

# STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS & SANCTIONS IN MYANMAR

## MAY 2015 REPORT

**Summary.** This report reviews the May 2015 developments relating to human rights in Myanmar. Relatedly, it addresses the interchange between Myanmar’s reform efforts and the responses of the international community.

<b>I.</b>	<b>International Community and Sanctions.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Civil and Political Rights.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>Election-Related Laws and Acts.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>Press and Media Laws/Restrictions and Freedom of Association.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>Official Corruption.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>Constitutional Reform.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Governance and Rule of Law.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>Political Prisoners.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Economic Development.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>Developments in the Legal Framework of Economic Development.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>Developments in Foreign Investment and Economic Development Projects.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>Land Seizures.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Ethnic Violence.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>Violence Against Muslims.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>Violence Between the Union Government and Ethnic Rebel Groups.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>Peace Talks.....</b>	<b>8</b>

## **I. International Community and Sanctions**

On May 4, the Ministry of Home Affairs announced that the hundreds of Myanmar fishermen being held in Jakarta and the Maluku Islands would be repatriated by mid-May.<sup>1</sup> As many as 140 fishermen were able to begin returning home on May 14.<sup>2</sup>

On May 4, senior officials from the United States Department of State met with Shwe Mann, the head of Myanmar's ruling party and parliamentary speaker in Washington, where Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken expressed concerns about new legislation which has been criticized as discriminating against Muslims.<sup>3</sup> The U.S. State Department was particularly critical of the Burmese government's decision to revoke identity cards for Rohingya.<sup>4</sup> Later in the month, the Myanmar Lower House of Parliament passed a law restricting "white card" holders from voting in the country's general election, which is scheduled to take place later this year.<sup>5</sup>

The regional government of Chin State will begin a new first-of-its-kind five-year social welfare initiative in partnership with UNICEF and the Myanmar Institute for Integrated Development.<sup>6</sup> The program is meant to improve food security and access to education, and to expand the coverage of available quality health services.<sup>7</sup>

On May 6, the Commander-in-Chief of the Burmese Army, Min Aung Hlaing, left Rangoon to pay official visits to Pakistan and Serbia, according to state-run media.<sup>8</sup> Sources related to military said that among the Commander-in-Chief's retinue were senior ranking officers who have are considered to have been connected with the purchase of weapons and other military equipment.<sup>9</sup>

On May 20, China lodged a protest with Myanmar after shelling originating in Myanmar injured five people in China's southwestern province of Yunnan.<sup>10</sup> Beijing has previously expressed its outrage toward similar events, including the deaths of five individuals in March and property damage sustained this month in another incident of stray shelling, and awaits a "responsible explanation" from Myanmar which the Chinese foreign ministry has been assured is forthcoming.<sup>11</sup> Yunnan province borders a region where fighting between the Burmese army and ethnic rebels is common, with the region currently under martial law while government troops attempt to contain the fighting.<sup>12</sup>

President Thein Sein signed the Population Control Health Care Bill, a controversial law that would require some mothers in regions with high population growth to refrain from having children more frequently than on three-year intervals.<sup>13</sup> Critics of the law point to infringement upon women's reproductive rights, as well as concerns that the law may be intended to apply disproportionately to certain ethnic groups and may be a response to a perceived and unsubstantiated threat that the Muslim population is outpacing the majority in new births.<sup>14</sup> U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Blinken criticized the new law while on a tour of southeast Asia.<sup>15</sup>

On May 28, the United Nations Security Council held its first closed-door briefing on the human rights situation in Myanmar, focusing on the status of the country's Rohingya minority.<sup>16</sup> A diplomat who attended the meeting confirmed that no immediate action is expected.<sup>17</sup>

The Dalai Lama met with Aung San Suu Kyi and urged her to speak out to protect the country's persecuted Rohingya Muslims.<sup>18</sup>

