

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 15, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

Successive U.S. administrations, with overwhelming bi-partisan support from Congress, have shown their support for Burmese peoples' aspiration to live in a democratic society free from their military dictatorship. Unfortunately, despite U.S. efforts as well as decades of peaceful attempts by successive United Nations Special Envoys and Rapporteurs to convince the Burmese military regime to end its atrocities and seek a peaceful transition to democracy, peace, democracy and stability elude Burma.

Therefore, we urge you to take the lead in establishing a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Commission of Inquiry into the Burmese military regime's crimes against humanity and war crimes against its civilian population. Similar cases in Rwanda, Yugoslavia, and Darfur have all led to Commissions of Inquiry and each previous case had UN Special Envoys and Special Rapporteurs assigned to seeking peaceful solutions to their respective countries international humanitarian crises. Still though, the UNSC took the necessary step and established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate and provide justice and accountability for the war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed with impunity by state agents. By elevating the cause of Burma to the UNSC, the United States is putting Burma's supporters on notice that we will not support the status quo while millions of people languish.

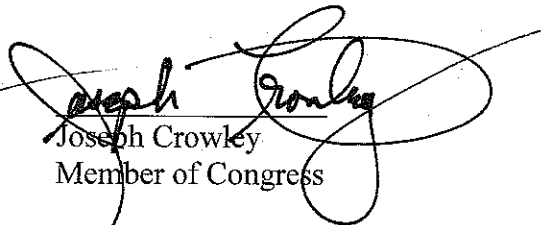
The United Nations has passed over 30 resolutions acknowledging and decrying the Burmese military regime's crimes and blatant system of impunity. All the while, Burma's military regime has carried out a scorched-earth campaign against the country's ethnic minority civilian population, destroying over 3,300 villages, using systematic rape as a weapon of war, pressing the Burmese people into modern-day slave labor, killing innocent civilians, and forcing at least one million people to flee their homes as refugees and internally displaced. The regime has also conscripted tens of thousands of child soldiers, and imprisoned and tortured those who dare speak out in support of freedom and democracy.

Compounding the brutality of the regime's war crimes and crimes against humanity is their flagrant system of impunity, in which perpetrators go free, but victims fear retribution if they seek accountability and justice. While the "slow burn" nature of the military regime's grave crimes has kept the spotlight away from these atrocities, it makes them no less dire. In fact, it makes it ever more urgent that we call upon the UNSC to hold the Burmese military regime to account for their war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Furthermore, the regime's constitution, on which it predicates its upcoming elections in 2010, contains an amnesty provision that exempts all members of the military regime from prosecution. The amnesty provision is a blatant attempt to legitimize the structured and systematic violence in the country for all junta inflicted crimes. In addition to the amnesty provision, the constitution also removes any rights for civil redress for victims of crimes committed by the military and police and blocks access to justice in civilian courts thus effectively denying justice to the regime's victims.

The world must not sit by and allow Burma's regime to commit mass atrocities with impunity. We urge you to urgently seek support at the UNSC for a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the Burmese regime's war crimes, crimes against humanity and system of impunity. The regime must be held accountable, on behalf of the millions of people of Burma who have no other course for redress.


Sincerely,



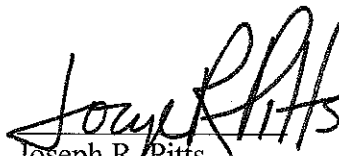
Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress



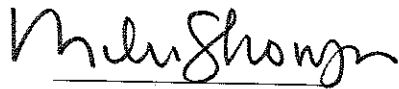
Donald A. Manzullo
Member of Congress



Rush D. Holt
Member of Congress



Joseph R. Pitts
Member of Congress



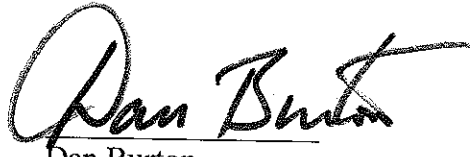
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



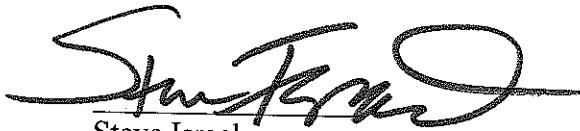
Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress



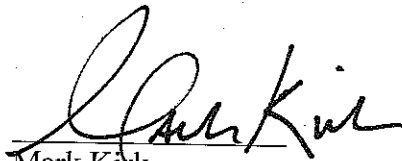
Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress



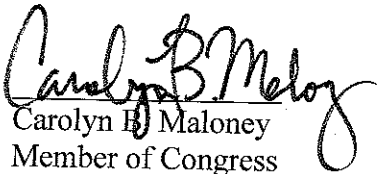
Dan Burton
Member of Congress



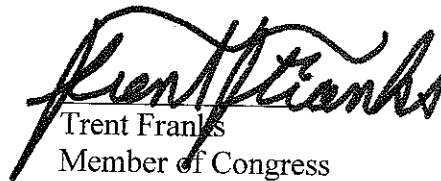
Steve Israel
Member of Congress



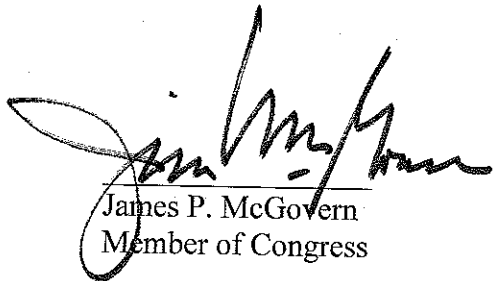
Mark Kirk
Member of Congress



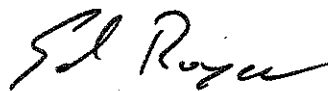
Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



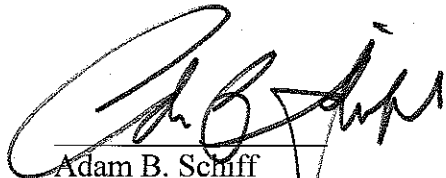
Trent Franks
Member of Congress




James P. McGovern
Member of Congress




Edward R. Royce
Member of Congress




Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress




Mark Souder
Member of Congress



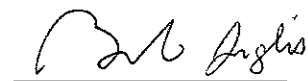
Brad Sherman
Member of Congress




Thaddeus G. McCotter
Member of Congress



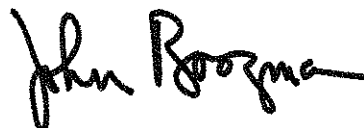
James P. Moran
Member of Congress



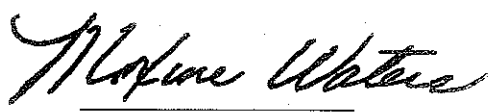
Bob Inglis
Member of Congress



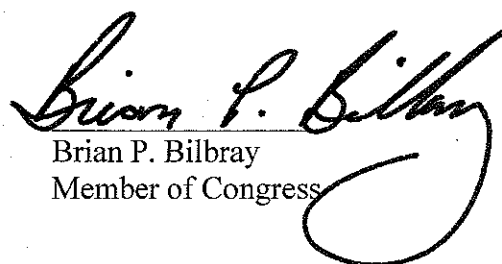
Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



John Boozeman
Member of Congress



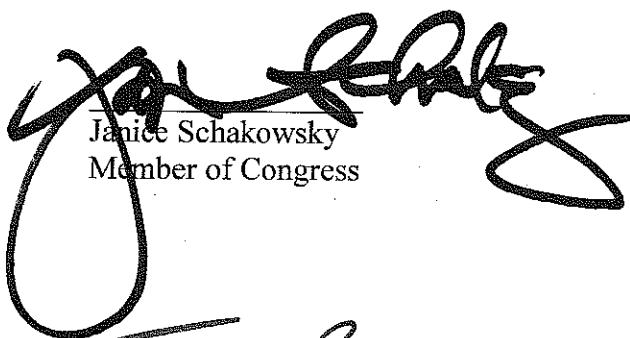
Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



