

ACRONYMS, ABBREVIATIONS & OTHER TERMS

ABSDF	All Burma Students' Democratic Front
ALP	Arakanese Liberation Party
baht	unit of Thai currency. During 2001, the exchange rate was roughly 44 Thai baht to one US dollar.
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action, the document detailing actions to be taken to advance women's equality signed by governments at the Fourth world Conference on Women in Beijing, China in 1995
BSPP	Burmese Socialist Programme Party, the name of the military government ruling Burma from 1974 to 1988. Prior to the acceptance by referendum of the 1974 constitution, the same government was known from 1962 to 1974 as the Revolutionary Council.
BSPP	Burmese Socialist Programme Party
Burman	denotes a member of Burma's largest ethnic group
Burmese	used to describe people from Burma, regardless of ethnic group, and the language of the Burmans
CAPS	Continuous Assessment and Progression System, a school program that uses regular evaluation of classroom work rather than heavy reliance on examinations
carry-thama	an agent who, for a fee, arranges jobs and sometimes transportation for potential migrants
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
cheroot	a hand-rolled Burmese cigar
CNF	Chin National Front
CPB	Communist Party of Burma
CRPP	Committee Representing People's Parliament
CSW	commercial sex worker
Daw	an honorific used for older women
eh may	Karen word for traditional birth attendant
CONGO	government-organized non-government organization
IB	infantry battalion
KIO	Kachin Independence Organization
KNPP	Karenni National Progressive Party
KNU	Karen National Union
Ko	an honorific used for young men
kyat	the Burmese currency. The government maintains an artificially fixed exchange rate of 6 kyat to one US dollar. On the more commonly used black market exchange, in mid 1997, one US dollar was equivalent to 180 kyat. By the end of 2000, the kyat had fallen to 350 or more per US dollar. In

	mid2001, the kyat was trading at 500 or more per US dollar.
LIB	light infantry battalion
longyi	a traditional Burmese sarong (men's or women's)
Ma	an honorific used for young women
MCH	maternal and child health
MI	military intelligence
MMCWA	Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Committee
MP	Member of Parliament
NaSaKa	Regional military command
nat	a spirit in traditional Burmese Animist belief
NGO	non-government organization
NUFA	National United Front of Arakan
OG	obstetrician/gynecologist or obstetrics and gynecology
paso	a traditional Burmese men's sarong
PCH	primary health care
peri-urban townships	resettlement communities in the suburban areas of major centers, such as Rangoon and Mandalay. Many were formed after slum clearances in downtown areas. These communities are often lacking in basic services. Among the biggest are Hlaingthayar and Chan-myar-tharzi.
pon	literally: power, glory; the masculine power that is believed to reside in the right side of a man's body and is related to a man's capacity to attain monkhood
pwehza	an agent or broker who works between a buyer and a seller, taking a commission
pyi	a volume measure usually used for rice, equivalent to eight 11-ounce tins of condensed milk
RTI	reproductive tract infection
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council, the name of the military junta ruling Burma from 1988 to 1997
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council, the name of the military junta ruling Burma from 1997 to the present
STD	sexually transmitted disease
taka	unit of Bangladesh currency. In 1999, the exchange rate was roughly 55 taka to one US dollar.
tamein	a traditional Burmese woman's sarong
Tatmadaw	the name of the Burmese central government army
TBA	traditional birth attendant
thanakha	a cosmetic paste made of ground sandalwood used by women throughout Burma to beautify and protect their skin

Acronyms, Abbreviations & Other Terms

U	an honorific used for older men
UG	underground
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Communication Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission on Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
viss	a weight measure used for meat and other foodstuffs. One viss equals 1.6 kilograms, or 3.5 pounds.
yuan	unit of Chinese currency. In 1999, the exchange rate was roughly 8 yuan per US dollar.

A NOTE ON THE GOVERNMENT TEXTS

In our report, we make use of a number of documents produced by the SPDC on their compliance with the CEDAW. To clarify:

The original text of the Government's initial report to the CEDAW Committee was submitted in March 1999. The full notation for this text is, Union of Myanmar, Report on Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Yangon, March 1999. We will refer to this report in short form as:

Union of Myanmar, "Report on the CEDAW."

