

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **MYANMAR: UN Human Rights Council must pressure Myanmar**

In its Resolution S-5/1 of 2 October 2007, the UN Human Rights Council urged the Government of Myanmar to guarantee freedom of peaceful assembly, association, opinion, and expression; to immediately release those detained in the recent crackdown on protests as well as all political detainees in Myanmar; and to investigate and bring to justice perpetrators of human rights violations.

The report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar paints a bleak picture of the human rights situation. He notes that he “did not find significant signs that the Government is implementing the substantive demands set out in Resolution S-5/1”. Contrary to its own assurances, the Government has neither reversed its policy of repression of peaceful political expression, nor has it released unconditionally all of those arbitrarily detained; rather it has carried out further arrests.

Amnesty International’s own information confirms the Special Rapporteur’s findings. We continue to receive reports of arrests and believe that roughly 700 people detained during and since the protests remain behind bars. A further 1,150 political prisoners held prior to the protests also remain in detention. Amnesty International is also aware of at least 72 cases of enforced disappearance in connection with the recent events, and has received reports of appalling conditions in detention and of torture and other ill-treatment of detainees.

Amnesty International supports the Special Rapporteur’s recommendations and strongly encourages the Council to urge the Government of Myanmar:

- To release immediately and unconditionally those arrested for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression or assembly during the crackdown, as well as all prisoners of conscience held since before the recent events;
- To make public the names of those detained or missing in connection with the demonstrations, including their place of detention, the legal basis for their arrest, and their current status;
- To ensure that all reports of killings, torture and other ill-treatment of detainees, unlawful arrests, and enforced disappearances are promptly and independently investigated, and that those responsible are brought to justice;

- To lift all restraints on peaceful political activity, and to guarantee freedom of peaceful assembly and association and freedom of opinion and expression; and
- To end the culture of impunity for human rights violations that pervades the country, by bringing laws into line with international human rights standards and by reforming the judicial system, the armed forces, and law enforcement agencies.

The Special Rapporteur notes that his recent visit did not meet the conditions for a full-fledged fact-finding mission, Amnesty International therefore encourages the Council to urge the Government of Myanmar:

- To invite the Special Rapporteur to undertake a follow up mission prior to March 2008 with terms of reference requiring unfettered access to persons, places and sources of information related to his mandate;
- To develop an effective channel for the Special Rapporteur to monitor on an ongoing basis the human rights situation in Myanmar including events preceding the crackdown and relating to ethnic minorities. Such a channel would include follow up communication, cooperation and regular access to the country.

Amnesty International also urges the UN Security Council to keep the human rights situation in Myanmar under close review. On 11 October, the Security Council specifically welcomed Human Rights Council Resolution S-5/1 and emphasized the importance of the early release of all political prisoners and remaining detainees. The Security Council must now consider the Special Rapporteur's findings that Myanmar has failed to fully cooperate with the United Nations and to release the prisoners and detainees. The Security Council must support the Special Rapporteur in ensuring the implementation of his recommendations, specifically by facilitating his early return to Myanmar.

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International Secretariat, Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW, UK  
[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)