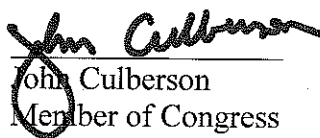
Brian P. Bilbray
Member of Congress



Todd Russell Platts
Member of Congress



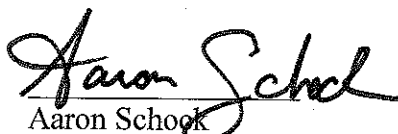
Janice Schakowsky
Member of Congress



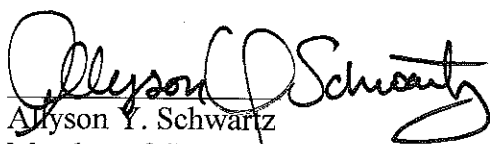
John Culberson
Member of Congress



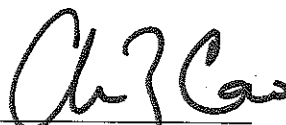
Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



Aaron Schock
Member of Congress



Allyson Y. Schwartz
Member of Congress




Anh "Joseph" Cao
Member of Congress

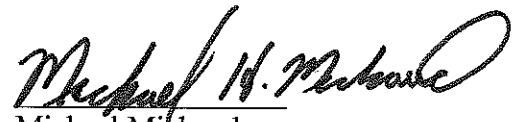


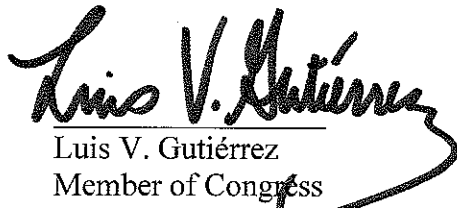
David E. Price
Member of Congress



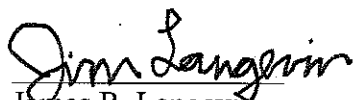
Brad Miller
Member of Congress


Rubén Hinojosa
Member of Congress

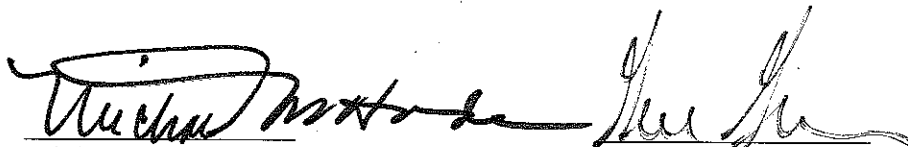

Michael Michaud
Member of Congress

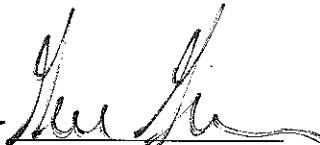

Luis V. Gutiérrez
Member of Congress



Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress



James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

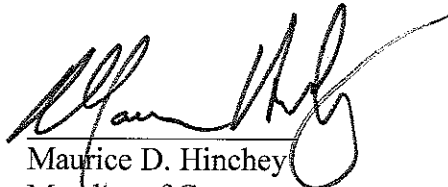

Patrick J. Kennedy
Member of Congress


Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress


Gene Green
Member of Congress


Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Paul W. Hodes
Member of Congress




Maurice D. Hinchey
Member of Congress




Michael E. McMahon
Member of Congress




Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



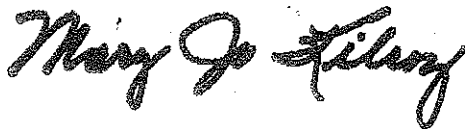
Daniel B. Maffei
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



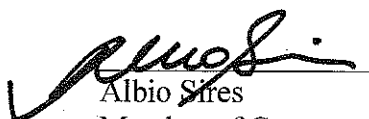
Timothy H. Bishop
Member of Congress



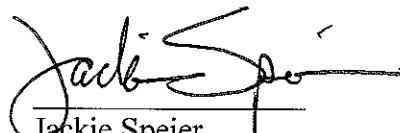
Mary Jo Kilroy
Member of Congress



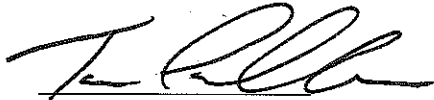
Betsy Markey
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
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Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



Thomas S. P. Perriello
Member of Congress



Peter T. King
Member of Congress