



Chronology of Burma's Constitutional Process

February 12, 1947:

While Burma is still under British colonial rule, the Panglong Agreement is signed by Burmese leader General Aung San and several ethnic nationality leaders from the Shan, Kachin, and Chin areas. The agreement is designed to hasten independence from the British and avert ethnic tensions in the new Burma, as recognized in paragraph 7 that states, "Citizens of the Frontier Areas shall enjoy rights and privileges which are regarded as fundamental in democratic societies."

July 19, 1947:

General Aung San and several members of the cabinet are assassinated in Rangoon. U Nu and his Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) prepare to take power from the British by finishing Burma's first constitution.

January 4, 1948:

Burma gains independence from British rule and institutes the 1947 constitution. The new constitution and its federal structure included the Shan state, Karenni state, Kachin state, and Karen state, with the Chin Hills being classified as a "special division." The constitution granted the right of secession to special division states after 10 years (chapter 10, articles 201-206) subject to a majority vote in the state assembly and majority in a plebiscite.

March 2, 1962:

The military Revolutionary Council under General Ne Win overthrows the constitutionally elected civilian government.

December 15-31, 1973:

The Revolutionary Council conducts a referendum to endorse the new constitution, which is carried by over 90 percent of the vote in a process that many international observers do not assess as fair.

March 1974:

Burma's second constitution is implemented, transferring power from the Revolutionary Council to the Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP). The new constitution demarcates seven ethnic minority states (Arakan, Chin, Kachin, Shan, Karenni, Karen, and Mon) and seven predominantly ethnic Burman (Myanmar) divisions (Tenasserim, Rangoon, Irrawaddy, Pegu, Magwe, Mandalay, and Sagaing).

July 23, 1988:

Announcing his resignation at the BSPP Extraordinary Congress called after major demonstrations against military rule, General Ne Win calls for a referendum to gauge the majority view on Burma's political system, "As I believe that holding a national referendum on what they wish, a one-party system or a multiparty system, would bring out the answer, I am asking the party congress to hold a referendum. If, after the referendum more votes are for a multiparty system, elections must be held at the earliest for a new parliament." The referendum is never held.

September 18, 1988:

The Burmese army stages a coup after months of countrywide, anti-government demonstrations following the fall of the BSPP. The military forms the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), which promises to conduct multiparty elections in the future. The SLORC's four "duties" under SLORC Declaration No.1/88 include the "holding of multiparty General Election." SLORC suspends the 1974 constitution.

May 31, 1989:

SLORC Law No.14/89, "Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law," states in chapter 3, section 3 that the "Hluttaw (Assembly) shall be formed with the Hluttaw representatives who have been elected," making clear that the planned election is to form a national legislative body.

May 27, 1990:

A general election is held in Burma with unexpectedly few government restrictions. The opposition National League for Democracy (NLD), many of whose leaders the SLORC had arrested and detained in 1989, wins 392 out of 485 parliamentary seats (80 percent of seats, with approximately 60 percent of the popular vote). The second-largest-winning party is the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD),

which wins 23 seats. The military-backed party, the National Unity Party (NUP), wins just 10 seats.

July 27, 1990:

The military government promulgates SLORC Declaration No. 1/90, transforming the newly elected General Assembly from a legislative body into a body to draft a new constitution, contrary to the 1989 Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law. Declaration No. 1/90 states that “the desire of the majority of the political parties which contested the General Election is to draw up a new constitution... [c]onsequently, under the present circumstances the representatives elected by the people are those who have the responsibility to draw up the constitution of the future democratic State.” The SLORC maintains martial law and continues to exercise legislative, executive, and judicial power.

April 24, 1992:

The SLORC announces that the National Convention to write a new constitution will convene at an unspecified future date.

May 28, 1992:

A National Convention Convening Commission is formed to plan the convention. The committee includes 14 SLORC officials and 28 people from seven different political parties. It is chaired by Rangoon Military Commander Lt. Gen. Myo Nyunt.

July 10, 1992:

The National Convention’s 702 delegates are named, only 99 of whom are members of the National Assembly from the 1990 election (about 15 percent of all delegates). The majority of delegates are township-level officials selected by the SLORC.

