



Home Office

BUILDING A SAFE, JUST
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COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION KEY DOCUMENTS

BURMA (MYANMAR)

14 OCTOBER 2007

Border and Immigration Agency
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION SERVICE

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1. Preface

- i This Country of Origin Information (COI) Key Documents has been produced by Country of Origin Information Service, Home Office, for use by officials involved in the asylum/human rights determination process. It provides general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum/human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. The COI Key Documents includes information available up to 14 October 2007. It does not contain any Home Office opinion or policy.
- ii The COI Key Documents is an indexed list of key reports, papers and articles on Burma (Myanmar), produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources. By way of introduction, brief background information on Burma (Myanmar) is also provided. The section on 'latest developments' provides a chronology of main events between 15 August and 14 October 2007. This background information is not intended to provide a summary of the material contained in the key documents listed.
- iii For Home Office users, the COI Key Documents provides direct electronic access to each source referred to in the document, via a link on the source numbers in the index and list of sources. For the benefit of external users, the relevant web link has also been included, together with the date that the link was accessed.
- iv This COI Key Documents and the documents listed are publicly disclosable.
- v Any comments regarding this COI Key Documents or suggestions for additional documents are very welcome and should be submitted to the Home Office as below.

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2. Latest developments

ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROTESTS: CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

2.01 On 15 August 2007, the Burmese authorities doubled the price of petrol and diesel fuel. The cost of compressed gas used to power buses increased five-fold. (BBC News, 27 September 2007) [7h] The unexplained increase was followed by a rise in bus fares and commodity prices. (The Irrawaddy, 20 August 2007) [42a] The price increases triggered unrest, which began with small-scale demonstrations but gathered momentum as Buddhist monks joined the protests (Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) newsfile on Burma, accessed 3 October 2007) [4c] The chronology of events as the protests developed is set out below.

First week: 19 to 26 August 2007

2.02 On 19 August, in response to the price rises, a 400 people-strong protest was staged in Rangoon, led by pro-democracy activists. (The Irrawaddy, 20 August 2007) [42a] At least 13 prominent activists from the 88 Students Generation group were arrested following protests over fuel prices. (The Irrawaddy, 22 August 2007) [42b] Protests continued to a fourth day on 22 August, when at least 20 more people were detained as security increased. (Radio Free Asia, 24 August 2007) [38a]

2.03 The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) (Burma) reported on 27 August that “A minimum of one hundred human rights activists and peaceful protesters were arrested by security forces and civilian militias of Than Shwe’s military regime in Burma from August 21st – 25th, 2007. The regime falsely reported that only 64 protestors were arrested, including famed activist Min Ko Naing.” [49]

Second week: 27 August to 2 September 2007

2.04 On 28 August, Radio Free Asia reported that anti-government protests spread outside of the former capital, Rangoon, into the city port of Sittwe. The report noted that several hundred monks took part in a peaceful demonstration. [38b] On the same date, prominent Burmese activist Su Su Nway was attacked whilst taking part in a peaceful protest in Rangoon. She escaped her attackers with the help of onlookers. (Radio Free Asia, 28 August 2007) [38b] (The Irrawaddy, 28 August 2007) [42c]

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Third week: 3 to 9 September 2007

2.05 On 5 September, in protest at the difficulties faced by the people of Burma following fuel price increases, over 500 monks took part in a march in Pakhokku, a town in central Burma. Three monks were arrested by members of the junta-backed Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) and Swan Arrshin [a branch of the USDA]. In response to these arrests, on the morning of 6 September 2007, monks detained 13 officials as they forcibly entered the monastery. (Mizzima News, 6 September 2007) [43a]

