



## **DCP urges strong UN action on Myanmar, Iran, and Sudan**

The Democracy Coalition Project calls on governments around the world to support UN action to address the grave human rights situations in Myanmar, Sudan, and the Islamic Republic of Iran at upcoming UN meetings in New York and Geneva.

Recently, the United States announced support for a UN Commission of Inquiry into possible crimes against humanity and war crimes in Myanmar (referred to by some as Burma). Canada, Australia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and the United Kingdom have also expressed their support for the measure. In March, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Mr. Tomas Ojea Quintana, recommended the establishment of a commission of inquiry, noting ongoing, widespread and systematic rights violations perpetrated by the ruling junta. Calls for a commission of inquiry have grown louder despite the first scheduled elections since the junta seized power twenty years ago. The elections, set to take place on November 7, are widely considered a veiled attempt to legitimize military rule and a new Constitution that essentially guarantees its continuance.

"We warmly welcome the US government's support for a commission of inquiry into crimes in Burma," said Dokhi Fassihian, executive director of the Democracy Coalition Project. "We now call on the United States and other UN member states to establish the commission of inquiry at the General Assembly meeting this fall."

The UN General Assembly and UN Human Rights Council will also be considering the human rights situations in Sudan and Iran at its upcoming sessions. DCP urges the Human Rights Council to adopt a resolution that renews the mandate of the independent expert on Sudan. The resolution should give particular attention to the concerns outlined in the independent expert's May 2010 report, including the lack of protection of the human rights of civilians, the culture of impunity for violations, as well as ongoing restrictions on political expression in northern Sudan.

"With the referendum on southern self-determination scheduled to take place in January 2011, and the situation continuing to deteriorate, it is essential that the Council remain committed to Sudan at this critical time in the country's history," said Fassihian.

Likewise, urgent action should be taken to extend protection to Iranian citizens. While states have extended significant political will and resources toward resolving the nuclear issue, they have failed to give adequate attention to the country's worsening human rights situation. Under President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and particularly since the disputed 2009 presidential elections, the situation has deteriorated dramatically in Iran. Over five hundred political prisoners continue to be held unlawfully. Civil society activists, as well as hundreds of ordinary citizens, have suffered serious violations including death, arbitrary detention, show trials, torture, and persecution of family members to silence dissent. Iran's embattled human rights defenders have urgently called for increased UN attention to the situation.

"It is time for UN member states to bring real international pressure on the Iranian government to curb its abuses," said Fassihian. "The situation in the country today warrants the urgent appointment of an independent human rights monitor by the UN General Assembly to investigate and report on violations."