October 2, 1992:

The SLORC announces the six objectives of the National Convention in SLORC Order No. 13/92, the first three of which are the same as the SLORC’s “Three Main National Causes”:

1. Non-disintegration of the Union;
2. Non-disintegration of national unity;
3. Perpetuation of national sovereignty;
4. Promotion of a genuine multiparty democracy;

5. Promotion of the universal principles of justice, liberty and equality; and,
6. Participation by the Defense Services in a national political leadership role in the future state.

January 9, 1993:

The National Convention starts its first session with the announcement that the first six objectives of the process have already been decided. It adjourns after just two days following dissension from opposition and ethnic delegates.

April 7, 1993:

The convention is suspended again after ethnic nationality delegates protest against the proposed centralized political structure.

June 7, 1993:

Lt. Gen. Myo Nyunt reopens the convention by stating that the new constitution must guarantee a leading role for the Defense Services in national politics.

August 4, 1993:

National Convention delegate Dr. Aung Khin Sint, an elected member of the NLD, is arrested for handing out leaflets critical of the convention.

September 15, 1993:

The SLORC forms the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), a social welfare movement that skirts the law prohibiting civil servants from being members of political parties by registering under SLORC Law 6/88, the Association Law. The association's patron is General Than Shwe, the president of Burma and head of the SLORC.

September 16, 1993:

The National Convention is suspended again, as ethnic minority representatives continue to propose a federal system. According to official reports, delegates have agreed to the 104 principles for the draft constitution.

October 15, 1993:

Twelve political activists are detained in Rangoon for publicly criticizing the National Convention.

January 18 to April 9, 1994:

Delegates draw up specific chapters on the structure of the state and the head of state. Despite opposition from many of the elected representatives, the convention approves a presidential rather than a parliamentary system. According to the approved draft, the president of Burma must have been a continuous resident of the country for more than 20 years, have political, administrative, military, and economic experience, and not have a spouse or children who are citizens of another country. Such requirements eliminate NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi as a candidate.

September 2, 1994:

The National Convention reconvenes and discusses self-administered areas, the legislature, the executive branch, and the judiciary. The move by the government to reserve one-third of all parliamentary seats for the Defense Services is approved by the convention.

July 10, 1995:

Aung San Suu Kyi is released from house arrest.

November 28, 1995:

The NLD requests a review of the National Convention's working procedures. Specifically, NLD delegates want to repeal orders that censor debate and allow for criminal punishment of those critical of the military during the convention. Authorities deny the request and the 86 delegates from the NLD boycott the meetings for two days.

November 29, 1995:

The NLD delegates are expelled from the convention.

December 23, 1995:

The convention acknowledges and then rejects a Shan Nationalities League for Democracy proposal for the constitution to accept the principle of sovereignty invested in the people.

March 31, 1996:

The SLORC adjourns the National Convention following the departure of the NLD representatives. It is widely believed that the detailed basic principles (DBPs) of a future constitution have already been finalized during the 1994-1996 sessions,

including sections on the head of state, the legislature, executive, judiciary, the role of the military, and self administered areas for small ethnic nationality groups.

June 7, 1996:

The SLORC enacts Law No 5/96, “The Law Protecting the Peaceful and Systematic Transfer of State Responsibility and the Successful Performance of the Functions of the National Convention against Disturbances and Oppositions,” a sweeping law that makes public criticism of the National Convention illegal and punishable by prison sentences of up to 20 years.

November 18, 1997:

The SLORC changes its name to the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), but apart from a reshuffle of regional military commanders and cabinet ministers, the changes to military rule in Burma are minimal.

September 16, 1998:

The Committee Representing the People’s Parliament (CRPP), is formed to represent the concerns of members of the 1990 elected parliament, comprising nine members of the National League for Democracy and one Arakan committee member representing four “ethnic” parties. The CRPP is criticized for its composition, having three members who had not been elected in the 1990 poll (including Aung San Suu Kyi) and being dominated by ethnic Burman representatives.

March 21, 2001:

A statement is issued by seven ethnic nationality groups that had concluded military ceasefires (“ethnic ceasefire groups”) with the government—the Kayan New Land Party (KNLP), Karenni National People’s Liberation Front (KNPLF), New Mon State Party (NMSP), Palaung State Liberation Organization (PSLO), Shan Nationalities People’s Liberation Organization (SNPLO), Shan State Army (SSA), and Shan State National Army (SSNA)—calling on the SPDC to begin a more inclusive negotiating process for political development and democracy and national unity.