- 2.06 On 6 September 2007, The Irrawaddy reported that up to ten monks had been arrested during a peaceful demonstration in Pakhukko, which was violently broken up by authorities. [42d] The monks were later freed. (Mizzima News, 6 September 2007) [4a] (The Irrawaddy, 6 September 2007) [42d]
- 2.07 Mizzima News reported on 7 September that the military junta had blocked access to the Internet website "You Tube", which featured the ongoing protests in Burma. [43b]
- 2.08 On 9 September Burma's military junta made an announcement accusing the National League for Democracy (NLD), in collusion with the 88 Students' Generation Group, of masterminding a wave of protests in Rangoon and other parts of Burma. The Government stated that "effective action" would be taken against the NLD for inciting public unrest. The authorities arrested 15 activists of the 88 Students' Generation Group, and accused them of having contacts with "destructive elements". A spokesperson for the NLD denied any connections with terrorist groups, or planning the protests. (Mizzima News, 9 September 2007) [43c]

Fourth week: 10 to 16 September 2007

- 2.09 Radio Free Asia reported on 11 September that "Buddhist monks in the central Burmese city of Pakokku" had demanded an apology "...for an armed crackdown on a demonstration by hundreds of their number, as well as the release of all political prisoners, including opposition leader and Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi." The "newly formed alliance of monks" was protesting against the "crackdown" on recent protests in the country and had issued a September 17 deadline for the government to meet their conditions. [3c]

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Fifth week: 17 to 23 September 2007

- 2.10 On 19 September 2007, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported that up to 5,000 monks took part in a protest in the city of Sittwe, and demanded the release of 20 citizens and three monks who were detained on 18 September. The article noted that state-run news paper, New Light of Myanmar, reported that one Sittwe official and nine police officers were injured when protesters, including citizens dressed in monks' robes, became "violent", threw stones and beat them. However, witnesses told RFA that protesters only threw stones when the police pointed guns at them and fired tear gas into the crowd. [38d]
- 2.11 The BBC reported on 22 September that, on a sixth day of anti-government protests, thousands of monks marched in protest across Burma. Opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, was greeted by protesting Buddhist monks as they were allowed to walk past her home. There were also demonstrations in Mandalay and the townships of Chauk, Shwebo, Mongwa, Taung Dwin Gyi and Ye Nan Chaung. No violence was reported. (BBC News, 22 September 2007) [7i]
- 2.12 Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported on 23 September that the military junta had detained 218 people since protests began. Most of those arrested were members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) or the 88 Generation

student movement. The head of the Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) stated “Activists have not only been beaten while in detention, but have also been under extreme physical and mental torture.” RFA reported that a group called the All Burma Monks’ Alliance was organising the protests by monks and novices. [38e]

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Sixth week: 24 to 30 September 2007

- 2.13 On 24 September 2007, BBC News reported that “Tens of thousands of monks and civilians around Burma have held the biggest protest marches against the military government yet. Eyewitnesses say up to 100,000 people marched peacefully through Rangoon with monks demanding better living conditions and national reconciliation.” There were also demonstrations in at least 25 towns, including the cities of Mandalay, Sittwe and Pakokku. [7j]
- 2.14 On 26 September 2007, The Guardian reported that a 60-day 9pm to 6am curfew was imposed by the military regime. A ban on gatherings of five or more people was also introduced. The article noted:
- “Trucks and cars mounted with loudspeakers toured Rangoon yesterday morning, warning people not to join the monks in the protests that pose the greatest challenge to the military dictatorship in almost two decades. The announcements warned that anyone taking part in or supporting the demonstrations - now 100,000 strong - faced prosecution, while action would also be taken against the Buddhist clergy. They also threatened to disperse any fresh ‘illegal’ protests by force.” [45a]
- 2.15 At least one monk was killed when up to 10,000 monks and civilians took part in their ninth day of protest in Rangoon, defying police bullets and tear gas. (BBC News, 26 September 2007) [7k] BBC News reported on 27 September 2007 that nine people were killed during a crackdown on anti-government protests in Rangoon. The dead included eight protesters and a Japanese video journalist. The deaths followed overnight raids on six monasteries, where witnesses claimed that monks were beaten as they slept and that hundreds were taken away in military trucks. [7l]
- 2.16 On 28 September 2007, Reuters news agency reported that it appeared the military regime in Burma had cut public internet access in an attempt to prevent information, photographs and videos of their crackdown against protesters reaching the outside world. The report noted that internet cafés were closed and it was not possible to contact the main internet provider for an explanation of why there was no internet access. [44a]
- 2.17 ABC News reported on 28 September that “Burmese security forces have fired guns and tear gas and arrested more people today, after protesters defied orders to stay off the streets...There were a number of sizeable protests in the capital, Rangoon, but the security forces have also raided more monasteries and arrested more monks.” The report also noted that the official death toll remained at 13, although diplomats in Burma feared the figure could be much higher, with unconfirmed reports that 30 bodies were laid outside Rangoon’s post office. [46a] BBC News reported on 28 September 2007 that security forces in Rangoon had sealed off five monasteries that were a focal point for

