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Canadian NGO Policy Paper on Burma  
May 1999

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### I Overview

There is little debate about Burma's status as a pariah within the international community of nations. A country that once showed enormous promise, Burma has been impoverished by almost four decades of military dictatorship. Not only impoverished, the people of Burma have been brutalized by a regime determined to crush any opposition to its rule.

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The UN Special Rapporteur, Rakhine Linn, did not resort to diplomatic nuance in the language of his report. He described the human rights situation in Burma as one of systematic repression, systematic rape, torture, inhumane, cruel and degrading treatment of prisoners of war, displacement, arbitrary killings of civilians, impunity, and the confiscation of property.

The Special Rapporteur reports that:

... violence against civilians would appear to be a fundamental component of the overall military strategy. In flagrant violation of the basic rules of humanitarian law, civilians living in rural settlements have been attacked, this has resulted in massacres, in disorderly flight to safety, often separating families. Those who are captured are often subjected to rape and arbitrary killing, or held to grow food for the army, or made to provide labour or portering for the army.

The UN Special Rapporteur outlines the magnitude of the crisis inside the country. Canadian emergency operations and forced relocation programs can't shelter people in ethnic minority states, resulting in... in which people have little access to food, shelter or basic health care... attempting to leave relocation sites are often shot on sight - there are numerous... documented reports... Rapporteur also... are several victims

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