May 30, 2003:

USDA militia attack Aung San Suu Kyi’s traveling NLD motorcade at Depayin in upper Burma, killing an unverified number of her supporters and injuring scores of others. Aung San Suu Kyi and fellow NLD leader U Tin Oo are incarcerated in Insein Prison in Rangoon and then returned to house arrest. The international community condemns

the attack, which many believe to be a clumsy assassination attempt orchestrated by the SPDC. The Japanese government suspends its Overseas Development Aid (ODA) program in protest.

August 30, 2003:

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt announces the SPDC's "Seven Step Roadmap to Democracy." The seven steps are:

1. Reconvening of the National Convention that had been adjourned since 1996;
2. After the successful holding of the National Convention, implement step-by-step the process necessary for the emergence of a genuine and disciplined democratic system;
3. Drafting of a new constitution in accordance with basic principles and detailed basic principles laid down by the National Convention;
4. Adoption of the constitution through national referendum;
5. Holding of free and fair elections for Pyithu Hluttaws (legislative bodies) according to the new constitution;
6. Convening of Hluttaws attended by Hluttaw members in accordance with the new constitution; and,
7. Building a modern, developed, and democratic nation by the state leaders elected by the Hluttaw; and the government and other central organs formed by the Hluttaw.

December 15, 2003:

A multilateral meeting in Thailand announces the "Bangkok Process" to support the "Seven Step Roadmap" and welcomes Burmese Foreign Minister Win Aung's promise to restart the National Convention. Representatives of Australia, Austria, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, and Singapore, and the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy Razali Ismail attend the three-hour briefing by Win Aung and express confidence in the process. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan welcomes the developments in a statement on December 19.

March 30, 2004:

The chairman of the National Convention Convening Commission (NCCC), Lt. Gen. Thein Sein, announces that the National Convention will reconvene on May 17, 2004.

May 11, 2004:

Eight ethnic ceasefire groups, the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), Kayan New Land Party (KNLP), Karenni National People's Liberation Front (KNPLF), New Mon State Party (NMSP), Palaung State Liberation Organization (PSLO), Shan Nationalities People's Liberation Organization (SNPLO), Shan State Army (SSA), and Shan State National Army (SSNA), issue seven points for changes to the convention:

1. The right to discuss Objective 6 (military's leading role in the future affairs of the state) again and revise it, since it does not fit with the democratic principles and does not reflect the wishes of the people;
2. The right to discuss and revise the points that are not in line with democratic procedures and principles;
3. The right to hold consultation with anybody and any organizations that can provide good advice for the sake of the Union while attending the National Convention;
4. The right of delegates to freely communicate with their mother organizations and to seek advice for discussion while attending the convention;
5. The right of the representatives of the people elected in the 1990 elections to participate in the convention;
6. The right of ceasefire organizations, and non-ceasefire organizations after entering into ceasefires, to join the National Convention;
7. To revoke Law No.5/96 that was announced in June 1996 to protect the National Convention.

May 17 – July 9, 2004:

The first post-“Roadmap” National Convention session resumes at a purpose-built hall called Nyaunghnapin Camp in Hwambi Township, north of Rangoon. Many ethnic ceasefire groups such as the New Mon State Party and Kachin Independence Organization attend.

July 7, 2004:

Thirteen of 17 ethnic ceasefire groups issue a joint proposal for devolving authority to future state assemblies and for those assemblies to maintain armed militias. The nine points submitted to the NCCC were:

1. To include a list of concurrent legislative powers for the states;
2. To give residual powers to the states;
3. To add a separate section on ethnic affairs in the union legislative list;
4. To include a defense and security planning section in each state's legislature;
5. To include a literature/language section in each state's legislature;
6. To include a section for ethnic minority tradition in each state's legislature;
7. To let the states draft their own constitutions;
8. To let the states make specific foreign policies in dealing with neighboring countries regarding various issues such as issuing border passes and border trade;
9. To let the states collect local taxes and finance.

October 19, 2004:

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, widely believed to be the architect of the "Roadmap" process, is arrested and nearly 1,000 of his military intelligence officers are purged, many of them later being charged with corruption and imprisoned.

