

*We call on all people of faith to pray for 30 days for change in Burma. This is one form of aid that cannot be stopped at the borders or stolen from the people.*

# *30 Days to Change Burma*



*As an act of solidarity with the nation of Burma and a visible sign of our commitment to pray, we also invite you to apply Burmese face paint - or an equivalent -take a photo and either upload it to the Facebook group [30 Days to Change Burma](#) or email it to [burma@creativeworldjustice.com](mailto:burma@creativeworldjustice.com) The paint has traditionally been worn for cosmetic purposes and sun protection. The photos will be made into a collage, the shape of Burma, as a visual symbol of our love and solidarity with the people.*

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## Day 1- Cyclone Nargis

Cyclone Nargis struck Burma on 2 May 2008, killing about 78,000 people and leaving another 56,000 missing. More than two million people have been displaced. Entire villages have been wiped out with hardly a building standing.

Survivors face poor sanitation and no shelter. Drinking water is in short supply as most sources have been contaminated by decomposing corpses. The UN is warning that flooding could lead to outbreaks of malaria and dengue fever as well as water-borne diseases such as cholera and dysentery.

Crops have been destroyed by saltwater seeping into the fields, which could have a devastating long-term impact on the country's food supply. In one part of the Irrawaddy delta, hungry crowds have stormed the few shops with stocks of food.

*Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me. I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched. My eyes fail, looking for my God.*

Psalm 69: 1-3

### Pray for ...

- Adequate shelter and sanitation for those displaced by the storm so that malaria, dengue fever, cholera and dysentery do not become widespread
- A harvest that can be distributed to meet the needs of all those within Burma

## Day 2 – Aid to Victims of Cyclone Nargis

A month after Burma was hit by cyclone Nargis the media reports that over a quarter of a million people have still not received any help.

The military regime has made it difficult for foreign aid workers to enter the country to distribute aid. Ban Ki-Moon, the UN Secretary General, and Senior-General Than Shwe, the head of the military junta, have met and visas are now being issued with some aid getting into the country.

Many displaced people have migrated to the cities in search of help but have been ordered back to their villages to start rebuilding with no assistance.

The Burma Campaign UK has accused the military junta of giving just £2.5m to disaster relief. (*Apparently less than the amount spent on wedding presents for the daughter of one of the country's rulers last year.*)

*Do not let the floodwaters engulf me or the depths swallow me up or the pit close its mouth over me. Answer me, O LORD, out of the goodness of your love; in your great mercy turn to me. Do not hide your face from your servant; answer me quickly, for I am in trouble. Come near and rescue me; redeem me because of my foes.*

Psalm 69: 14-18

### Pray for ...

- Foreign aid workers to be granted full access to the country and those most in need access to emergency aid
- The military regime to repent and make the people most affected by the cyclone their main priority

## Day 3 – Rice Crops

Once Burma's was the biggest rice exporter in the world, but this broke down after poor agricultural policies were introduced by the military regime. Instead there is now widespread land and produce grabbing which is fuelling hunger in the countryside and driving people from their communities to search for work in the cities. The average Burmese family spends 75% of that meager income on securing adequate food supplies.

In addition, Cyclone Nargis, which hit the Irrawaddy Delta in May 2008, damaged the current rice crop and stores. The Irrawaddy delta region is densely populated, and plays a dominant role in the cultivation of rice in its rich alluvial soil. Burma's agriculture ministry says it needs £122 million for rice seed, fertiliser and to rehabilitate paddy fields.

***A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.***

**Proverbs 22:9**

### Pray for ...

- Reforms to Burma's agricultural policies so that all those living within Burma can receive an adequate food supply
- The restoration of the Irrawaddy delta to its pre-Nargis condition so that rice harvests are not affected for years to come

## Day 4 – Impact of the Global Food Crisis

Increases in food prices are disproportionately affecting the poor in countries like Burma. There are a range of reasons for this including switching from food crops food to those that produce ethanol for bio-fuel; droughts and other unpredictable weather patterns which may be related to climate change; changes to weather conditions; reductions in government grain stores and other neoliberal policies that mean food is exported rather than used to meet the needs of local people; increased energy prices; growing demand for meat and finally.