A corrected but essentially similar version of this report was circulated at the 22nd CEDAW session. The full notation for this report is, United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Initial report of States parties, Myanmar (CEDAW/C/MMR/1). We refer to it in short form as:

"Initial report of States parties: Myanmar."

During the session, the government's oral presentation to the Committee reiterated this information in slightly abbreviated form. A printed version of this text was also distributed. The paper is titled, Presentation by His Excellency U Win Mra, Permanent Representative of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations and the Leader of the Myanmar Delegation to the Twenty-Second Session of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), New York, 21 January 2000. We will refer to this presentation in short form as:

"Presentation by U Win Mra."

Finally, the government also made available a printed version of its responses to the Committee's questions in the session. The full notation for this document is, Response by the Myanmar Delegation, Twenty-Second Session of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), New York, 26 January 2000. We will refer to this document in short form as:

"Response by the Myanmar Delegation."



COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Burma (Myanmar) is a country of approximately 676,600 square miles in Southeast Asia, bordering Thailand, Lao P. D. R., China, India and Bangladesh. It is administratively divided into seven states named for the largest ethnic groups and seven divisions. Boundaries imposed under British colonial rule to create the polity that exists today artificially split many of the country's larger ethnic communities, which now straddle international borders. Burma's varied topography and richly diverse mix of ethno-linguistic groups (20 major ethnicities, although the Government officially recognizes 135 linguistic subgroups) make it exceedingly difficult to generalize about conditions in the country as a whole.

Few recent and reliable demographic figures exist, and very little of the available data are disaggregated by sex, geographic area or ethnicity. Although current estimates place the population at 48 million or more, with the government claiming 52 million in 2001, lack of infrastructure and ongoing conflict in remote parts of the country have meant that a reliable population census has never been conducted. The last census taken in 1983 did not reflect accurately population figures in war-torn and inaccessible border regions. Women are believed to make up slightly more than half of the total population. Although Burmese form the majority ethnic group, ethnic minorities make up 35% or more of the total population, and some rural areas are populated entirely by non-Burman ethnic groups. While the majority of Burma's people are Theravada Buddhists, many of the larger ethnic minorities are followers of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or Animism.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Known in Burmese as *Mynmar Ngaingan Taw*, the country was called Burma during the period of colonial occupation. Burmese people use both *Myanmar Ngaingan* and *Bamar-Ngaingan* to refer to their country. In Burmese, the word *Myanmar* by itself is an adjective, usually used to refer to the language. The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), after seizing power in 1988, officially changed the name of the country from the Union of Burma to the Union of Myanmar. Now it is alternately referred to as Burma and Myanmar. Throughout this re-

port, we will use the name "Burma." We have also tried to use the city names familiar to foreign readers; for example, Rangoon instead of Yangon, and Moulmein instead of Mawlamyaing. However, when quoting from other sources, we have preserved the spelling used in the original texts. We apologize for any confusion this may create.

Burma has been ruled by a series of self-appointed military juntas since U Ne Win seized power in 1962. Despite the changes in the regime's name over the years, most of the key personnel have remained the same, leading some analysts to refer to the successive ruling governments as "old wine in new bottles." The ruling powers are often referred to by their acronyms:

- RC Revolutionary Council. Following elected Prime Minister U Nu's resignation, U Ne Win headed a protectorate government for two years, before seizing power in 1962 in a military coup and forming the Revolutionary Council
- BSPP Burmese Socialist Programme Party, the name the Revolutionary Council assumed after the 1974 constitution was adopted
- SLORC State Law and Order Restoration Council, the name the military junta took on 18 September 1988 in what many have referred to as a "false coup," after quelling popular demonstrations against the Ne Win regime
- SPDC State Peace and Development Council, the latest incarnation of the junta. The name change was announced on 15 November 1997 following a reshuffle during which the command hierarchy was restructured, weeding out some members of the junta and giving more power to regional commanders of the *Tatmadaw* (the Burmese army).