On May 29, the Burmese navy seized a boat off the coast of Myanmar with 727 people aboard; while the nationality of the people on board is unclear, the Ministry of Information described the people as “Bengalis”, the term used by the government to refer to the country's Rohingya minority as well as to immigrants from Bangladesh.<sup>19</sup>

On May 29, Myanmar joined a group of 17 Asian countries to discuss causes of the Southeast Asian illegal migration issue which has garnered increasing media attention in the past few months.<sup>20</sup> At the conference, Volker Turk, the assistant high commissioner for protection at the U.N. refugee agency, criticized Myanmar's treatment of its ethnic minorities as one of the root causes of the illegal migrant issue.<sup>21</sup>

## **II. Civil and Political Rights**

### **A. Election-Related Laws and Acts**

With elections scheduled for this November, a delegation from Myanmar's Union Election Commission (“UEC”), sponsored by The Asia Foundation, sought to improve its voter outreach and education initiatives by studying the tools used by Indonesia's General Elections Commissions (“KPU”) for its elections.<sup>22</sup> The KPU shared its experience from previous elections in Indonesia with the delegation, with particular emphasis on improving electoral management through stakeholder consultations, new technology, and a commitment to voter access to essential election data.<sup>23</sup> The Myanmar delegation further explored the use of technology for engaging voters, the importance of providing access to disabled voters and the inroads made with engaging women voters.<sup>24</sup>

Meanwhile, as election preparations are in progress, some observers point to the practical challenges of mobilizing a country where transportation and electricity are limited and over 47,000 polling stations are expected to be run with trained staff.<sup>25</sup> Observers are also concerned that the cost of taking adequate measures for ballot security is prohibitive.<sup>26</sup> Importantly, Myanmar plans to go ahead with the election despite the challenges it faces, which includes completing an electoral roll and accounting for population in areas which have suffered from ethnic conflict.<sup>27</sup>

In light of the challenges, the UEC is preparing for a high number of complaints to be lodged following the election and has encouraged the political parties, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations to know the laws, bylaws and procedures of the election commission.<sup>28</sup> The UEC also expects the media to monitor the situation and hold them accountable.<sup>29</sup>

### **B. Press and Media Laws/Restrictions and Freedom of Association**

Minister for Information Ye Htut referred to the arrest and subsequent shooting death of reporter Ko Par Gyi last year, an incident addressed further in Section IV below,

attributing public opinion harm sustained to the nation's image to the incident and others like it.<sup>30</sup> He made the remark at a media conference held earlier in the month, pointing to a lack of media laws that would have ostensibly provided some measure of protection to Par Gyi, who was arrested while covering conflict between the military and ethnic rebels.<sup>31</sup>

At the same conference, Aung San Suu Kyi admonished the media itself not to "self-censor," encouraging them to "be brave enough to point out the wrongdoings in our society."<sup>32</sup> The UN also called upon the Burmese government to allow full and uncensored access to the media in the lead up to this year's elections, "without fear and intimidation from anyone."<sup>33</sup> Myanmar was ranked 144<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries in Reporters without Borders' World Press Freedom Index.<sup>34</sup>

On the same day – ironically, World Press Freedom Day – the military released a statement warning the media that broadcasting or reporting any statements made by the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army ("MNDAA") would subject them to punishment under Section 17(1) of the Unlawful Association Act.<sup>35</sup> Under the Act, members of the media could be charged with "assisting the operations" of the MNDAA, an ethnic armed group in the Kokang region which has been deemed an unlawful association, and could be punished by up to three years in prison.<sup>36</sup> Vice president of the Myanmar Press Council Khin Maung Lay voiced his concern that the government could declare other ethnic armed groups to be unlawful associations, both encroaching upon the freedom of the press and jeopardizing the ongoing peace process.<sup>37</sup> Kamayut Media's Han Thar said that he received an e-mail from the Myanmar Press Council warning him that he "would be in trouble" if he contacted the MNDAA going forward, even though it had previously been acceptable practice.<sup>38</sup>

