic sanctions, an arms embargo and visa bans on Burmese military officials and their family members because of Burma's poor human rights record and lack of democracy. The common position also restricts visits to Burma, by high-level officials from EU member states. The sanctions were further tightened following the junta's crackdown on monk-led demonstrators in September 2007.

EBO's director Harn Yawngnhe said he supports the EU's position towards Burma saying the extension of sanctions on Burma highlights that there is a lack of political developments in the country. "The statement reminds us that there is still no progress in Burma...The EU cannot change its position toward the regime unless there are signs of changes in the country."

Yawnghwe noted however that though the EU wants to see Burma moving towards change, the military regime is continually resisting it. He especially emphasized that "only through dialogue can the crisis in Burma be solved".

Last year, in response to the humanitarian crisis caused by Cyclone Nargis, the European Commission provided € 39 million (US\$ 50 million) for the initial recovery project in 2008. The Council also added that welcomed the extension of the Tripartite Core Group (formed with the Burmese government and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean)) for another year and hopes that they would be able to continue its effective role to facilitate international assistance, citing that "In this context, it is critical that unfettered access by humanitarian agencies continues to be ensured. The EU recalls its large and growing role as a donor to the country and stands ready to increase its assistance to the people of Burma/Myanmar further". - [Mizzima](#) - 27 April 2009

**Statement:** [Council conclusions on Burma/Myanmar](#) - 2938th General Affairs Council meeting - Luxembourg, 27 April 2009 - [FR](#)

[EU Extends Burma Sanctions](#) - [Irrawaddy](#) – 27 April 2009

[EU extends sanctions against Burma](#) - [Financial Times](#) - 27 April 2009

[EU official sees no chance of formal Myanmar aid talks](#) - [AFP](#) - 21 April 2009

[European Commission willing to provide more aid to Myanmar](#) - [DPA / EarthTimes](#) – 21 April 2009

[Renewal of Burma sanctions by EU welcomed by Burma Campaign UK](#) - [Narinjara News](#) - 28 April 2009

[Release of Political Prisoners Still Key Issue: UK Ambassador](#) - [Irrawaddy](#) - 23 April 2009

**Opinion:** [Why Boycott Just Makes Things Worse - By Erik Solheim](#) - [Irrawaddy](#) – 28 April 2009

["Missing the Boat on Myanmar"](#) - [Neil Campbell](#) - [European Voice / ICG](#) – 24 April 2009

[Burma's inhumanity toward its citizens - By Zin Linn](#) - [UPI](#) – 28 April 2009

**EU-Japan Summit Calls for Progressive Changes in Burma** – Leaders of the European Union and Japan called for an inclusive political process in Burma and the release of political prisoners ahead of the 2010 election, during the EU-Japan Summit in Prague. According to a joint press statement from the summit, leaders of the EU and Japan pointed out that the elections in 2010 "could be welcomed by the international community if they were based on an inclusive dialogue among all stakeholders in Myanmar [Burma]." - [Irrawaddy](#) – 4 May 2009

[EU-Japan call for inclusiveness in 2010 election](#) – [Mizzima](#) – 5 May 2009

**Statement:** [EU-Japan Summit Joint Statement on Burma/Myanmar](#) – 4 May 2009

**US Will Not Lift Sanctions on Burma, US State Department** – A State Department official has said United States is not considering lifting sanctions against Burma as part of a review of policy toward the junta. In a letter to Representative Peter King, a congressman who supports strong pressure against the military regime, Richard Verma, the assistant secretary for legislative affairs at the State Department who handles relations between the State Department and Congress, said reports that the United States would lift sanctions were "incorrect," rather that "the sanctions that the United States and other countries maintain against the regime are an important part of our efforts to support change in Burma". US President Barack Obama has offered to reach out to US adversaries and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has said that she wants to find a "better way" to sway Burma's military leaders. "While we are currently reviewing our Burma policy, we can assure you that we remain committed to delivering a firm message on the need for real reform, including the initiation of a credible and inclusive dialogue with the democratic opposition and the release of political prisoners," Verma said. - [AFP](#) – 28 April 2009  
[Daily Press Briefing, US Dept of State, Acting Department Spokesman Robert Wood](#) - 30 April 2009

[US Will Not Lift Sanctions on Burma](#) - [Irrawaddy](#) – 30 April 2009

[Burma Expert Urges US to Tighten Sanctions](#) - [Irrawaddy](#) – 24 April 2009

**Opinion:** [5 opportunities Obama should seize right now](#) - [Foreign Policy](#) – 4 May 2009

[Burma needs Obama's help - Editorial](#) - [Boston Globe](#) – 30 April 2009

[Obama's clock ticks down on Myanmar - By Brian McCartan](#) - [Asia Times](#) – 25 April 2009