Cyclone Nargis has also affected food prices and availability in Burma. The United Nations' World Food Program reports that malnutrition of children under 5 is at 32 percent, and that there are at least 5 million people in Myanmar who are short of food.

***I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.***

**Matthew 25:35**

### Pray for ...

- God to provide the basic necessities to those who no longer can afford to provide for themselves as a result of this economic crisis
- Those involved in human activities that have caused the crisis to repent and change their ways.

## Day 5 - Trade and Development

The country is one of the poorest nations in Southeast Asia, suffering from decades of stagnation, mismanagement and isolation. Burma's GDP has the lowest rate of economic growth in the region. Since 1987 Burma has been designated a least developed country by the UN.

Lack of progress towards political reform, poor economic performance, unclear economic policies and worldwide consumer boycotts have meant that Burma has failed to attract foreign investment. The country is regarded as a high risk destination and a difficult location to do business due to governance issues, non-existent rule of law, arbitrary policy-making, and severe trade restrictions.

Inflation is also a serious problem for the economy as well. Basic commodity prices increased from 30 to 60 percent in 2006. Corruption is also a major concern. The corruption watchdog organization Transparency International ranked Burma the most corrupt country in the world in 2007.

*The Soldiers also asked him 'And we, what should we do?' He said to them 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages'.*

**Luke 3:14**

### Pray for ...

- The improvement of economic governance by those in positions of power
- An end to the corruption within the current government, thus reducing inflation and making basic resources affordable for those most in need

## Day 6 – Infrastructure

The country lacks adequate infrastructure. Highways are normally unpaved, except in the major cities. Although the government attempted to improve many major roadways in the 1990s, most remain in poor repair and are not passable during the monsoon season. Railroads are old and rudimentary, with few repairs since their construction in the late nineteenth century. Only ten of eighty airports have paved runways.

There is inadequate production and intermittent supply of electric power. State and private enterprises very often have to depend on their own diesel-run power generators to meet their electrical needs.

The telephone system is inefficient and outdated. Radio and television stations are state-owned and operated. Newspaper content is also heavily controlled. Unauthorized ownership of modems is punishable by up to 15 years in jail. E-mail is restricted to foreigners and business people with close ties to the military junta.

*And it will be said: "Build up, build up, prepare the road! Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people."*

**Isaiah 57:14**

### Pray for ...

- Investment in the physical infrastructure to enable people, resources, energy and goods to move around the country more easily.
- Increased freedom of information through digital communications and the media

## Day 7 – Colonial Past

In 1886 the United Kingdom had incorporated Burma, into the British Raj. It was administered as a province of British India until 1937 when it became a separate, self-governing colony.

Burmese resentment was strong and was vented in violent riots through to the 1930s. Much of the discontent was caused by a perceived disrespect for Burmese culture and traditions, such as the refusal by the British to remove their shoes upon entering Buddhist temples or other holy places.

On 4 January 1948, the nation became an independent republic, named the *Union of Burma*. Unlike most other former British colonies and overseas territories, it did not become a member of the Commonwealth.

The military junta changed the name of the country from the English Burma to Myanmar in 1989 (Myanma is the largest ethnic group). This has proved to be controversial both within and outside of Burma.

***Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up.***

**Psalm 71:20**

### Pray for ...

- Resentment and wounds created during colonial times to heal
- A future that brings unites all the people of Burma

## Day 8 –Military Junta

Burma (Myanmar) is ruled by one of the most extreme military dictatorships in the world; a dictatorship charged by the United Nations with a “crime against humanity” for its systematic abuses of human rights, and condemned internationally for refusing to transfer power to the legally elected Government of the country – the party led by Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

This dictatorship, officially known as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), is made up entirely of Burman Buddhists serving as generals in the Tatmadaw, or armed forces. The inner workings of the junta, or ruling military council, are largely unknown, even among experts.