protests, in an attempt to bring an end to further demonstrations. Security presence was high and main roads had been blocked. [7m]

2.18 On 29 September 2007, The Irrawaddy reported that around 50 monks led 5,000 peaceful protesters in the city of Sittwe. Later that day, it was reported that despite the security presence, more than 1,000 monks led 30,000 demonstrators in Mandalay. [42e]

2.19 Radio Free Asia reported on 30 September 2007 that protesters in Sittwe and other areas of Burma accused security forces of beating and detaining demonstrators arbitrarily as special UN envoy, Ibrahim Gambari, arrived in the country to meet NLD leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and military government leaders. The article noted:

“Reports put the number of troops in Rangoon at about 20,000 after reinforcements arrived during the weekend, ensuring that almost all demonstrators would remain off the streets. Troops have now arrested hundreds of monks and barricaded the streets of Rangoon, shutting thousands of monks under armed guard inside their monasteries. Observers said the likelihood of further serious opposition to the government in the city now looked unlikely, as people suspected of leading or organizing this week’s rallies have been continually taken into custody.” [38f]

2.20 Reporting on the Burma protests on 30 September 2007, The Irrawaddy stated that at least three journalists had disappeared or been arrested, believed to be in connection with the demonstrations. One journalist, Min Zaw, of the Tokoyo Shimbun newspaper, was confirmed arrested on 28 September 2007. [42e]

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Seventh week: 1 to 7 October 2007

2.21 BBC News reported on 1 October 2007 that about 4,000 monks, detained by government forces determined to stamp out the protests, would be dispersed to prisons in the far north of Burma. The disrobed and shackled monks detained in Rangoon would soon be moved away, according to a government-sponsored militia source. The report noted that since the detention of the monks, demonstrations had died down and that soldiers remained prominent in Rangoon. [7n]

2.22 Small groups of protesters continued to demonstrate across Burma although their movements were restricted by a tight security presence. Passers-by were searched and people with cameras and mobile phones were targeted in an attempt to curb the flow of information. (Mizzima News, 1 October 2007) [43d]

2.23 BBC News reported on 3 October 2007 that, following a night of further arrests by security forces, scores of monks were attempting to leave Rangoon in a bid to escape the military crackdown on anti-government protests. A heavy presence of troops remained in Rangoon, soldiers warned protesters to stay away. [7o]

2.24 On 7 October 2007, The Sunday Times reported that secret cremations had taken place, with the Burmese army burning an undetermined number of

bodies, ensuring that the exact death toll in the recent anti-government protests would remain unknown. Local people reported tarpaulin covered army trucks arriving at the crematorium in the northeast of Rangoon, as smoke rose continuously from the furnace chimneys. [47a]

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Eighth week: 8 to 16 October 2007

