



**17th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 6: Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Plenary on Burma/Myanmar**

**Oral Statement Delivered by Mr. Aung Myo Min on Behalf of
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)**

Wednesday, 8 June 2011

Thank you, Mr. President. FORUM-ASIA and its member organization HREIB make this statement on behalf of the Burma Forum on the Universal Periodic Review (BF-UPR)¹.

Mr. President, despite the November 2010 elections' illusory promise of a democratic transition in the country, "systematic militarization contributes to widespread abuses of human rights which remain essentially unaddressed by the authorities", as noted by the Special Rapporteur Tomas Ojea Quintana in his recent mission to Thailand. In particular, we are extremely disturbed that the situation in ethnic nationality areas continues to deteriorate as the armed conflict is ongoing, leading to extrajudicial executions, sexual violence and mass displacement of civilians. Clashes on the Election Day between the State armed forces and a breakaway faction of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army has led to a humanitarian crisis that in need of urgent attention with the single largest refugee influx in two decades of more than 27,000 civilians seeking shelter in Thailand. In this light, it is our deep regret that the State has rejected or has not provided any concrete responses to the UPR recommendations calling for protection of civilians in conflict areas and the rights of internally displaced persons.

Furthermore, we remain concerned that child soldiers continue to be recruited by the State armed forces in order to meet a quota and seek financial incentives. Often recruited by force or intimidation, they suffer torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and are used as human mine-sweepers, frontline combatants, porters, sentries and camp cleaners. We urge the State to ensure that all those involved in the recruitment of child soldiers are immediately prosecuted.

Mr. President, the practice of forced labour continues as up to two million men, women and children are forced to work for the armed forces, on development projects or in infrastructure expansion without compensation. In some cases, those using the ILO complaints mechanism face intimidation, arrest and imprisonment. Given that the practice of forced labour continues, it is significantly regrettable that the State chose to reject the UPR recommendation to "review the legislation and practices in accordance with ILO Convention No. 29 and extend the ILO mandate to the overall territory of Myanmar".

Finally, Mr. President, as emphasized by the High Commissioner for Human Rights during her opening statement to this Council session, "sustainable transition requires an end to impunity and ensuring accountability". With no domestic mechanism available inside the country to effectively and impartially establish justice and accountability, failure to independently investigate those widespread and systematic violations of human rights will only make further abuses inevitable. Therefore, we strongly urge this Council to act swiftly to establish an UN-mandated Commission of Inquiry to look into the violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in the country. Thank you, Mr. President.

¹ Assistance Association for Political Prisoners Burma (AAPP-B), Arakan Rivers Network (ARN), Burma Fund UN Office, Burma Lawyers' Council (BLC), Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO), Emergency Act Team vs Backpack Health Worker Team, Federation of Trade Unions of Burma (FTUB), Foundation for Education and Development (FED), Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB), Human Rights Foundation of Mon Land (HURFOM), Kachin Women's Organization Thailand (KWAT), Kaladan Press Bangladesh, Shwe Gas Movement, Women and Child Rights Project (WCRP)

