

Press Release

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Call to put an end to brutal crackdown on peaceful protests in Myanmar (Burma)

Strasbourg, 01.10.2007 - The Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), meeting in Strasbourg, on 1 October 2007, calls on the military Junta in Myanmar (Burma) to put an immediate end to the brutal crackdown on the peaceful protests, led by Buddhist monks, which have swept across the country. The violence with which the demonstrations have been struck down and the ensuing heavy death toll among the civilian population are shocking in this day and age. To repress the peaceful expression of dissent with such violence and on such a disproportionate scale is a flagrant and massive violation of human rights.

To date, calls for restraint by the international community have gone unheeded which demonstrates that the Junta is prepared to use the most repugnant means in their struggle to hang on to power at all costs.

The Bureau encourages and supports all democratic forces in the country in their struggle for the establishment of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights in Myanmar (Burma). It pays tribute to the courageous actions of the Buddhist Monks who have rallied the civilian population in their peaceful attempts to alleviate the many years of suffering under the Junta's harsh regime. It also salutes the courage and tenacity of Aung San Suu Kyi, (Nobel Peace Prize Winner 1991), who has spent the major part of the last 18 years in detention, in her long-standing and tireless efforts to bring about democratic change in the country, and calls for her immediate release.

Since democratic reforms, rule of law and respect for human rights are the only way forward to achieve stability and prosperity in the country, the Bureau calls on the Junta to seize this opportunity to put an end to brutal repression, to open a dialogue with the political forces opposed to the regime and civil society and to embark on a peaceful transition to democracy.

The Bureau lends its wholehearted support to the efforts of the international community to find a peaceful outcome of the current crisis.

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 318 members from the national parliaments of the 47 member states.

President: René van der Linden (Netherlands, EPP/CD); Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

Political Groups: SOC (Socialist Group); EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); EDG (European Democratic Group); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).