- 2.25 On 8 October 2007, the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) reported that a number of monks and civilians detained at the Government Technology College in Insein Township were, according to witnesses, transferred to unknown locations by the authorities. [32a]
- 2.26 The Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) reported on 9 October 2007 that “Arrests and raids have continued in connection with the recent mass demonstrations despite the Burmese regime’s claims that the situation has now returned to normal. Daytime raids have become common in Rangoon, and the houses of suspicious or high profile characters are all under close watch by government agents.” DVB further stated that three leaders of the All-Burmese Federation of Students’ Unions (ABFSU), who were hiding at a safe house in Rangoon, were arrested following a raid by security forces. [32b]
- 2.27 In another report on 9 October 2007, the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) stated that opposition groups had claimed that around 6,000 people had been detained by the authorities and up to 200 killed following the pro-democracy protests. DVB also reported that the detainees had been put into categories according to their level of involvement in the demonstrations. DVB noted:
- “The categories range from A, which includes protest leaders or organisers and politicians, to D, people who were bystanders at the protests or clapped their hands in support. Category B denotes those who held flags or marched in the first row of protestors. The level a detainee is given determines whether they will be released. Those in category A and B will remain in detention, while category D prisoners will be released. There is no further information on those in category C or what will happen to them.” [32c]
- 2.28 The same source reported the Burmese government’s statement that they had recently released 104 monks and 188 civilians from detention, leaving 109 monks and nine civilians still detained. [32c]
- 2.29 BBC News reported on 9 October 2007 that deputy labour minister, Aung Kyi, had been appointed by Burma’s military rulers to liaise with National League for Democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, although the government had not stated when contact with Suu Kyi would begin. BBC News noted that “Mr Gambari [UN special envoy, Ibrahim Gambari] suggested appointing a liaison officer when he met Burma’s military leader, Gen Than Shwe, last week. The New Light of Myanmar [a government-run newspaper], in an announcement on its front page, said that the government had agreed to the idea ‘in respect of Gambari’s recommendation and in view of smooth relations with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.’” [7p]
- 2.30 In a statement released by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), it was reported that a member of the National League for Democracy

(NLD), Ko Win Shwe, had died whilst under interrogation by the authorities. Ko Win Shwe had been arrested on 26 September, at the start of the government's crackdown on protests. The Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) quoted the AAPP as saying "The authorities informed his family that he [Ko Win Shwe] died during interrogation, but they refused to give the cause of death and wouldn't let them see the body." (Democratic Voice of Burma, 11 October 2007) [32d]

2.31 Amnesty International reported on 13 October 2007 that "Four people have been detained overnight in Yangon [Rangoon] as part of a continuing crackdown by the military authorities. The four detainees include prominent activists Htay Kywe (39), Mie Mie (F, 35 also known as Thin Thin Aye), and Aung Thu (43) who are members of the 1988 Generation Students group. All have been imprisoned previously for their peaceful activism for human rights and democracy." [11j] BBC News reported on the same date that following the latest arrests, few, if any, of the 88 Generation Students' group, remained at large. The article noted "Burmese activists and dissidents say several thousand people have been taken into detention since troops and armed police cracked down on the protests at the end of September." [7q]

2.32 BBC News also reported on 13 October 2007 that the military junta organised a pro-government rally. The report stated that:

"Officials said 120,000 people had attended the event, though there is no way to independently verify the figure. Burmese dissident groups said the number was much smaller. There are reports of people being bussed to the rallies and being paid cash to attend, while one participant told AFP news agency that every factory in the city's industrial zone had been obliged to send 50 participants to the rally. The crowd chanted slogans denouncing Western countries and the foreign media, including the BBC, which Burma's military rulers accuse of fomenting the recent protests." [7q]

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3. Background information on Burma (Myanmar)

3.01 **Full Country Name:** The Union of Myanmar

Britain's policy is to refer to Burma rather than 'Myanmar'. It is the form preferred by the leaders of Burma's democracy movement, the legitimate winners of the 1990 elections, who do not accept that the unelected military regime has the right to change the official name of the country.

Area: 677,000 sq km (419,740 sq mi)

Population: 52m

Capital City: Rangoon (Yangon) (population 3,598,980) (Nay Pyi Taw is the administrative capital) [10a]

People: Bamar (69%), Shan (8.5%), Karen (6.2%), Rakhine (4.5%), Mon (2.4%), Chin (2.2%), Kachin (1.4%), Karrenni (0.4%), other indigenous (0.1%) and foreign nationalities (including Burmese Indian & Sino Burmese people) 5.3%

Languages: Burmese is the official language. There are numerous other ethnic minority languages.