The military in Burma controls all major aspects of the economy such as mining logging, oil and transport, manufacturing, apparel and energy .It controls the export of all key commodities and must approve all foreign investment. The junta spends 50 percent of Burma’s GNP on the military.

***When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan. A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father, but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth. By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down.***

**Proverbs 29**

### Pray for ...

- The democratic process of government to resume
- Junta leaders see the hardship they are causing to their own people and amend their ways

## Day 9 – General Than Shwe

The current Head of State is Senior General Than Shwe, serving as Commander-in-Chief of the 'Tatmadaw' (Burmese Military) and Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council. He is also the Head of the Union Solidarity and Development Association. These positions and titles effectively amount to Shwe being what is generally referred to as the "head" of Burma's ruling military junta.

Than Shwe has been the top figure in the junta since 1992. As chairman reaches his mid-70s and has fallen into ill-health, his behavior has also been depicted as increasingly bizarre. In 2006, he abruptly moved the country's capital from Burma's largest city, Rangoon, to the remote town of Naypyidaw—reportedly on the advice of his astrologer.

***A ruler who oppresses the poor is like a driving rain that leaves no crops.***

**Proverbs 28:3**

### Pray for ...

- A softening of Senior General Than Shwe heart so that he can no longer tolerate the oppression that is occurring in Burma as a result of his leadership
- Wisdom in senior General Than Shwe's decision making so that it benefits all who live in Burma

## Day 10 – Aung San Suu Kyi

Aung San Suu Kyi has become an international symbol of heroic and peaceful resistance in the face of oppression. For the Burmese people, she represents their best and perhaps sole hope that one day there will be an end to the country's military repression.

Aung San Suu Kyi leads the National League for Democracy (NLD) who won elections in 1990 but has never been allowed to take power. She has spent 12 of the last 18 years under house arrest in Burma's commercial capital, Ragoon.

Inspired by the non-violent campaigns of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi, she organised rallies and travelled around the country, calling for peaceful democratic reform and free elections. But the demonstrations were brutally suppressed by the army, who seized power in a coup on 18 September 1988. Aung San Suu Kyi has often said that detention has made her even more resolute to dedicate the rest of her life to represent the average Burmese citizen.

***For the LORD loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever, but the offspring of the wicked will be cut off; the righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever. The mouth of the righteous man utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks what is just. The law of his God is in his heart; his feet do not slip. The wicked lie in wait for the righteous, seeking their very lives; but the LORD will not leave them in their power or let them be condemned when brought to trial.***

**Psalms 37:28-33**

### Pray for ...

- Aung San Suu Kyi to be comforted, encouraged, strengthened and released from house arrest
- A fair system of government in Burma that will support and care for the people

## Day 11 – Uprising

In August and September 2007 the biggest uprising in almost 20 years took place. It was sparked by the government's decision to increase the price of petrol, diesel and compressed gas. The hikes hit Burma's people hard, forcing up the price of public transport and triggering a knock-on effect for staples such as rice and cooking oil.

Pro-democracy activists led the initial demonstrations in Burma's main city, Rangoon. The authorities moved swiftly to stop the protests, arresting dozens of activists. Nonetheless, protests continued around the country. Tens of thousands of monks and civilians were involved.

A group called the Alliance of All Burmese Buddhist Monks emerged to co-ordinate the protests; they issued a statement describing the military government as "the enemy of the people". The group pledged to continue their protests until they had "wiped the military dictatorship from the land of Burma". There were reports of thousands of arrests.

*The wicked draw the sword and bend the bow to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those whose ways are upright. But their swords will pierce their own hearts, and their bows will be broken. Better the little that the righteous have than the wealth of many wicked; for the power of the wicked will be broken, but the LORD upholds the righteous.*

Psalm 37:14-17

### Pray for ...

- The voices of the oppressed to be heard and change to take place
- Freedom to speak out without the risk of arrest

## Day 12 - Political Prisoners

There are currently approximately 1,864 political prisoners in Burma. Mere disagreement with the authorities can land you in detention and when arrested often torture, such as hooding or beating, and interrogation follows. Cells are often too small to lie down in, food and water are limited, heavy iron shackles that keep the feet permanently astride may be worn and disease is rampant. Amnesty International and the International Committee of the Red Cross are unable to carry out monitoring visits to the prisons.

