



The 88 Generation Students
Yangon (Rangoon), Myanmar (Burma)
Statement 5/2008 (88)
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Let's not be Slaves of the Military
Vote "No" to the Sham Constitution
An Appeal of "the 88 Generation Students" to the People of Burma

All our revered Monks, students and the people of Burma,

(1) We call for the people of Burma to reject the state constitution, written by the Burmese military junta, in the upcoming referendum decisively, because;

(a) The peoples' representatives elected from the 1990 general elections were not allowed to participate in the constitution writing process.

(b) This constitution is not based on real federal system and does not grantee the equality, self-determination and minority rights for all ethnic nationalities.

(c) This constitution does not intend to build a democratic society and does not protect the interest and security of the people.

(2) The Referendum is expected to be a sham and the junta's plan is to steal and abuse the real desire of the people. Here is how the junta has acted in writing the constitution and planning to approve it.

(a) According to the announcement 1/90, the junta claimed that elected representatives are solely responsible for writing the constitution. However, in violation of their own law, the junta did not allow the elected representatives to participate in writing the constitution.

(b) The basic and fundamental principles were illegally adopted by the junta-sponsored mass rallies, in which all the attendees were forced to participate.

(c) The national convention was just for show to approve these principles written in advance by the junta. Submissions by ethnic cease-fire groups were ignored.

(d) The junta's order 5/96 threatens to punish with 20 years imprisonment the people who criticize the national convention and the constitution.

(e) Freedom of expression and media are severely restricted.

(f) The Commission for Holding Referendum was formed with the junta's handpicked persons and those whom people can trust are not included. The Referendum Law, issued on Feb 28, 2008, is also not in line with international and ASEAN standards. There is no clear indication of what the junta will do if the majority of the voters reject the constitution. The junta is apparently planning to win anyhow.

(g) Thousands of democracy activists, including Buddhist Monks, Nuns, students, ethnic youths and our leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, are still incarcerated.

(3) This constitution is designed to protect and promote the interests, wealth and security of Generals and their cronies. Ordinary soldiers, who are actually sons and daughter of the people, would become an elite class, and will have more privileges than ordinary citizens, who are the root of them. This constitution will allow the military dictatorship to perpetuate in Burma.

(4) What will happen if this constitution is approved?

The people of Burma will be abused and oppressed more by the Generals, their families and their cronies. They will also monopolize the state economy and they will have a “License to Oppress”. The people of Burma will become slaves of the military for generations.

(5) Let us transform the junta’s sham national referendum into the “National Show of Peoples’ Desire”. We will prevent the country from falling into the depths with the junta’s one-sided roadmap. “People Power” will prevail.

(6) How will the people vote?

People, who are eligible to vote, should go to polling stations and put “No” votes in the ballot boxes. You do not need to be afraid. The authorities have no right to arrest you for voting “AGAINST” this constitution. You are entitled to use your vote freely. By voting “AGAINST” this constitution, let us show the enormous power of the people. If you fail to do so, you will be afraid of the military for the rest of your life and of your next generations.

(7) If the junta tries to claim that this constitution is approved, despite a majority of voters voting against it, we will continue our fight with various levels of peaceful acts. After the previous dictator Ne Win approved the one-party system constitution in 1974, there were mass protests in 1974, 1975 and 1976. In 1988, under the deluge of mass demonstration in August, the 1974 constitution was abolished. The history of our country has already proved that any constitution, which does not reflect the desire of the people, would not last long and is no more than a piece of paper.

(8) Let us be responsible for what we, each and every one of us, need to do. Our united action will frighten the Generals. They will come to realize that we are not puppets, which they can crush as they wish. This will be a way for us to be free from all the crises we face.

We will pave the way to freedom by ourselves.

All the people have the right to draw the roadmap for the people.

With our “No” votes, we will clean the blood and dirt stained on the bodies of our revered Monks by the soldiers.

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