Religion(s): Buddhism is the predominant religion. The other main religions are Christianity, Islam and Animism.

Currency: Kyat

Major Political Parties: Burma is ruled by a military junta known as State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). The main democratic opposition party is the National League for Democracy (NLD).

Government: Military junta - State Peace and Development Council (SPDC)

Head of State: Senior General Than Shwe

Prime Minister/Premier: General Soe Win

Foreign Minister: U Nyan Win.

Membership of International Groupings/Organisations: UN, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand Economic Co-operation (BIMSTEC). (FCO Country Profile: Burma, 16 June 2007) [4a]

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GEOGRAPHY

3.02 Europa World Online, accessed 12 October 2007, stated:

"The Union of Myanmar (Myanma Naing-ngan—formerly Burma) lies in the north-west region of South-East Asia, between the Tibetan plateau and the Malay peninsula. The country is bordered by Bangladesh and India to the north-west, by the People's Republic of China and Laos to the north-east and by Thailand to the south-east.... In 2006 the functions of the capital city were in the process of being transferred from Yangon to the new administrative centre of Pyinmana (Nay Pyi Taw)." [1]

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RECENT HISTORY

- 3.03 The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Country Profile for Burma, updated 16 June 2007, notes that:

“Military governments have ruled Burma since 1962. In 1988 pro-democracy protests were brutally crushed by the military. In 1990 national elections were held in Burma for the first time in 30 years. The National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK), won the elections with an overwhelming majority. The military regime refused to recognise the results claiming a new constitution must be passed before power could be handed over. However, democratic groups such as the National League for Democracy have remained resolute in their opposition to the regime.” [4a]

- 3.04 “The current military regime is known as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC)... Aung San Suu Kyi has remained under house arrest since she and her supporters were attacked in May 2003.” (FCO newsfile for Burma, accessed 3 October 2007) [4c]

- 3.05 The FCO’s 2006 Human Rights Annual Report noted that “In November 2005, the government suddenly moved its seat of administration to a site near Pyinmana, 250 miles north of Rangoon, now referred to as Nay Pyi Taw. The UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, has noted reports of forced relocation of villages and the alleged use of forced labour in the construction of the new city.” [4b]

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ECONOMY

- 3.06 **GDP:** \$9.6 billion (estimate at March 2007 market rate).

Annual growth rate: 2.9% (2006 estimate)

GDP per capita (2006 est.): US \$174.

Natural resources: timber, tin, antimony, zinc, copper, tungsten, lead, coal, limestone, precious stones, natural gas, hydropower, and some petroleum.

Agriculture: Products: rice, pulses, beans, sesame, groundnuts, sugarcane, hardwood, fish and fish products.

Industries: Types: agricultural processing, knit and woven apparel, wood and wood products, copper, tin, tungsten, iron, construction materials, pharmaceuticals, and fertilizer. [2c]

- 3.07 FCO’s Human Rights Annual Report 2006, Burma, noted:

“Despite substantial natural resources, Burma is a poor country. It is also the second largest producer of illicit opium in the world and has developed into a major supplier of methamphetamines.

“Fundamental problems in the economy remain unresolved, and the macroeconomic situation remains unstable. A serious banking crisis in early 2003 led to reduced consumer confidence and spending power with some retailers noting a 30-40% drop in sales. The banking sector remains fragile, and the crisis continues to have knock on effects throughout the economy.

“The rate of inflation, which fell following the banking crisis, has increased rapidly in recent months. Unconfirmed estimates suggest a rate of approximately 50% in 2006...Despite inflation, structural rigidities, weak economic policies, and low investment the Burmese economy is thought to be growing (although at a much lower rate than the SPDC claims) largely due to growth of gas exports.” (FCO Human Rights Annual Report 2006) [4b]

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HUMAN RIGHTS

3.07 The United States Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2006, 6 March 2007 noted:

“The government's human rights record worsened during the year, and the government continued to commit numerous serious abuses. The following human rights abuses were reported:

- abridgement of the right to change the government
- extrajudicial killings, including custodial deaths
- disappearances
- rape, torture, and beatings of prisoners and detainees
- arbitrary arrest without appeal
- politically motivated arrests and detentions
- incommunicado detention
- continued house arrest of National League for Democracy (NLD) General Secretary Aung San Suu Kyi and NLD Vice Chairman U Tin Oo, and the continued closure of all NLD offices, except the Rangoon headquarters
- imprisonment of members of the United Nationalities Alliance, including Hkun Htun Oo and Sai Nyunt Lwin, both leaders of the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy
- infringement on citizens' right to privacy
- forcible relocation and confiscation of land and property
- restriction of freedom of speech, press, assembly, association and movement
- restriction of freedom of religion
- discrimination and harassment against Muslims
- restrictions on domestic human rights organizations and a failure to cooperate with international human rights organizations
- violence and societal discrimination against women
- forced recruitment of child soldiers
- discrimination against ethnic minorities
- trafficking in persons, particularly of women and girls for the purpose of prostitution and as involuntary wives
- restrictions on worker rights
- forced labor (including against children), chiefly in support of military garrisons and operations in ethnic minority regions.” [2a]

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4. Index to key source documents

(KB users - click source number to access document directly)

KEY FACTS AND GEOGRAPHY	[1]	Europa World Online, Myanmar, Country Profile, Location, Climate, Language, Religion, Flag, Capital, accessed 12 October 2007 http://www.europaworld.com/entry?id=mm&go_country=GO
	[1]	Europa World Online, Myanmar, Country Profile, Country Statistics, accessed 12 October 2007 http://www.europaworld.com/entry/mm.ss.1
	[2c]	United States Department of State, Background Note: Burma, last updated June 2007 http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35910.htm
	[4a]	Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Country Profile: Burma, last updated on 16 June 2007 http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Servlet?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountrProfile&aid=1018965307901
	[7a]	BBC, Country Profile: Burma, last updated on 25 September 2007 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1300003.stm
	[10a]	Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook, Burma, last updated on 4 October 2007 https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/bm.html
	[30a]	Department for International Development (DfID), Country Profile, Burma, updated 4 April 2007 http://www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/asia/burma.asp
MAP	[7j]	BBC News: Monks lead largest Burma protest, 24 September 2007 (showing map of Rangoon) http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/7009825.stm
	[10a]	Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook, Burma (showing location of Nay Pyi Taw, administrative capital), last updated on 4 October 2007 https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/bm.html
	[19a]	United Nations Cartographic Section, Map of Myanmar. http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/myanmar.pdf
HISTORY	[1]	Europa World Online, Myanmar, Country Profile, Recent History, accessed 12 October 2007 http://www.europaworld.com/entry/mm.is.4
	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices – 2006: Burma, 6 March 2007 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78768.htm
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Annex A: Political organisations

Ruling military junta:

State Peace and Development Council (SPDC)

Chairman: Field Marshal Than Shwe

Vice-Chairman: Dep. Senior Gen. Maung Aye.

First Secretary: Lt-Gen. Thein Sein.

A total of 93 parties contested the general election of May 1990. By October 1995 the ruling military junta had deregistered all except nine political parties:

National League for Democracy (NLD)

Founded 1988

Gen. Sec: Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Chair: U Aung Shwe.

Vice-Chair: U Tin Oo, U Kyi Maung.

Kokang Democracy and Unity Party

Mro (or) Khami National Solidarity Organization

Founded 1988

Leader: U San Tha Aung

National Unity Party (NUP)

Founded 1962 as the Burma Socialist Programme Party; sole legal political party until Sept. 1988, when present name was adopted.

Chair: U Tha Kyaw.

Gen. Secs: U Tun Yi, U Than Tin.

Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD)

Founded 1988

Chair: Khun Htun Oo.

Sec.-Gen: Sai Nyunt Lwin

Shan State Kokang Democratic Party

Founded 1988

Leader: U Yankyin Maw.

Union Karen (Kayin) League

Union Pa-O National Organization

Founded 1988

Leader: U San Hla.