The Insein Prison, where hundreds of political prisoners are locked up, was one of the sites hardest-hit by Cyclone Nargis. Rain flooded prison cells, the wind uprooted trees, and electricity was cut. The storm triggered a riot and guards started shooting prisoners.

*Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul, will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob.*

Psalm 146

### Pray for ...

- The conditions that political prisoners kept under to be improved and for torture to stop.
- Increased freedom to speak out about issues of injustice within the country without fear of arrest

## Day 13 – Environmental Destruction

The country of Burma is extremely rich in natural resources and is a beautiful land largely untouched by the effects of industry. This is beginning to change, however, as the government finds eager buyers for their resources. 25 massive river dams have been or are being built along the Irrawaddy, Salween, and Sittaung Rivers without any consideration for the peoples living in the area or the environmental effects of the dams..

The civil war that rages on also has a large effect on the environment as land mines and mortar shells are left all over the country and toxic fumes from chemical warfare are released into the air and soil.

About one third of Burma is covered by forest which support a wide variety of birds, mammals and snakes. Extensive logging operations are leading to widespread deforestation. causing new problems of erosion, floods, and landslides. It is also threatening some of the last habitats on earth for endangered animals such as the clouded leopard, gaur, silvered leaf monkey, tapir, tiger, Asian elephant, and Asian rhinoceros.

***The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.***

**Genesis 2: 7**

### Pray for ...

- The impact of industry and war on the environment to be taken seriously by the international community.
- Countries and companies involved in dam-building and mining in Burma will consider the impact of their projects upon the land and the people before profit.

## Day 14 – Resources

Burma is a country with a great deal of natural resources. These include: petroleum, timber, tin, antimony, zinc, copper, tungsten, lead, coal, marble, limestone, precious stones, natural gas, hydropower etc.

The Burmese government is known to sell off mining rights to other countries without any consideration for the effects on local populations and has even sold whole villages that sit on resource rich land to companies without making fair arrangements with the residents. The military regime has been mainly financed by their exploitation of natural gas fields and other mineral resources. Neighbouring Thailand imported \$2.7 billion worth of natural gas from Burma last year, which amounted to 45% of the total exports of Burma.

***Wail, O pine tree, for the cedar has fallen; the stately trees are ruined! Wail, oaks of Bashan; the dense forest has been cut down!***

**Zechariah 11: 2**

### Pray for ...

- Those who are control over the resources will use them to benefit the poor in their country
- The resources not to be wasted or used to fund the means of oppression

## Day 15 – Drug Trade

Burma is the world's second highest producer of heroin and accounting for 8% of entire world production and is a major source of illegal drugs, including amphetamines.

The government of Burma officially opposes the drug trade but does very little to decrease it and key individuals in the government most certainly profit from its continuation.

Much of the drug production occurs in Wa State where the United Wa State Army (UWSA) has signed a cease-fire agreement with the government which allows them to carry on without much government interference. The drugs are mostly trafficked to neighbouring Thailand, but the effect of the drug trade on local villages is very negative, and the drugs are also heavily used by the Burmese Army.

***He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich—both come to poverty.***

**Proverbs 22:16**

### Pray for ...

- Farmers, who grow the heroin, to find creative ways to switch to other crops while still making a livable income.
- Leaders of the UWSA to realize the negative social effects of the drugs they produce and to be driven more by concern for their neighbour than concern for profit.
- Those living in addiction to drugs to find freedom from them.

## Day 16 – Sexual Exploitation

Burma is a prime location for human traffickers to find individuals who are so desperate that they will enter into virtual slavery for the chance to enter a different country. Many young women are taken from the border states into China and Thailand where they are sold into forced marriages or prostitution rings. Young children from Karen state are known to sneak back and forth across the border into Thailand where they find ready work in the sex-tourism industry.