February 17 – 31 March, 2005:

The National Convention conducts another session with 1,075 delegates attending, including members of ethnic ceasefire groups, to discuss legislative power sharing. Some Shan delegates leave the convention in February following the arrest of leaders of the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, which won the second-highest number of seats in the 1990 general election, including the SNLD chairman Hkun Htun Oo and the leader of the Shan State Army-North, Maj. Gen. Sao Hso Ten.

February 18, 2005:

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan calls on the SPDC "even at this late stage, to take the necessary steps to make the roadmap process more inclusive and credible."

November 7, 2005:

The SPDC relocates its administrative capital from Rangoon to a purpose-built city in the mountains near Pyinmana, a town called Naypyidaw ("Royal Capital"), over 300 kilometers north of Rangoon. Within months many of the government ministries are moved to this new capital, which reputedly will include planned parliamentary buildings.

December 5, 2005 – January 31, 2006:

The National Convention conducts its third post-“Roadmap” session in Nyaungnabin Camp with 1,074 of 1,080 invited delegates attending. The session “adopted the detailed basic principles of the chapters on the sharing of the executive and judicial powers.”

January 10, 2006:

The National Convention begins discussion on the role of the armed forces in the future political system.

May 24, 2006:

UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs (later Special Advisor) Ibrahim Gambari, after a three-day visit to Burma, says the National Convention would not resume until October 2006.

July 27, 2006:

Burmese Foreign Minister Nyan Win tells Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) foreign ministers that a conclusion of the National Convention could be announced by the time of the ASEAN Summit in December 2006.

July 29, 2006:

Lt. Gen Thein Sein, chairman of the National Convention Convening Commission, claims in a statement at the new capital of Naypyidaw that 75 percent of the constitution has been drafted.

October 10 – December 29, 2006:

The National Convention sits for its fourth session, completing the chapters on the role of the military (Tatmadaw), and national legislature, comprising the People’s Assembly (Pyithu Hluttaw, the lower house) and Nationalities Assembly (Amyotha Hluttaw, the upper house), and the fundamental rights and duties of citizens.

October 18, 2006:

The international Inter-Parliamentary Union Governing Council at its 179th session in Geneva states that “the National Convention, in its present form, is designed to prolong and legitimize military rule against the will of the people.”

November 27, 2006:

Following his three-day visit to Burma from November 9-12, Gambari briefs the UN Informal Consultative Group on Myanmar (ICGM) and states that “the UN has been consistent in questioning the credibility of a process that is not all-inclusive of political tendencies and responsive enough to the concerns of all ethnic groups. At the same time, it is important to be aware that the National Convention has clear momentum and therefore the opportunity to influence this first step in the roadmap process may be dwindling.”

January 12, 2007:

The UN Security Council votes on a motion condemning Burma’s human rights abuses as a threat to international security. The motion is vetoed by China and Russia. South Africa also votes against it.

February 12, 2007:

The UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, states in his report to the Human Rights Council in Geneva that the National Convention, while recognizing that it held potential for political transition, “has been strictly limited and delineated... [and] marked by a lack of transparency.”

May 25, 2007:

The SPDC extends the house arrest order of Aung San Suu Kyi for another year.

June 5, 2007:

The National Convention Convening Commission announces the final session of the National Convention will start on July 18, to make “some amendments, additions and nullification to some of the points... to ensure that the constitution is free from flaws and weaknesses.” The final seven chapters of the constitution will also be completed.

June 29, 2007:

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) releases a statement denouncing the SPDC’s gross violations of international humanitarian law in eastern Burma.

July 3, 2007:

The SPDC claims that “terrorist insurgent groups” based on the Burma-Thailand border are planning acts of violence to disrupt the National Convention process.

July 18, 2007:

The National Convention resumes for its pronounced final session. The state-controlled press starts running convention-linked parables, such as: “The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago, the second best time is now.”

Mid-July 2007:

The Kachin Independence Organization, one of the largest ethnic ceasefire groups, which signed a peace accord with the government in 1994, releases a 19-point list of demands to the SPDC calling for significant reforms to the constitutional process, including, point one:

As currently intended, the Union will be composed of constituent states; we believe that specifying these additional goals clearly and concretely will be necessary. One, that the constituent state union system of state be technically and genuinely a system of federation of states, and two, that this system of state organization be fully transparent in its implementation. We are mindful of the fact that, whereas, the Constitution of 1947 specified a Union that is a federation of states, what actually transpired was a system where all political power was centralized, as in a unitary system, instead of a federation, and one constituent state alone held that power. Therefore, to effectively preclude a recurrence of this fate, and the calamitous results, we urge in the strongest sense possible, that a specific constitutional mandate be included for a federal system of union and for its judicious implementation.