Wa National Development Party

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The following parties contested the general election of March 1990 but Subsequently had their legal status annulled:

Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League

Founded 1988; assumed name of wartime resistance movement that became Myanmar's major political force after independence.

Chair: Bo Kyaw Nyunt.

Gen. Sec: Cho Cho Kyaw Nyein.

Democracy Party

Founded 1988; comprises supporters of fmr Prime Minister

U Nu

Chair: U Thu Wai.

Vice-Chair: U Khun Ye Naung.

Democratic Front for National Reconstruction

Founded 1988; left-wing

Lahu National Development Party

Founded 1988; deregistered 1994.

Leader: U Daniel Aung.

League for Democracy and Peace

Founded 1988

Gen. Sec: U Thein Sein.

Party for National Democracy

Founded 1988

Chair: Dr Sein Win.

Union National Democracy Party (UNDP)

Founded 1988; est. by Brig.-Gen. Aung Gyi (fmr Chair. of the National League for Democracy).

Chair: U Kyaw Myint Lay.

United League of Democratic Parties

Founded 1989

United Nationalities League for Democracy

An alliance of parties representing non-Bamar nationalities; won a combined total of 65 seats at the 1990 election

Other deregistered parties included the Arakan (Rakhine) League for Democracy, the Mon National Democratic Front, the National Democratic Party for Human Rights, the Chin National League for Democracy, the Kachin State National Congress for Democracy, the Zomi National Congress, the Naga Hill Regional Progressive Party, the Kayah State Nationalities League for Democracy, the Ta-ang (Palaung) National League for Democracy, the Democratic Organization for Kayan National Unity, the Graduates' and Old Students' Democratic Association, the Patriotic Old Comrades' League, the Union Danu League for Democracy, the Kamans National League for Democracy, the Mara People's Party and the Karen (Kayin) State National Organization.

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The following groups are, or have been, in armed conflict with the Government:

Burma Democratic Alliance (BDA)

Founded 2004; opposition alliance composed of several dissident organizations.
Leader: Dr Naing Aung.

Chin National Army

Chin National Front

Founded 1988; forces trained by Kachin Independence Army 1989–91; first party congress 1993; conference in March 1996; carried out an active bombing campaign in 1996–97, mainly in the Chin State.
Pres: Thomas Tang No.

Communist Party of Burma (CPB)

Founded 1939; reorg. 1946; operated clandestinely after 1948; participated after 1986 in military operations with sections of the NDF; in 1989 internal dissent resulted in the rebellion of about 80% of CPB members, mostly Wa hill tribesmen and Kokang Chinese; the CPB's military efficacy was thus completely destroyed.
Chair. of Cen. Cttee: Thakin Ba Thein Tin (exiled)

Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB)

Founded 1988; formed by members of the NDF to incorporate dissident students, monks and expatriates.
Pres: Maj.-Gen. Bo Mya.
Gen. Sec: U Tin Maung Win.

All-Burma Student Democratic Front (ABSDF)

Founded 1988; in 1990 split into two factions, under U Moe Thi Zun and U Naing Aung; the two factions reunited in 1993.
Chair: Than Khe.
Sec.-Gen: Myo Win.

Karen (Kayin) National Union (KNU)

Founded 1948; in process of negotiating peace agreement with SPDC in 2004.
Chair: Saw Ba Thin.
Vice-Chair: Gen. Tamalabaw.
Sec.-Gen: Mahn Sha
Military wing: Karen (Kayin) National Liberation Army (KNLA); c. 6,000 troops; Chief of Staff: Gen. Mutu

Karenni (Kayinni) National Progressive Party.

Agreement with the SLORC [State Law and Order Restoration Council, now SPDC] signed in March 1995 but subsequently collapsed; resumed fighting in June 1996.
Chair. Gen: Aung Than Lay.
Military wing: Karenni (Kayinni) Revolutionary Army

God's Army

Breakaway faction of the KNU.
Leaders: Johnny Htoo, Luther Htoo (surrendered to the Thai authorities in Jan. 2001).

