

IUSY Resolution on Burma

Burma is ruled by a military dictatorship, that has been in power for over 40 years. In 1990 *free elections* were organised where the National League of Democracy (NLD) won 82% of the votes. The junta ignored these election results and kept themselves in power.

Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the NLD and Nobel peace prize laureate, was placed under house arrest, in today she still lives under the same circumstances.

The dictatorship greatly suppresses the Burmese people. In Burma, basic human rights are violated every single day. One out of three children is undernourished. There is widespread forced labour and there are more child soldiers in Burma, than on the African continent. The ongoing situation in Burma has led to an enormous flow of Burmese refugees.

The lack of attention from the international community to change the situation in Burma, makes possibilities for the democratic opposition to work on democracy and human rights within the country impossible.

IUSY has to act in solidarity with the Burmese people, as Burma is a forgotten nation and its people are forgotten.

Decent work

Burma is a dictatorship where there is no rule of law of any kind. The international principles of human rights are far from being acknowledged. At the same time there is a massive scale of forced labour.

IUSY calls upon all companies present in Burma to take responsibility for their employees and make sure that they work under the right and fair circumstances. As there is a great lack of schooling and health services we also call upon these companies to invest in both.

Refugees

In 08-08-1988, 08.08, the biggest student uprising in Burma started. Thousands of students and other Burmese went on to the streets to peacefully demand basic human rights and democracy. Soldiers fired on the crowds of unarmed protesters, killing thousands. Lots of Burmese were forced to flee the country, as their lives were in great danger. Because of forced labour, dangers of being politically active, forced movements and the violation of other important human rights the flow of Burmese refugees still continues. Most of the Burmese refugees end up in refugee camps in Thailand, Bangladesh or Indian border areas. The situation in most of these camps is very poor and most of the refugees end up spending their lives in these camps.

The European Union

IUSY calls upon all European countries to start a national program on small groups of Burmese refugees, giving them a chance in life. IUSY asks these countries to provide large to small scale refugee resettlement programs within their countries.

All EU member states should provide education to Burmese students, both to refugees as Burmese residents.

The European Union should also provide education and other humanitarian aid to the existing refugee camps and support the countries that take care of most of the refugees. Burmese refugees living in neighbouring countries often lack an official status and do not have the possibility to integrate within these countries. Therefore many problems arise in terms of employment and making a decent living, moving out of these camps. Education will increase their future prospects. By learning the local language, they will have better possibilities to take part within society and be accepted.

The EU should take a leading role within the Asian countries to discuss the existing refugee laws and policies. These policies should become more uniform and refugees have to have access to all basic necessities.

UNHCR

The UNHCR has unfortunately in some cases no, or to little agencies in the border areas. Therefore many refugees haven't got the possibility to register themselves and often disappear in the illegal atmosphere. The UNHCR would have greater means to support the refugees if they could directly take care of them as they cross borders. The UNHCR has the duty to grant at least the bare necessities of live to all Burmese refugees. The UNHCR has to monitor by being present in the field, in stead of only focussing on formal desk work and official reports. The UNHCR and other refugee organisations have to make sure their work is compatible to the local situation. Recognized refugees, whom have the right to work, have to be assisted in finding a job. To guarantee this, UNHCR has to stay in close contact with both national members of parliament and employers. The countries in which the UNHCR operates have to give enough room for the agency to do its work properly.

Political tasks European Union

IUSY calls upon the European Union to take a leading role within the international community to enforce fundamental changes in Burma. The EU has to make use of all democratic agencies and alliances to do so. The EU has to put political pressure on alliances like the ASEAN to enforce democratic changes, like free and fair elections and the release of all political prisoners. In all the talks with Asian counterparts, the democratisation of Burma should be put prominently on the agenda.

The EU and all its member states have to create a special humanitarian aid program to stop the poverty in Burma. Within these programs, education should play an important role.

We also ask the European Parliament to create a special Burma committee, as was done with another dictatorship: Belarus. Such a group will give a strong signal both within and outside of the European Union.

Role of the United Nations

The United Nations is the most powerful organisation there is on world level of international cooperation. The organisations, comprising of 192 member states, is a worldwide organisation of governments that work together on the field of international justice, World wide safety, human rights, developments of the World economy and social and cultural changes.

The United Nations Security Council, and its fifteen members voted on a resolution on Burma the 12th of January 2007. The resolution encountered demands such as the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners and called upon the Burmese regime to start a dialogue with democratic and ethnic movements within the country.

Whereas nine of its members – a clear majority - voted in favour of the resolution, the resolution will not come into power. China and Russia used their veto to stop the process. South Africa also voted against.

IUSY demands the United Nations to take a strong stand towards the situation in Burma and the democratisation process. We demand the creation of a new resolution, encountering the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners, access to humanitarian aid and a call to the military regime to stop violating the human rights and forced labour.

The road to democracy

IUSY wants to act for a democratic Burma. At the moment Burma is one of the most repressive dictatorships in the world. The road to democracy is a peaceful one. We can not walk this road by ourselves. We have to work together with all parties and actors involved.

The Burmese people, the civil society has to be strengthened and empowered. They are the ones that can really bring about changes. Education, media & information, health services and other humanitarian aid can speed up this process.

IUSY strongly supports Aung San Suu Kyi in her attempts to create a dialogue with the current regime and all ethnic minorities. All three parties – the democratic forces, the ethnic minorities and the ruling regime – have to be involved in the democracy process.

