



NATIONAL COALITION GOVERNMENT UNION OF BURMA

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Press Release

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NCGUB Says Ignore the Junta, Save Lives First!

We are extremely disappointed by the Burmese generals' total disregard for human suffering. Latest reports indicate that international agencies have suspended airlift of humanitarian supplies because the Burmese military impounded the relief packages from the World Food Programme. The military's foreign minister has also announced that Burma only wants aid and not foreign experts.

We would not have been concerned by the minister's statement if Burma had the capability to deliver the urgently needed assistance on time. But the Burmese military neither has the capability nor the expertise to meet the humanitarian demands of the day.

We are, therefore, deeply frustrated by the paranoiac decision of the Burmese generals as well as the wrangling over procedural matters at the UN Security Council while people are dying everyday in Burma. We appeal to all UNSC members to approach the issue from a humanitarian point of view and prevent further loss of lives.

Of the estimated population of 54 million in Burma, a total of about 25 million people are living in the five cyclone-affected areas. Irrawaddy Division, which bore the brunt of the cyclone, represents almost 10 percent of the population and people are dying and in desperate need of help.

We appreciate the United States and France for their preparedness to assist the people and the international community for trying its best through diplomatic means to cooperate with the Burmese military in the relief efforts. These efforts, however, have failed and precious time has been wasted. We believe that the time has come for the international community to assume its responsibility to protect the lives of the people of Burma.

We, the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, therefore urgently call on governments, the United Nations, international agencies, and in particular, France and the United States which have demonstrated their expertise in saving lives when natural disaster struck Indonesia and Bangladesh, not to ignore but to immediately initiate the deployment of search and rescue missions and medical and relief efforts to extend humanitarian assistance to the cyclone victims without waiting for the approval from the Burmese generals.

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