Sexual abuse is also reported to be very common among soldiers in the Burmese army. In many parts of the country rape is considered by military commanders to be a legitimate weapon of war and method of terrorizing and subjugating local women. There are reports that suggest the Burmese army may also intentionally conscript HIV/AIDS patients for the express purpose of infecting the minority ethnic groups with the disease.

***But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go.***

**Judges 19:25**

### Pray for ...

- Those involved in human trafficking circles and the sex trade industry to be exposed and brought to justice
- Soldiers in the army to recognize the harm they are doing and will have compassion on the women they encounter
- Freedom and healing for all those wounded by sexual exploitation

## Day 17 – Child Soldiers

There are an estimated 70,000 child soldiers in Burma, more than in any other country. Young boys are often taken from the street where they are going about their daily activities and forced to enter the army against their will. Often boys found out past curfew or who do not have identification cards will be taken as soldiers. These children are taken directly to training camps without the opportunity to tell their families where they are going. Child soldiers in Burma are taken at any age. Children who came out of the army report that some boys in the army camps were so young that they still wet the bed. Young boys in the army are often given drugs and alcohol to confuse them while they are being trained and are quickly sent into active conflict where they are forced to kill others, sometimes their own people.

*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*

**Matthew 19:14**

### Pray for ...

- The Burmese army to be called to account for their use of child soldiers
- Burmese officers involved in the forced conscription of children to be convicted and would repent of this action
- Child soldiers to find ways to escape from the military, be reunited with their families and not be stigmatized

## Day 18 – Education in Burma

In the 1970's Burma received two awards from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for promoting literacy. Now Burma faces a crisis originating in the military regime's severe restriction of educational opportunities and rapidly deteriorating education system.

Official figures for Burma place literacy rates as high as 83 percent yet many sources indicate that they are closer to 30 percent. According to a survey by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), three out of ten children never start school, 40 percent of school aged children have never attended school, 26 percent of parents cannot afford primary school fees and 60 percent of those who start school are unable to finish.

The quality of high school and university education is also limited due to the heavy restrictions placed on the content of courses by the military junta.

*A wise man has great power, and a man of knowledge increases strength;*

**Proverbs 24:5**

### Pray for ...

- Increased opportunities for children to become literate and acquire other useful skills and knowledge
- Teachers to find ways to provide high quality education to those in high school and university

## Day 19 – Human Rights

Numerous human rights organizations have reported on human rights abuses by the military government in Burma.

According to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions several hundred thousand men, women, children and elderly people are forced to work against their will by the administration. Individuals refusing to work may be victims of torture, rape or death.

The authorities also arbitrarily search citizens' homes, intercept mail, and monitor telephone conversations, and that the possession and use of telephones, fax machines, computers, modems, and software are criminalized.

There is no independent judiciary in Burma and the military government suppresses political activity.

*You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. 6You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.*

James 5: 5-6

### Pray for ...

- Protection over the citizens of Burma from falling victim to the abuses and persecution
- The conscience of those in leadership within the Military Junta to be restored and they would be outraged by the human-rights abuses carried out

## Day 20 – The Christian Church

The Constitution of Burma stipulates that 'the national race shall enjoy the freedom to profess their religion provided that the enjoyment of any such freedom does not offend the laws or the public interest'. In practice, however, the Burmese junta closely monitors and restricts the organization, activities and expression of all religions,

Gatherings of five or more people are illegal and families are required to register houseguests. These restrictions on civil liberty naturally impact religious communities

Christian communities experience extreme difficulties in obtaining permission to construct or repair places of worship. Since the 1960's, Christian groups have also encountered great difficulties in translating, printing and importing religious literature. Religious publications, like secular ones, remain subject to state censorship. In some districts, translations of the Bible into indigenous languages are outlawed.

*But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you*

Psalm 5:11

### Pray for ...

- Followers of Jesus in Burma, that they will model his new way of non-violent love for their enemies
- Christians to be encouraged and inspired to extend the radical welcome of God in the face of political persecution

## Day 21 - Ethnic Groups and Religion

With over 140 distinct ethnic groups, Burma is a very diverse nation. About two thirds of the population is ethnically Burmese (Myanma), the Shan make up 9 percent, the Karen 7 percent, and Rakhine, 4 percent.

