



19 September 2011

Rt Hon John Key
Prime Minister
Level 8
Executive Wing
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Prime Minister

Proposed UN Resolution on Burma: New Zealand support

I am writing on behalf of the New Zealand Law Society (the Law Society) in support of the International Bar Association Human Rights Institute's "Justice for Burma" campaign. In particular, the Law Society respectfully requests the New Zealand Government support a forthcoming Resolution on Burma, which the Law Society understands will be introduced and considered at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) later this year.

At this point 16 states have called for a UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) into alleged international crimes (human rights and humanitarian law violations) committed in Burma. Those states include: Australia, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Slovakia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

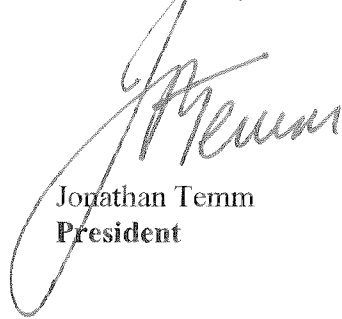
The Law Society is committed to advancing and upholding human rights world-wide and the Law Society's Human Rights and Privacy Committee monitors adherence to international human rights covenants and obligations both here in New Zealand and overseas.

The Law Society and its members think it is important that New Zealand takes further steps to ascertain the facts where there are credible and serious allegations of human rights law and humanitarian law abuses. That verification is best carried out through an impartial and independent UN COI, which could assist in providing credible answers to allegations that crimes against humanity and war crimes have been perpetrated in Burma.

In March 2010, the UN Special Rapporteur, in reporting on the situation in Burma, recommended the establishment of a COI. He repeated that recommendation this year. There is concern that the Burmese Government has failed to act on and to verify prima facie evidence of human rights violations collected in numerous reports, including: arbitrary killings; forced displacement of civilians; forced labour; rape and other serious sexual violence; and torture.

In light of the serious allegations of human rights law and humanitarian law abuses reported by UN bodies the Law Society urges the New Zealand Government to support the planned Resolution on Burma at the UNGA.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Temm', written over a large, stylized flourish that loops around the text.

Jonathan Temm
President

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Hon Murray McCully
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