### **C. Official Corruption**

The forestry department announced this month that some 2,000 departmental employees have been dismissed in connection with timber smuggling, which the department claims has been on the rise due to corruption.<sup>39</sup> Deputy director general of the forestry department Zaw Win also said that 700 individuals have been targeted for further action, including possible indictment.<sup>40</sup> It is not clear whether the 700 individuals targeted include any high ranking governmental officials, although Zaw Win has told the media that he believes bribery among the upper ranks to be commonplace.<sup>41</sup> He apportioned some of the blame to the Chinese government's failure to make any arrests in connection with the smuggling activity, noting that Chinese demand was the main driver for the illegal trade of Burmese timber – around 160,000 tonnes of which have been seized over the last five years – and that Chinese gangs purportedly involved in the smuggling operations have not been sufficiently dealt with domestically in spite of promises to do so.<sup>42</sup>

### **III. Constitutional Reform**

After months of Burmese officials stating that the scheduled and approved constitutional referendum would take place this May,<sup>43</sup> the month of May passed without any such constitutional referendum. Burmese officials have yet to specify a new date for the referendum, or to confirm whether the referendum will in fact take place before the 2015 national elections.

According to Burmese law, the date of the referendum must be declared 30 days in advance, and the lists of eligible voters must be announced 15 days before the referendum.<sup>44</sup>

Following a recess, Parliament reconvened on May 11 with many expecting constitutional reform to be a major subject of debate during the new legislative session.<sup>45</sup> A bill on constitutional reform has been drafted by Parliament's Implementation Committee on Constitutional Amendments and could be submitted to the Union Parliament for a vote sometime after the legislature returns.<sup>46</sup> However, reform advocates are not optimistic about the bill's chances of passage, saying the bill is "very unlikely" to be approved by Parliament.<sup>47</sup> Instead, reform advocates are pinning their hopes for constitutional change to the high-level, six-party talks between government officials, including President Sein, both parliamentary speakers, the Army's Commander-in-Chief, opposition leader Suu Kyi and a representative for Myanmar's ethnic minorities.<sup>48</sup>

Although President Sein has said that his government is "ready to finalize" a long-sought nationwide ceasefire agreement with more than a dozen ethnic armed groups, certain leaders of the ethnic groups have indicated that any such ceasefire agreement would be contingent on the passage of amendments to the 2008 constitution.<sup>49</sup> "The main key is to have amendments to the Constitution. If there are amendments to the Constitution, other ethnic groups, including [the] Wa, will sign the [accord]," said Wa leader Bao Yuxiang.<sup>50</sup>

#### **IV. Governance and Rule of Law**

The *Myanmar Times* ran an editorial this month questioning the implications and desirability of following the "rule of law" to the letter.<sup>51</sup> The piece focused primarily on the application of the death penalty – which remains a legal and occasionally prescribed penalty in Myanmar, although sentences are typically commuted to life imprisonment – and its application or lack thereof amidst moral opposition to capital punishment, vis-à-vis adherence to the rule of law.<sup>52</sup> The author appears to encourage the government (which he seems to assume will be headed by opposition leader Suu Kyi) to follow the law on the books and seek capital punishment wherever available, particularly for war crimes allegedly committed by Burmese military officers and members of the previous military-run government, but is critical of Suu Kyi's unwillingness to take such an approach, quoting her as telling him, "[w]e have always said that we are not out for vengeance."<sup>53</sup>

Rule of Law, Peace and Stability Committee secretary Win Myint announced this month that more "rule of law" centers will be opened in as-yet undecided locations.<sup>54</sup> There are currently centers in Mandalay and Lashio, but the opening of additional centers is being hindered by governmental non-cooperation, according to a report submitted to Parliament by committee chair Suu Kyi.<sup>55</sup> The centers are being established in part thanks to aid from the European Union and the U.S. Agency for International Development.<sup>56</sup>