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National Democratic Front (NDF)

Founded 1975; aims to establish a federal union based on national self-determination; largely defunct

National Socialist Council of Nagaland**Shan State Army (SSA)****Vigorous Burmese Student Warriors (VBSW)**

Founder 1999

Most of the following groups have signed cease-fire agreements, or reached other means of accommodation, with the ruling military junta (the date given in parentheses indicates the month in which agreement with the junta was concluded):

Democratic Karen (Kayin) Buddhist Organization**Kachin Democratic Army**

(Jan. 1991); fmrlly the 4th Brigade of the Kachin Independence Army.

Leader: U Zaw Maing.

Kachin Independence Organization (KIO)

(Oct. 1993).

Chair: U Lamon Tu Jai.

Military wing: Kachin Independence Army

Karen (Kayin) Solidarity Organization (KSO)

Founded 1997; formerly All Karen Solidarity and Regeneration Front; breakaway group from the KNU21-mem. exec. cttee; advocates nation-wide cease-fire and the settlement of all national problems through negotiations.

President: Saw W. P. Ni.

Sec.-Gen: Mahn Aung Htay.

Karenni (Kayinni) National People's Liberation Front

(May 1994).

Leader: U Tun Kyaw.

Kayan National Guard

(Feb 1992)

Kayan New Land Party

(July 1994).

Leader U Than Soe Naing.

Myanmar National Democracy Alliance

(March 1989)

National Democracy Alliance Army

(June 1989)

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New Democratic Army

(Dec 1989)

New Mon State Party

(June 1995).

Military wing: Mon National Liberation Army

Palaung State Liberation Organization

(April 1991); military wing: Palaung State Liberation Army; 7,000–8,000 men

Pa-O National Organization

(Feb. 1991).

Chair: Aung Kham Hti.

Military wing: Pa-O National Army

Shan State Nationalities Liberation Organization

(Oct. 1994).

Chair: U Tha Kalei

United Wa State Party

(May 1989); fmrly part of the Communist Party of Burma;

Military wing: United Wa State Army (10,000–15,000 men).

Leaders: Chao Ngi Lai, Pao Yu Chang.

Since 1991 the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, constituted by representatives elected in the general election of 1990, has served as a government-in-exile:

National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB)

77 South Washington Street, Suite 308, Rockville, Maryland 20850, USA

Tel: (301) 424-4810

Fax: (301) 424-4812

Email: ncgub@ncgub.net

Internet: www.ncgub.net

Prime Minister: Dr Sein Win.

Source - Europa World Online, accessed 16 October 2007 [1]

Other organisations:**Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA)**

A social welfare movement formed and supported by Burma's ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). (Human Rights Watch, 24 April 2007) [5e] "The Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) is a government-run organization that was founded in September 1993 by top military leaders of the military regime. It has become a civilian wing of the junta and it is frequently used by the authorities to enforce obedience by the general population through violence and intimidation. It is the same organization that attempted to assassinate Nobel Peace Prize recipient Aung San Suu Kyi on May 30, 2003, an attack which resulted in 100 of her supporters being beaten to death by USDA members." (Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) (Burma)) [49]

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Pyithu Swan Arr Shin – PSAS (People's Power Group)

“a branch of the USDA consisting of civilian henchmen, including many with criminal records.” (Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) (Burma)) [49]

88 Generation Students' Group (88GSG)

Named after the 1988 uprising, when the groups' key members were at the forefront of the protests. 88GSG plays a prominent role in pro-democracy campaigns in Burma. Unofficial leader: Min Ko Naing (BBC News, 22 August 2007) [7r]

All Burma Federation of Students Unions (ABFSU)

Founded 1931 as Rangoon University Students' Union, renamed All Burma Students' Union in 1936 then changed to ABFSU in 1951. An underground organisation that re-emerged to join the pro-democracy demonstrations that followed the government's fuel price increases in August 2007. (The Irrawaddy, 28 August 2007) [42f]

All Burma Monks Alliance

Clergy group at the centre of the pro-democracy protests that started in August 2007. (Radio Free Asia, 23 September 2007) [38e] (Burma Net News, 21 September 2007) [27]

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