



**Immediate Release**  
**May 16, 2008**

**REFERENDUM RESULT MUST NOT BE ACCEPTED**

The united front of the Burmese democracy movement denounces in the strongest possible terms the published results of the ruling military regime's illegal National Referendum. The Burmese military junta has claimed that 92.4% of the 22 million eligible voters approved the National Constitution, which would serve to consolidate its illegitimate rule. The referendum was held amidst gross injustice and human rights abuses. International voting standards were fundamentally contravened, all political dialogue was suppressed and the referendum was neither free nor fair. Ballots were openly manipulated by a heavily present military and armed forces, many were arrested, some had their vote cast for them and others were simply barred from casting any vote.

It is ethically indisputable that the absolute priority of the authorities must be to assist those affected by the catastrophe of Cyclone Nargis and to properly address its grave potential aftermath. As well as the spread of disease and the extreme vulnerability of those affected, Burma has just suffered the destruction of its food-bowl. The Irrawaddy Delta is the overwhelmingly major agricultural area of Burma; crops, forests, fisheries and livestock have been annihilated. The long-term economic effects of a failure to confront this disaster would be devastating for a country that is already considered one of the poorest in Asia.

The military junta has announced the 'results' of their referendum in advance of the vote of those in the areas most affected by the cyclone. This illegal act emphasises the cruel absurdity of the entirely fraudulent referendum. 47 of the country's 324 townships have had their vote postponed until May 24<sup>th</sup>. There has so far been no announcement of the list of eligible voters or where they should vote, which must surely be deemed impossible in the current situation. We are further concerned that people will be intimidated into voting in favour of the junta's constitution by the threat of having much-needed aid withheld. It is a humanitarian disgrace to consider holding the vote amidst such tragedy and disruption.

In the face of the despicable contravention of their own and international laws regarding the holding of a national vote, as well as the current humanitarian crisis, the referendum must be whole-heartedly condemned. We hereby call on the United Nations Security Council, ASEAN and the whole international community to reject the results of this referendum on both legal and ethical grounds.

- END -

Media Contact:	Dr. Lian H. Sakhong	+66 81 029 6100
	Khin Ohmar	+66 81 884 0772
	Soe Aung	+66 81 839 9816
	Nang Hseng Noun	+66 81 884 4963

- National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB)
- National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB)
- Ethnic Nationalities Council (ENC)
- Women's League of Burma (WLB)
- Forum for Democracy in Burma (FDB)
- Student and Youth Congress of Burma (SYCB)
- Nationalities Youth Forum (NY Forum)