



PEACE & JUSTICE COMMISSION

CONSENT CALENDAR

July 13, 2010

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Peace and Justice Commission
 Submitted By: Eric Brenman, Secretary, Peace and Justice Commission
 Subject: Support of H.R. 898 - Democracy in Burma and Opposition to Crimes Against Humanity

RECOMMENDATION

At its regular meeting, the Peace and Justice Commission adopted the following recommendation:

That the Berkeley City Council direct the City Clerk to send the attached letter to Representative Barbara Lee urging her to co-sponsor House Resolution 898 to support democracy and action to end the crimes against humanity taking place in Burma today.

M/S/C: (Nicely/Meola)

Ayes: Bohn, D.; Kenin, W.; Lippman, G.; Maran, R.; Marley, J.; Meola, B.; Nicely, M.; Rabkin, A.; Sherman, M.; Sorgen, P.

Noes: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: Brody, D.; Litman, J. (excused); Sorgen, P.; Wornick, J.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Berkeley City Council has adopted several resolutions concerning the situation in Burma including:

a) In July 1994, a resolution declared July 20, 1994 to be a day of fellowship with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the people of Burma; and

b) In February 1995, a resolution--the first of its kind in the world -- prohibited the purchase of goods and services from companies that do business in Burma because of the regime's repressive human rights record; and

c) In June 2008, a resolution commended the people of Burma (now also known as Myanmar) for forty-six years of struggle against a brutal dictatorship, and honored the 20th Anniversary of the 1988 popular uprising in Burma by declaring August 8 as Burma Day.

House Resolution 898 - Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the immediate and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi, a meaningful tripartite political dialogue toward national reconciliation, and the full restoration of democracy, freedom of assembly, freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and internationally recognized human rights for all Burmese citizens.

Some of what House Resolution 898 calls for:

- 1) The United Nations Security Council to establish a Commission of Inquiry into crimes against humanity, war crimes, and impunity in Burma; and
- 2) A global arms embargo against the Burmese junta; and
- 3) All of Burma's political prisoners to be freed, including Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Peace and Justice Commission, consistent with its mandate to promote peace and justice, locally, nationally and internationally, recommends that Council direct the City Clerk to send the attached letter to Congresswoman Barbara Lee in support of H.R. 898 (supporting democracy and opposition to crimes against humanity in Burma).

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager takes no position on the Commission's findings or recommendations contained in this Report.

CONTACT PERSON

Wendy, Kenin, Chairperson, Peace and Justice Commission, 510-504-4937
Mary Nicely, Commissioner, Peace & Justice Commission, 510-526-8601
Eric Brenman, Secretary, Peace and Justice Commission, 510-981-5114

RESOLUTION NO. ---N.S.

SUPPORT FOR H.R. 898 AND THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY IN BURMA
AND OPPOSITION TO THE MILITARY REGIME'S CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

WHEREAS, Chapter 3.68 of the Berkeley Municipal Code sets forth the mandate and functions of the Peace and Justice Commission including,"(A) Advise the Berkeley City Council on all matters relating to the City of Berkeley's role in issues of peace and social justice, including, but not limited to support for human rights and self-determination throughout the world;" and

WHEREAS, Congresswoman Barbara Lee is urged to co-sponsor H.R. 898, expressing the sense of Congress regarding the immediate and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi, a meaningful tripartite political dialogue toward national reconciliation, and the full restoration of democracy, freedom of assembly, freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and internationally recognized human rights for all Burmese citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Berkeley, directs the City Clerk to send the attached letter to Congresswoman Lee in support of H.R. 898.

July 13, 2010

Congresswoman Barbara Lee
2444 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Lee,

The City of Berkeley urges you to co-sponsor House Resolution 898 - Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the immediate and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi, a meaningful tripartite political dialogue toward national reconciliation, and the full restoration of democracy, freedom of assembly, freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and internationally recognized human rights for all Burmese citizens.

The Burmese junta has destroyed over 3,500 ethnic minority villages, recruited tens of thousands of child soldiers, and its adult soldiers rape with impunity.

Crimes against humanity have escalated as the Junta tries to consolidate power before the election planned for 2010. In the past few months alone the regime has displaced more than 50,000 people from eastern and northern Burma, sending tens of thousands over the border into China and Thailand.

President Obama's new policy calls for the regime to be held accountable for crimes against humanity and war crimes. Resolution 898 affirms the House's commitment to holding the regime accountable as well as supporting the democratic process in Burma.

House Resolution 898 calls for important measures including:

- 1.) The United Nations Security Council to establish a Commission of Inquiry into crimes against humanity, war crimes, and impunity in Burma
- 2.) A global arms embargo against the Burmese regime
- 3.) All of Burma's political prisoners to be freed, including Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

Please co-sponsor House Resolution 898 to support democracy and action to end the crimes against humanity taking place in Burma today. Please find attached a copy of HR 898. The resolution is being circulated by Representative Peter King and Representative Joe Crowley. To co-sponsor, please contact Jeremy Woodrum in Representative Joe Crowley's office at (202) 225-3965

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Deanna Despain
City Clerk