

European Union Must Support UN Burma Crimes Inquiry

The European Parliamentary Caucus on Burma calls upon the European Union to officially support a United Nations Commission of Inquiry into war crimes and crimes against humanity, and include its establishment in the United Nations General Assembly resolution on Burma. The Burma resolution is drafted by the EU.

The creation of such an Inquiry was recommended by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Burma in March 2010. The European Parliamentary Caucus on Burma is deeply concerned about the failure of the EU to endorse and act upon this recommendation, despite the apparent increase in human rights abuses in Burma.

For decades the dictatorship in Burma has acted with impunity, committing gross violations of international law. Abuses taking place include military attacks against civilian villages, arbitrary detention and torture, rape and gang rape, including child rape, forced labour, forced relocation, denial of humanitarian assistance, and many others.

As twenty previous UN General Assembly resolutions testify, the United Nations is fully aware that these actions have been taking place, yet has taken no practical steps to put an end to them.

The European Parliamentary Caucus on Burma is concerned that the continuing failure of the European Union to support a UN Inquiry is encouraging the dictatorship to continue to believe it can act with impunity.

The European Parliamentary Caucus on Burma reminds European governments that they have repeatedly been lied to and deceived by the dictatorship in Burma. Promises of reform have never been delivered. The promises made to visiting diplomats still stand in stark contrast to their actions.

As the recent Arab Spring should have taught us, when dealing with brutal dictatorships, policies of appeasement and pursuing reforms through gentle persuasion do not work. The European Union must take a united, robust and principled stand in support of human rights and democratisation in Burma.