

Jubilee Campaign Statement on Adoption of the UPR Report on Myanmar

To be orally delivered to the Human Rights Council, 8 June 2011, by Matthew Jones

Thank you Mr Chair.

The Jubilee Campaign welcomes Myanmar's commitment in the review to the ratification and full implementation of international human rights treaties including the CAT and ICCPR and looks forward to Myanmar honouring this commitment in the near future.

However we are deeply concerned about other statements made during the review. The Myanmar delegation suggested it is in the "advanced stages of its transition to democracy", yet did not support recommendations made by a number of states relating to its 2,200 political prisoners including the Greek delegation's recommendation that the ICRC be granted access to them.

The Jubilee Campaign questions the definition of "democracy" that allows for thousands of political prisoners to be detained arbitrarily, in contravention of international law and without recourse to adequate health care or humanitarian assistance.

Mr Chair, we are disturbed at reports of the ongoing attacks in Shan state with civilians being targeted in the military offensive, and mortar bombs fired at civilian villages. Violations reportedly committed by the Myanmar Army include arbitrary execution, arbitrary detention, torture, looting, rape, forced relocation and forced labour.

Unfortunately this is not limited to Shan state. The Myanmar army has a sad recent history of killing unarmed, peaceful civilians, including shooting women and children at point-blank range. We also have ample documentation attesting to the forcible recruitment of child soldiers by the army and the widespread and systematic use of rape as a weapon of war. This culture of impunity must end with clear action taken to investigate and prosecute those responsible.

Finally we take note of a recommendation of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, to establish a UN commission of inquiry to investigate reports of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Special Rapporteur reported that "a pattern of gross and systematic violation of human rights" has been occurring in Myanmar "over a period of many years." He concluded that the violations "are the result of a state policy that involves authorities in the executive, military and judiciary at all levels". We urge the delegation of Myanmar and the international community not to take a conclusion of this magnitude lightly, and to sufficiently address these concerns in future deliberations on Myanmar's domestic human rights situation.

Thank you Mr Chair.