Soldiers involved in the shooting death of journalist Ko Par Gyi last year were acquitted by a court martial, prompting Par Gyi's widow to criticize the lack of accountability for the military's actions.<sup>57</sup> "I want to ask whether the 2008 constitution protects just the military, but not civilians," she asked, and although she plans to make a written complaint, says that she feels

the influence of the country's military and weakness of its judicial system means such an effort will ultimately be fruitless.<sup>58</sup> The two soldiers involved in the shooting were tried by military court martial in accordance with the constitution, despite calls to hold a civilian trial instead.<sup>59</sup> The military does not deny shooting Par Gyi, who was killed while attempting to escape detainment last October, but says that he was working for ethnic rebels at the time.<sup>60</sup> Par Gyi was arrested while photographing clashes between the military and the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army and killed when he tried to escape.<sup>61</sup>

## **V. Political Prisoners**

There were at least 157 political prisoners presently jailed in Myanmar at the end of April 2015, according to the Assistance Association of Political Prisoners.<sup>62</sup> During the month of May further cases were brought to the forefront, including those described below:

A Burmese court has imposed four years and four months imprisonment with hard labor for six prominent activists who were already serving prison terms for their political activities.<sup>63</sup> The activists were protesting outside of the Chinese embassy last year in opposition to the fatal shooting of an opponent of a Chinese-backed copper mine project and were charged for disrupting public tranquility, deterring a public officer from carrying out his duty and for rioting and violating a peaceful assembly law.<sup>64</sup>

A court has imposed a prison sentence of three months with hard labor on university lecturer Wai Yan Aung, the first to be sentenced for protesting against the National Education Law.<sup>65</sup> Wai Yan Aung led a demonstration during nationwide student protests and was charged under the Peaceful Assembly Law.<sup>66</sup> Critics say that the law stifles academic freedom and centralizes control over universities.<sup>67</sup>

## **VI. Economic Development**

### **A. Developments in the Legal Framework of Economic Development**

The U.S. State Department released a report on Myanmar's investment climate.<sup>68</sup> The report concluded that the Myanmar government "must prioritize among its long list of desired reforms", finding, in particular, that many laws and regulations are "outdated and inadequate" and that "[i]nvestor protection and the criteria for foreign investment are not well-defined."<sup>69</sup> The report also summarized criticisms by investors over the lack of transparency on investment approval procedures and the lack of reliable government data.<sup>70</sup> With only "tentative progress" by the government to date, the report cautioned investors to "come in with 'eyes wide open.'"<sup>71</sup>

### **B. Developments in Foreign Investment and Economic Development Projects**

With regard to foreign direct investment ("FDI"), the same report by the U.S. State Department (summarized in Section VI.A above) noted that the manufacturing and tourism services sectors are expected to continue growing.<sup>72</sup> However, the report reiterated that legal and other reforms are "urgently needed."<sup>73</sup> Corruption and related activity continue to be cited by investors as impediments to FDI.<sup>74</sup>

In the banking sector, there continue to be positive FDI developments.<sup>75</sup> A number of foreign banks, including Bangkok Bank and The Commercial Bank of Ceylon, have recently opened offices.<sup>76</sup>

### **C. Land Seizures**

Land seizure protests took a tragic turn this month. On May 21, Myint Aung, 63, immolated himself to protest the confiscation of his land by the military.<sup>77</sup> Myint and his family owned about 14 acres of land that the military seized in 2004.<sup>78</sup> Until a state government edict last year, they were permitted to continue farming so long as they made annual tenancy payments.<sup>79</sup> On May 20, Myint learned that the military was beginning construction of barracks on his land and, in the wake of a physical confrontation over this construction, rumors circulated that one of his nieces had been detained by the government.<sup>80</sup> That night, he and his family slept on their fields, afraid the military would begin construction if they left for home.<sup>81</sup> Early the next morning, Myint returned home, drafted a letter criticizing the village authorities and urging the return of all confiscated land, and then walked into the street, poured gasoline on himself, and set himself on fire.<sup>82</sup> More than 600 people, including land confiscation victims from outlying towns and local political party representatives, attended his funeral held several days later.<sup>83</sup>

Elsewhere this month, in Loikaw, the capital of Kayah State, roughly 500 farmers and their supporters took to the streets on May 5 to protest a recent sentencing.<sup>84</sup> The Loikaw Township Court fined the farmers, including a teenager, 500 kyat (US \$0.50) or else sentenced them to 15 days in prison for trespassing after a march around the town in protest of seized land.<sup>85</sup> Villagers stated the decision was particularly unfair because they have official ownership documents for the farmland.<sup>86</sup> This sentence follows the April 28 sentencing of farmers from Solyaku village, discussed in last month's report, who received identical sentences.

