

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 21, 2008

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**ASEAN'S PLAN FOR BURMA IS A MERE "BAND-AID"**

*ASEAN's Plan to Deliver Aid to Burma Nargis' Victims Inadequate; UN, US, UK, France Must Intervene*

**(San Francisco, CA USA) Empathizers of Burma Nargis' victims will march from Justin Herman Plaza at 12 noon to the Singapore Consulate-General (595 Market St.) in San Francisco on Friday, May 23, 2008 to plead with the Singapore Consul-General for timely and sufficient aid for cyclone victims. There will be a meditation in front of the Singapore Consulate-General immediately following the march.**

In the last two weeks, the world has watched the millions of cyclone victims in Burma suffer as the military regime of Burma has resisted, restricted, and refused an outpouring of humanitarian aid offered by the international community. According to Human Rights Watch, only about 30% of the 2.5 million survivors have received any type of aid and whole regions have not received any assistance.

On May 19, 2008, more than two weeks after cyclone Nargis ravaged Burma, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), chaired by Singapore, held an emergency meeting to find ways of escalating delivery of foreign aid to Burma amid resistance from its military regime. As a result of the meeting, Burma agreed to allow members of ASEAN and some of its other neighbors—such as China and India—to send personnel into Burma. Members of ASEAN will send a total of 270 medical personnel to handle the 2.5 million people in crisis in Burma. ASEAN also has as yet unclear plans to develop a mechanism to allow a better flow of aid into Burma.

Immediately after the release of ASEAN's special statement, Human Rights Watch called for UN Security Council to act because it found ASEAN's plan to be inadequate given the scope of the crisis in Burma.. "While the ASEAN initiative may turn out to be a step forward, it does not have the capacity to address all the urgent needs faced by Burma's cyclone survivors," said Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "Governments and aid agencies should not delude themselves into thinking otherwise."

"The member countries of ASEAN understood that they needed specialists to help them recover after a massive natural disaster like the tsunami. Why does ASEAN think the cyclone victims in Burma, who have already endured more than two weeks of waiting and suffering, deserve or want anything less?" asks Nyunt Than, President of the Burmese American Democratic Alliance (BADA). "The Burmese military regime is relenting a little just to appease critics and deflect pressure. It will do as little as possible, but just enough to avoid humanitarian intervention by western states."

Singapore, Thailand and other ASEAN member countries have vast economic connections with the Burmese military dictatorship, including arms sales and money laundering. "ASEAN is shielding the junta for economic reasons," says Nyunt Than. "ASEAN should have acted much earlier rather than stalling to protect the Burmese regime's ineptitude and its own economic interests. Had the welfare of the cyclone victims been ASEAN's true priority, they would have had the emergency meeting within days of the cyclone instead of waiting until an imminent humanitarian intervention by western countries. The insufficient and superficial aid operations of ASEAN, still tightly controlled by Burma's military, will inevitably result in hundreds of thousands of more deaths in the coming weeks and the potential of 2.5 million people dying of starvation, dehydration, disease and/or exposure."

BADA, along with other organizations, is calling on: (1) the United Nations to use all instruments available to ensure that aid is delivered to those in need; (2) China to stop blocking the UN Security Council from acting and use its relationship with the regime to pressure them to accept full assistance; (3) the US, UK, and France to provide humanitarian intervention with or without approval; and (4) Singapore to stop enabling the regime and to pressure the junta to accept all available help.

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Burmese American Democratic Alliance (BADA) – [badasf.org](http://badasf.org)  
Burmese American Women's Alliance (BAWA) - [bawasf.org](http://bawasf.org)  
Association of Burmese Students San Francisco (ABSSF)

Committee for Responsibility to Protect - [burmarelief.blogspot.com](http://burmarelief.blogspot.com)