August 16-25, 2007:

Demonstrations by members of the ‘88 Generation Students, NLD-Youth, and others are broken up by plainclothes members of the security forces, USDA, and paramilitary groups, following a dramatic increase in fuel prices. Over 100 activists are detained.

September 3, 2007:

After several sessions since 1993, the National Convention concludes with the adoption of the Fundamental Principles and Detailed Basic Principles.

September 5, 2007:

A small demonstration in Pakokku in northern Burma is broken up by local officials and two young pongyi (monks) are reportedly beaten by officials. The following day, monks seize several officials who arrive at their monastery to apologize, detaining them for several hours before releasing them.

September 9, 2007:

The All Burma Monks Alliance (ABMA) issues a four-point statement demanding from the government: 1. an apology to the monks for the violence, 2. an immediate reduction in commodity prices including fuel, rice, and cooking oil prices, 3. the release of all political prisoners including Aung San Suu Kyi and those detained during the current protests, and 4. an “immediate dialogue with the democratic forces” in order “to resolve the crises and difficulty facing and suffering by the people.” The monks give the SPDC a deadline of September 17 to comply with the demands, threatening otherwise to excommunicate the military leadership.

September 18-25, 2007:

Small numbers of monks begin marching silently through the streets of Rangoon, stopping at key Buddhist shrines and places of historical anti-government protests, such as the Shwedagon Pagoda, Sule Pagoda, and markets throughout the city. The monks ask lay people not to join them, and authorities do not attempt to stop the processions. On September 22, several hundred monks and civilian supporters march down University Avenue to pray at the house of detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who is allowed to greet the monks from her guarded compound. The marches grow larger, encompassing tens of thousands of monks, nuns, and civilians including celebrities and activists, and also spread to other towns in Burma including Sittwe, Pegu, Pakokku, and Mandalay.

September 26-27, 2007:

Gatherings of monks and civilians in Burma are brutally dispersed by security forces including the army, riot police (lon htein), USDA paramilitaries, and Swan Arr Shin militias using baton charges, rubber bullets, and live ammunition. Several hundred monks, nuns, and civilians are arrested and detained in several detention facilities throughout Burma. The total death toll is not known, although the SPDC acknowledges 14 dead in Rangoon. Human Rights Watch documented at least 20

people killed by security forces, and UN Special Rapporteur Pinheiro later reported that 31 were killed, although all observers believe the true death toll is much higher.

September 28, 2007:

ASEAN leaders meeting at the UN General Assembly in New York express their “revulsion” over the use of force by the SPDC against protestors.

October 2, 2007:

The Human Rights Council issues resolution S-5/1, which “strongly deplores the continued violent repression of peaceful demonstrations,” and calls on the SPDC “to engage urgently in a reinvigorated national dialogue with all parties with a view to achieving genuine national reconciliation, democratization and the establishment of the rule of law.”

October 5, 2007:

Speaking to the UN Security Council following his four-day visit to Burma after the September crackdown, Special Advisor Gambari states that there are “<<continuing and disturbing reports of abuses being committed by security and non-uniformed elements [in Burma]. We cannot go back to the situation before the recent crisis.”

October 9, 2007:

The SPDC appoints former deputy labor minister Aung Kyi to be the formal liaison minister for Aung San Suu Kyi, a move reportedly first suggested by Gambari during his recent visit.

October 11, 2007:

The UN Security Council issues a statement “strongly deploring the use of violence” by the SPDC, and calling on the government to cooperate with Gambari and “create the necessary conditions, for a ‘genuine’ dialogue with all concerned parties and ethnic groups” in Burma.

November 8, 2007:

Visiting special advisor Gambari releases a statement he received from Aung San Suu Kyi expressing her willingness to negotiate with the SPDC: “In the interest of the nation, I stand ready to cooperate with the government in order to make this process

of dialogue a success.” Gambari hails the statement as a breakthrough “which would lead to substantive dialogue between the government and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as a key instrument in promoting national reconciliation in an all-inclusive manner.”