## **VII. Ethnic Violence**

### **A. Violence Against Muslims**

The plight of Rohingya Muslims received international attention this month as a result of the growing crisis of human trafficking in Southeast Asia, and the fate of those refugees stranded onboard trafficking ships.<sup>87</sup> According to one source, in the last several weeks, at least 3,000 refugees have been rescued by fisherman or have made their way to Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, with several thousand more believed to still be at sea after human traffickers abandoned their boats amid a regional crackdown on human trafficking.<sup>88</sup> In a departure from their previous policies, Malaysia and Indonesia agreed this month to provide Rohingya with shelter for one year, while Thailand has offered humanitarian help but no shelter.<sup>89</sup>

At the end of May, a regional conference to discuss the ongoing crisis of “boat people”, as these refugees are called, was well attended by representatives of 17 nations that are directly or indirectly affected by the crisis, as well as the United States and Japan and officials from various international organizations.<sup>90</sup> Although there were no major breakthroughs at the

conference, the high level of participation and general consensus that such discussions should continue were viewed as progress.<sup>91</sup>

However, calls for Myanmar to assume the responsibility of addressing the root cause of the refugee problem were met by criticism from Burmese officials who responded that “finger pointing” would not help.<sup>92</sup> In addition, the term “Rohingya” was not officially part of the regional conference and most people who spoke at the conference avoided using the term, because Myanmar threatened to boycott the talks if the term was used.<sup>93</sup> Further, Burmese officials have not only questioned the volume of refugees from their country, but have also rejected so-called “negative comments” made by the international community about their role in the crisis.<sup>94</sup>

At the end of May, it was reported that many Rohingya Muslims are paying off the traffickers and returning to the camps they used to live in after being held for months on overcrowded trafficking ships.<sup>95</sup> Those who return reported that the crews beat them with metal rods and chains when they asked for more food; many were starving, having been given only three cups of water and two handfuls of rice a day for up to three months.<sup>96</sup>

## **B. Violence Between the Central Government and Ethnic Rebel Groups**

According to the state-run media, seven Kokang rebels were killed, along with some government soldiers and some senior military officials, during fighting in the Kokang Self-Administered Zone.<sup>97</sup> The fighting resulted in government soldiers taking control of three “important hill posts” in the region.<sup>98</sup>

During the last few weeks of May, clashes between government forces and the Kachin Independence Army (“KIA”) were an almost daily occurrence, according to a KIA spokesman.<sup>99</sup> The spokesman further indicated that the government army has launched offensives aimed at seizing KIA-held mountain bases and that both sides had suffered casualties, although the exact number is yet unknown.<sup>100</sup>

## **C. Peace Talks**

At the end of May, members of the Union Peace-Making Work Committee (“UPWC”), the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (“NCCT”) and the government and ethnic negotiating groups met in Chiang Mai, Thailand to discuss preparations for a political dialogue to follow the eventual signing of a ceasefire agreement.<sup>101</sup> At the meeting, negotiators discussed the formation of committees for ceasefire monitoring and the implementation of a framework for political dialogue.<sup>102</sup> The UPWC/NCCT meeting was held in advance of a NCCT summit that will take place at the beginning of June, when ethnic leaders are expected to make their final assessment of the draft nationwide ceasefire agreement.<sup>103</sup>

The chief peace negotiator from the government delegation expressed the government’s satisfaction with the meeting, and urged the NCCT to arrive at a consensus on any further changes to the draft ceasefire agreement during the NCCT summit, while reiterating the government’s position that the government is satisfied with the current draft agreed upon on March 30.<sup>104</sup> However, some ethnic leaders are apprehensive about the exclusion of three armed ethnic



groups from the ceasefire agreement: the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, the Arakan Army and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, all of which are involved in ongoing hostilities with the government.<sup>105</sup>

1 The Irrawaddy, May 4, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/slave-fishermen-to-be-repatriated-next-month-home-affairs-ministry.html>.