[Tyrants Get Another U.N. Platform: America should rescue the human-rights agenda from its hijackers.- By Saad Eddin Ibrahim](#) - [Wall Street Journal](#) – 24 April 2009

**Child Soldiers Still Common in Burma: UN Report** – The Burmese military regime's army and nine other armed groups are still recruiting child soldiers, according to the latest Annual Report of the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict. The report accuses both the Burmese junta and an array of armed ethnic groups, including ceasefire groups and active anti-government forces, of continuing to engage in the practice of recruiting child soldiers. The report also said that even as the regime has informed the UN country task force that it has put procedures in place for the rehabilitation and reintegration of underage recruits, UNICEF has not been given access to children who were released through

the government's mechanisms for follow-up purposes, and on underage recruitment cases received by ILO, no action against perpetrators has been taken under either the Penal Code or military regulations. - [Irrawaddy](#) – 23 April 2009

**Report:** [Report to the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict](#) – 22 April 2009  
[Rights Monitoring Could Increase](#) - RFA – 22 April 2009

## **ASEAN**

[Thai Ex-diplomat: He Urged Ban on Burma's Asean Membership](#) - [Irrawaddy](#) – 30 April 2009

**Opinion:** [Is Asean prepared to pressure Burma over the Rohingya refugees?](#) - By Kavi Chongkittavorn - [The Nation](#) – 22 April 2009

## **Migrants**

[Thai labor ministry to issue new registration for migrants](#) - SHAN - 4 May 2009

[Rohingya refugees besieged by rains](#) - [Kaladan Press](#) - 4 May 2009

[Indonesia repatriates Rohingya refugees](#) - [Xinhua](#) – 1 May 2009

[Thai and migrant workers reeling under financial crisis](#) - [Mizzima](#) - 29 April 2009

['I Worked For Human Traffickers'](#) - RFA – 29 April 2009

[Burmese Migrants Handed Over to Human Traffickers](#) - [Irrawaddy](#) – 27 April 2009

[Migrants sent back to Burma](#) - [Mizzima](#) - 27 April 2009

[Thailand, Malaysia to act on trafficking of Burmese migrants](#) - [Mizzima](#) - 26 April 2009

[Burmese Refugees 'Treated Like a Commodity'](#) - [Irrawaddy](#) – 27 April 2009

[Malaysia To Probe Abuse Claims](#) - RFA – 24 April 2009

[Burmese migrants remain trapped in Malacca without jobs](#) - [Mizzima](#) - 24 April 2009

[Burmese refugees 'sold at brothel'](#) - [Financial Times](#) – 23 April 2009

[Over 200 Burmese arrested in Malaysia](#) - [Mizzima](#) - 23 April 2009

[Malay officials accused over human trafficking](#) - [Financial Times](#) - April 22 2009

[Malaysian Levy Hike Will Hit Burmese Workers Hard](#) - [Irrawaddy](#) – 21 April 2009

## **Thai–Burma border clashes**

[Thai army protests after Burma's mortar shells injured two soldiers](#) - [The Nation](#) – 29 April 2009

[Burmese, Thai Troops Clash on Border](#) - [Irrawaddy](#) – 28 April 2009

[Three Thais wounded after Myanmar border fighting](#) - TNA - 27 April 2009

[More casualties as fighting continues on border](#) - [Mizzima](#) - 22 April 2009

## **Of interest:**

[Arms transported from Thailand seized](#) - [Mizzima](#) - 5 May 2009

[Chin National Day in Crisis in Myanmar](#)- [The Seoul Times](#) – 4 May 2009

[Myanmar major source of arms for Assam ultras: Police](#) - [The Times of India](#) - 3 May 2009

[Manipur rebels attack from Myanmar camps](#) - [The Times of India](#) - 29 April 2009

[China's help sought for rail link with Myanmar](#) - [The Daily Star](#) – 25 April 2009

[Zoya Phan: the face of Burmese protest](#) - [Telegraph.co.uk](#) - 1 May 2009

[Book review: Little Daughter: A Memoir of Survival in Burma and the West](#) - [Financial Times](#) – 27 April 2009

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[News Analysis: China Pulling Southeast Asia into its Orbit](#) - [Irrawaddy](#) – 4 May 2009

### **Other**

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