November 16, 2007:

In a speech to the Annual General Meeting of the USDA, the group’s patron and president of Burma, Senior General Than Shwe, states, “The over 24 million members of the organization should not only be quantitative but also qualitative since they are to be the model citizens contributing to the welfare of the State.” He notes that there are now 15,327 village and ward chapters of the USDA, 320 township organizations, 66 district and 17 state and division organizations.

November 11-15, 2007:

Special Rapporteur Pinheiro visits Burma to conduct preliminary research on the September events, but does not call the trip a fully fledged fact-finding mission. During his visit, labor activist Ma Su Su Nway is arrested while trying to visit the envoy’s hotel, after four months in hiding having been involved in the August protests.

December 3, 2007:

In a press conference that terms the September crackdown on peaceful protests “trivial for the whole country” and “instigated by outside powers,” Information Minister Brig. Gen. Kyaw Hsan announces the first meeting of a 54-member Constitution Drafting Commission to frame the constitution from the Fundamental Principles and Detailed Basic Principles. Kyaw Hsan also denied the need for any further consultation with broader society on the substance of the constitution:

The Constitution Drafting Commission comprises sufficient number of legal experts and the law graduates of national races from various States and Divisions... The fundamental principles and detailed basic principles adopted by the National Convention are the best to suit the prevailing conditions of the country... It is not reasonable or fair to review and amend those principles adopted by the delegates representing the entire people. Otherwise, the eight delegate groups of the National Convention would again make demands they like. So, it will be never ending and the

process will get further complicated... Thus it is in no way to review the adopted principles. We have now commenced the drafting of a constitution as the third step of the Road Map.

December 10, 2007:

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon states that the international community is becoming impatient over the slow pace of reform in Burma: “I know the international community is very much impatient, and our patience is running out. I would like to emphasize that the return to status quo is not acceptable, and is politically unsustainable.”

January 30, 2008:

Aung San Suu Kyi meets with senior NLD leaders and the liaison minister Aung Kyi. Suu Kyi reportedly requests direct contact to negotiate with the SPDC leadership.

February 9, 2008:

Announcement No. 1/2008 of the SPDC states that “the approval of the Constitution draft will be sought in a National Referendum to be held in May 2008,” announced by Secretary 1 of the SPDC, Lt. Gen. Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo. At the same time, Announcement No. 2/2008, after listing the military government’s development “achievements” since 1988, states, “As such necessary good foundations have been established, it is most appropriate to transform the administration of Tatmadaw into democratic administration of the people. Thus, in accordance with the forthcoming State Constitution, the multi-party democracy general elections will be held in 2010.”

February 19, 2008:

The SPDC announces that the Constitution Drafting Commission has finalized the constitution.

March 6-10, 2008:

Special Advisor Gambari visits Burma and is briefed on the forthcoming referendum and given a copy of the constitution and ballot paper. Gambari’s offer of UN technical assistance and monitoring of the referendum is rejected by the SPDC.

March 18, 2008:

Gambari briefs the UN Security Council on his recent visit, and informs the council, “I was given repeated assurances, including at the highest level of Myanmar’s leadership on previous visits, that all political forces in Myanmar (Burma) will be allowed to freely participate in the referendum and election.”

March 27, 2008:

A small demonstration is conducted by NLD members in Rangoon wearing “No” T-shirts and holding placards calling on citizens to reject the constitution.

April 2, 2008:

The National League for Democracy calls on the population to vote “No” in the referendum, and releases a list of people’s rights pertaining to the referendum. There are a series of physical attacks on NLD members in Rangoon by men suspected of being USDA militia or Special Branch operatives.

April 7, 2008:

A draft presidential statement of the Security Council is rejected by China and Russia as it called on the SPDC to make the referendum “inclusive and credible [and] to allow full participation of all political actors,” and called on the authorities to “make an early end to military rule and begin a transition to democracy.”

April 9, 2008:

The Commission for Holding Referendum for the Approval of the Draft Constitution announces the referendum will be held on May 10. Copies of the constitution are released for sale in Rangoon (1,000 Kyat, about US\$85¢).

April 11, 2008:

The SPDC conducts workshops on voting for the referendum, including showing ballot boxes and ballot cards prominently in the state-controlled media and television.