2 The Irrawaddy, May 15, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/trafficked-fishermen-arrive-in-rangoon-from-indonesia.html>.

3 The Irrawaddy, May 4, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/us-voices-concerns-to-shwe-mann-on-race-religion-bills.html>.

4 *Id.*

5 The Irrawaddy, May 25, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/lower-house-passes-election-laws-nixing-white-card-suffrage.html> .

6 The Irrawaddy, May 5, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/health-and-education-plan-to-support-chin-women-children.html>.

7 *Id.*

8 The Irrawaddy, May 7, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/army-chief-jets-off-to-pakistan-serbia.html>.

9 *Id.*

10 The Irrawaddy, May 20, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/china-lodges-protest-with-burma-after-artillery-shells-injure-five.html>.

11 *Id.*

12 *Id.*

13 The Irrawaddy, May 24, 2015 <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/burma-president-signs-off-on-contested-population-law.html>.

14 *Id.*

15 The Irrawaddy, May 22, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/us-urges-burma-to-address-root-causes-of-rohingya-crisis.html>.

16 The Irrawaddy, May 29, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/un-council-has-first-ever-briefing-on-rights-in-burma.html>.

17 *Id.*

18 The Irrawaddy, May 29, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/dalai-lama-urges-suu-kyi-to-help-rohingya-muslims.html>.

19 The Irrawaddy, May 29, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/burma-navy-finds-boat-with-727-boatpeople-off-southern-coast-govt.html>.

20 Radio Free Asia, May 29, 2015: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/bangkok-refugees-05292015173739.html>.

21 *Id.*

22 The Asia Foundation, May 20, 2015: <http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2015/05/20/myanmar-election-commission-visits-indonesia/>.

23 *Id.*

24 *Id.*

25 The Globe and Mail: May 12, 2015: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/challenges-lie-ahead-for-myanmars-democracy-as-election-planning-begins/article24393506/>.

26 *Id.*

27 Channel News Asia: May 26, 2015: <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/myanmar-on-track-for/1873266.html>.

28 Eleven Myanmar: May 22, 2015: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/politics/uec-prepares-complaints-following-2015-elections>.

29 *Id.*

30 Myanmar Times, May 4, 2015: <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/14260-nation-s-image-harmed-by-threats-to-reporters-minister.html>.

31 *Id.*

32 *Id.*

33 *Id.*

34 *Id.*

35 Myanmar Times, May 4, 2015: <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/14262-army-warns-media-off-kokang.html>.

36 *Id.*

37 *Id.*

38 Videonews, May 5, 2015: <http://news.videonews.us/myanmar-outlaws-reporting-rebel-groups-059743.html>.

39 Eleven Myanmar: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/local/700-%E2%80%98corrupt%E2%80%99-forestry-officials-targeted>.

40 *Id.*

41 The Nation, May 28, 2015: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/aec/Corruption-lack-of-Chinese-worsen-timber-smuggling-30261176.html>.

42 *Id.*

43 The Irrawaddy, February 11, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/burmas-president-approves-plan-constitutional-referendum-lawmakers.html>

44 Eleven Myanmar, March 9, 2015: [http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=9258:delayed-constitutional-amendment-places-myanmar-in-limbo&catid=38&Itemid=361](http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9258:delayed-constitutional-amendment-places-myanmar-in-limbo&catid=38&Itemid=361)

45 The Irrawaddy, May 8, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/as-mps-return-and-charter-talk-heats-up-six-party-dialogue-may-hold-key.html>

46 *Id.*

47 *Id.*

48 *Id.*

49 The Irrawaddy, May 5, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/govt-ready-to-finalize-nationwide-ceasefire-president.html>

50 *Id.*

51 The Myanmar Times, May 21, 2015: <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/opinion/14586-entering-the-rule-of-law-minefield.html>.