Because ethnic minorities in Burma are often religious minorities as well, the fear and conflict between them is complex. The ethnic Burmese are primarily Buddhist, which is the considered the national religion. In contrast, the Karen and Shan are predominately Christian. Because the Karen converted to Christianity during the colonial rule of the British, they can be labeled as threatening colonial sympathizers by the Burmese military. Christian and Muslim minorities are also viewed as having the support of rich nations, which threatens the Buddhist national identity. Both the Muslim and Christian populations face persistent persecution by the military and others.

***But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whole you are also built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.***

**Ephesians 2:13, 21-22**

### Pray for ...

- Protection for those ethnic and religious minorities that are facing persecution
- People to be bridge-builders of cultural and religious understanding between the conflicting groups

## Day 22 - The Karen people

The Karen or *Paw Ka Nyaw Po* people make up a large ethnic minority in Burma. Coming from Tibetan descent, the Karen have faced long-standing tensions with the greater Burmese population. In the 1940s, this people desired to have a subdivision within Burma as it was gaining its independence from Britain. They were not recognized, and instead sought to live in co-existence with the Burmese people. Later that decade, they experienced violent attacks from political militias armed by the national Burmese government.

Led by the Karen National Union (KNU) and other groups, the Karen fought for independence from Burma. More recently, this group have participated in insurgency against the military dictatorship. Once a fighting force of 20,000 in the 1980s, the KNU now numbers less than 4,000. As a result of decades of war, approximately 200,000 Karen have been driven from their homes to live in refugee camps in neighboring countries, especially Thailand.

***A new command I give you: Love one another. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.***

**Romans 12:14, 17-21**

### Pray for ...

- Healing and unity between the Karen and Burmese ethnic groups
- The Karen people to know the love of God in their oppression

<b>Day 23 – Refugees in Thailand</b>	
<p>About three million people from Burma seek sanctuary and livelihoods in neighbouring countries. Thailand and other countries in the region are already straining to handle the Burmese exodus.</p> <p>Since the mid-1980s, Thailand has tried to discourage Burmese refugees and maintain very harsh, unattractive conditions for those admitted in their refugee camps. At present, 140,000 Burmese are registered in refugee camps; some living in these camps for all of their lives. 10-15,000 more moved in without screening.</p> <p>In Thailand officials guard all the roads leading into the camps, which are located deep in the woods by the border. The camps are overcrowded and refugees must follow strict regulations. They are not allowed to leave the camp unless they can obtain a day pass. In most cases they cannot work or earn money which means that they must rely on provisions including food from the United Nations.</p>	<p><i>When an alien resides with you in your land, you should not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Leviticus 19:33-34</b></p>
	<p><b>Pray for ...</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those who have been displaced from Burma or grown up only knowing life in a refugee camps</li> <li>• Improved conditions and greater freedom within the refugee camps in Thailand to enable refugees to have an improved quality of life</li> </ul>

<b>Day 24 – Hsermular’s Story – Part 1</b>	
<p>Hsermular spent her early years hiding from the Burmese military in the jungle with her family. Often they did not have enough nutritional foods and even had to eat wild vegetables and bamboo shoot to survive. She was little and wanted to play but couldn't because they had to be quiet all the times. She couldn't go to school properly because we were always on the run.</p> <p>In 1994 the Burmese Military attacked their village and burned down houses and rice stores. The soldiers took away everything and started killing villagers. So they fled to the Thai and Burma border to take refuge. They had to walk for about two weeks to get to the Thai border. On the way we had to avoid the Burmese military camps. We had to follow the Karen soldiers’ footsteps because the Burmese military set up land mines everywhere. They crossed the Salween river at the border to get to the refugee camp. It was very dangerous because the military fired guns and threw bombs at the boat.</p>	<p><i>We have escaped like a bird out of the fowler's snare; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Psalms 124:7</b></p>
	<p><b>Prayers</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection on those ethnic minority groups trying to escape persecution.</li> <li>• The basic needs of those hiding in the jungle to be met</li> </ul>

## Day 25 – Hsermular’s Story Part 2

In April, 1994 Hsermular’s family got to a temporary refugee camp in Thailand. At the end of the year the Burmese military attacked the camp and so they moved further into Thailand.

