

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES

**Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales**



IAW ACTION SHEET - March 2008

Equal Rights

Under **PEACE** in the IAW Action Programme 2008-2010 members will find the following clause:

- * work for the control and reduction of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and fight against their illicit trade**

IAW is a member of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) which has issued the following call to support Amnesty International.

Myanmar: Stopping the Arms Flow

The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) is calling on its members to support the campaign by Amnesty International for a comprehensive arms embargo on Myanmar.

Goals

- ∞ To urge governments to immediately stop arms supplies to Myanmar.
- ∞ To demonstrate worldwide support for a comprehensive UN Security Council arms embargo on Myanmar.

Background

Between 25 and 29 September 2007, security forces in Myanmar attacked peaceful demonstrators and raided many monasteries, in response to the largest display of civil unrest seen in the country since 1988. The military fired live ammunition to suppress the wave of peaceful protests. Thousands were arrested, hundreds were injured, and at least 31 were killed although the actual number is likely to be over 100. Myanmar security forces have continued to arrest protesters and those suspected of being associated with them, including monks, journalists, human rights defenders and other activists.

Arms to Myanmar

China has been the main supplier of arms to Myanmar security forces, followed by India, Serbia, Russia and Ukraine, according to Amnesty International (AI). The EU and US have imposed arms embargoes on Myanmar, but AI is concerned that components from these countries have been used in arms transferred to Myanmar.

An effective arms embargo will complement other coordinated action to end the widespread and systematic violations of human rights in Myanmar. Over time an arms embargo would reduce new supplies to the military, security and police forces that are perpetrating such violations.

On 11 October, the UN Security Council issued a statement deploring the use of violence against peaceful demonstrations in Myanmar. Amnesty International is now calling for the Security Council to go further and impose an arms embargo. The current members of the Council are the 5 permanent members (China, France, Russia, UK, US) and also Belgium, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Croatia, Indonesia, Italy, Libya, Panama, South Africa and Vietnam.

Campaign suggestions

- ∞ Email petition. Invite people to send an email to the national Amnesty International section with the message “The World Says No Arms to Myanmar”. You will need to check with the national section first, since not all sections are involved in this campaign. These emails will be counted and then the results delivered by the AI section to the Chinese, Russian and Indian embassies in order to express the widespread support for the imposition of a comprehensive arms embargo on Myanmar.
- ∞ High-level advocacy meetings with national governments. Ministries of Foreign Affairs should be urged to put maximum pressure on China, India and Russia to halt the supply of military and security equipment and to agree a UN arms embargo.
- ∞ Public demonstrations and outreach. Public demonstrations could highlight the demand “The World Says No Arms to Myanmar” through banners, posters and other means. It is important to link up with partner NGOs and to mobilise the support of parliamentarians and where relevant with religious authorities.

Amnesty International has recommended that its sections should **not** demonstrate outside the embassies of China and India. Please coordinate with your national AI section on this campaign. Please email Bruce Millar (bruce.millar@iansa.org) with your plans and these will be circulated to the rest of the global network.

More information

To receive the Amnesty International Action Circular with more details of the campaign, please email Bruce Millar (bruce.millar@iansa.org)

Background on the human rights abuses in Myanmar

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/asia-and-pacific/south-east-asia/myanmar>

Myanmar needs a comprehensive arms embargo (Amnesty report, September 2007)

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA16/014/2007/d274397f-a2d8-11dc-8d74-6f45f39984e5/asa160142007en.html>

Photographs and other electronic campaign materials are available from Sauro Scarpelli at Amnesty International: sscarpel@amnesty.org

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You can find this IAW *Action Sheet* also on the IAW website: <http://www.womenalliance.org>