

Violent crackdown escalating on peaceful protests

FIDH calls on the Burmese military regime to stop repression immediately

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International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

Paris, September 27, 2007 - The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) expresses its deepest concern regarding the escalation of violence in the brutal crackdown on peaceful activists in Burma.

Last night, the security forces of the Burmese military regime continued to arrest civil activists in Rangoon and Mandalay, where a curfew order has been imposed since yesterday. Violent operations were also launched against several monasteries in Rangoon, in which several dozens of monks were brutally beaten and arrested.

These events follow the brutal confrontations that took place yesterday when soldiers, police and members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association resorted to force against tens of thousands of protesters, including monks, nuns and students.

Dozens of peaceful protesters who were gathering around the Shwedagon and Sule Pagodas in Rangoon were beaten and several were arrested, dragged onto trucks and taken to unknown locations. Security forces also used tear gas against the protesters and even shot at them, causing several deaths and a number of injured that has still to be determined.

Moreover, several leaders of the National League for Democracy have been arrested, including U Hla Pe, an NLD leader, and U Myint Thein, an NLD spokesperson and a Member of Parliament, who were arrested last night. U Pu Chian Sian and U Htaung Kho Thank, two ethnic leaders from the United Nationality Alliance (UNA) were also arrested last night.

In particular, FIDH is very concerned regarding the fate of Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy, who, according to various sources, has reportedly been transferred from her home, where she was kept under house arrest, to the Insein Prison in Rangoon.

FIDH reiterates its solidarity with those men and women who have chosen to bravely defy one of the world's most repressive regimes.

FIDH asks the Burmese authorities to put an immediate end to the current repression of peaceful protesters, in accordance with international human rights instruments guaranteeing freedom of assembly, and to engage in a genuine dialogue with the democratic forces.

FIDH reiterates its call to the UN Member States, urgently, to :

- Call the Burmese military regime to stop repression and open a dialogue with the opposition ;
- Convene a special session of the United Nations Human Rights Council to recognise the failure of the Burmese authorities to implement the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on Burma/Myanmar, and to respond to the serious deterioration in the human rights situation over recent months ;
- Adopt effective sanctions against the Burmese regime, including an arms embargo as well as a prohibition on foreign investment in Burma's key natural resource industries (oil, gas, timber).

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