52 *Id.*

53 *Id.*

54 The Nation, May 14, 2015: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/aec/More-rule-of-law-centres-to-open-30259924.html>.

55 *Id.*

56 *Id.*

57 The Daily Mail, May 12, 2015: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3078355/Wife-slain-Myanmar-reporter-decries-army-acquittals.html>.

58 *Id.*

59 *Id.*

60 *Id.*

61 Channel NewsAsia, May 12, 2015: <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/wife-of-myanmar-journalis/1841464.html>.

62 Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma), May 13, 2015: <http://aappb.org/2015/05/aapp-b-monthly-chronology-of-april-2015/>.

63 Fox News, May 15, 2015: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2015/05/15/myanmar-court-hands-hard-labor-sentence-to-6-activists-in-prison-for-political/>.

64 *Id.*

65 News VideoNews.US, May 25, 2015: <http://news.videonews.us/myanmar-court-sentences-lecturer-student-protests-2519192.html>.

66 *Id.*

67 *Id.*

68 U.S. State Department, “2015 Investment Climate Statement – Burma,” May 2015: <http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2015/241502.htm>.

69 *Id.*

70 *Id.*

71 *Id.*

72 *Id.*

73 *Id.*

74 *Id.*

75 The Business Times: "Banks on Charm Offensive in Myanmar," May 25, 2015:

<http://www.businesstimes.com.sg/banking-finance/banks-on-charm-offensive-in-myanmar>.

76 Colombo Page: "Sri Lanka's Commercial Bank Begins Myanmar Operations with Opening of Yangon Office," June 10, 2015:

[http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_15B/Jun10\\_1433915191CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_15B/Jun10_1433915191CH.php); Reuters: "Bangkok Bank to Open First Branch in Myanmar on June 2," May 26, 2015:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/26/bangkok-bank-myanmar-idUSL3N0YH3IW20150526>.

77 The Irrawaddy, May 25, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/funeral-held-for-farmer-after-land-seizure-protest.html>.

78 *Id.*

79 *Id.*

80 *Id.*

81 *Id.*

82 *Id.*

83 *Id.*

84 Eleven Myanmar, May 5, 2015: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/local/kayah-farmers-protest-land-seizure>.

85 *Id.*

86 *Id.*

87 San Jose Mercury News, May 29, 2015: [http://www.mercurynews.com/nation-world/ci\\_28213222/boat-people-crisis-17-countries-at-bangkok-meeting](http://www.mercurynews.com/nation-world/ci_28213222/boat-people-crisis-17-countries-at-bangkok-meeting).

88 *Id.*

89 *Id.*

90 *Id.*

91 *Id.*

92 *Id.*

93 *Id.*

94 The Irrawaddy, June 1, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/arakan-officials-face-off-with-muslim-leaders-over-boat-people-crisis.html>.

95 The Irrawaddy, May 21, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/beaten-and-starving-some-rohingya-flee-boats-return-to-camps.html>.

96 *Id.*

97 The Irrawaddy, May 13, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/as-fighting-rages-in-northeast-burma-govt-claims-territorial-gains.html>.

98 *Id.*

99 The Irrawaddy, May 26, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/over-three-weeks-fighting-almost-daily-in-kachin-state-kia.html>.

100 *Id.*

101 The Irrawaddy, May 29, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/govt-ministers-meet-ethnic-leaders-in-lead-up-to-ceasefire-summit.html>.

102 *Id.*

103 *Id.*

104 *Id.*

105 *Id.*; The Irrawaddy, May 20, 2015: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/fighting-on-burmas-peripheries-to-be-at-center-of-ethnic-summit.html>.