In 1999 they were registered by the UNHCR as official refugees. Unfortunately in 2000 Hsermular lost her father as he was killed by the Burmese military when he went back to help people who were hiding in the jungle. Her father was a pastor in one of the Karen Baptist Churches.

Hsermular was in the refugee camp for twelve years. During that time they were ill treated and faced many problems.

In 2005, the Canadian Government sponsored Hsermular’s family and they arrived the following year.

***Leave your orphans; I will protect their lives. Your widows too can trust in me.***

**Jeremiah 49:11**

### Pray for ...

- More international government sponsored refugee programmes by countries around the world
- Those remaining in refugee camps in Thailand

## Day 26 - Corporate Involvement

Corporations such as Chevron and Total continue to support the military junta. The Yadana oil and natural gas pipeline stretches across Burma from the Gulf of Andaman to Thailand. The pipeline, whose partners are Total and Chevron, involved mass forced labour and other human rights abuses, committed by the army on behalf of the oil companies.

Activists are working on a bill in America aimed at getting Chevron out of Burma; it has been passed by Congress. But the Senate hasn’t passed it because some Senators are worried about Chevron having to leave Burma. Previously, consumer boycotts have worked. A boycott campaign in America, led to PepsiCo and Levi’s withdrawing right away.

***Nevertheless, the righteous will hold to their ways, and those with clean hands will grow stronger.***

**Job 17:9**

### Pray for ...

- Employees and management of corporations like Chevron and Total, to see their part in supporting the Burmese military regime and advocate for change
- Growing public pressure on Chevron and Total and other companies who support the regime

## Day 27 - Surrounding Countries

Burma is situated in Southeastern Asia, bordering the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Bangladesh and Thailand. Its bordering countries are: Bangladesh, China, India, Laos and Thailand.

Burma has no enemies among its neighbouring countries. In fact, they benefit significantly from trading with Burma. Thailand accounts for nearly 50% of exports with India and China close behind, and 50% of imports come from China and Thailand.

Burma is a member of the Association of South East Asian Countries (ASEAN). The purpose of ASEAN is to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries in the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter.

***You should not march through the gates of my people in the day of their disaster, nor look down on them in their calamity in the day of their disaster, nor seize their wealth in the day of their disaster.***

**Obadiah 1:13**

### Pray for ...

- Neighbouring countries to put justice above economic benefits and to listen to the voices of the oppressed
- ASEAN countries to hold Burmese Military Junta to account and fulfill the aims of the Association.

## Day 28 – United Nations and Burma

Burma became a United Nations Member State in 1948. Burma has not signed the following: UN International Conventions on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), UN International Covenant on Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984). It has signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

There has been numerous envoys from the United Nations to Burma to establish the democratic process but these have been unsuccessful.

The UN's World Food Programme runs a project which aims to feed a total of 1.6 million people, but notes that aid is constrained by the government's complex system that controls movement of goods from state to state.

***Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.***

**Proverbs 31: 8-9**

### Pray for ...

- The UN to have increased access throughout the country
- The military junta to listen to the recommendation that the UN are making and act upon them

## Day 29 – Non Government Organisations (NGOs)

NGOs started to flourish in Burma in 1993 when UN started a project called the Human Development Initiative (HDI). It was a unique action as the United Nations had previously not got involved in project implementation. Usually it supported government agencies financially and provided technical assistance. UNDP, relied heavily on NGO's to carry out the work. Therefore most NGOs working in Burma are under UNDP sub-contracts. Health and social welfare NGOs are the largest in number.

The activities of NGOs are very strictly controlled and the government only allows NGOs to operate under the close of the Military Intelligence.

***Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him the LORD protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land; you do not give him up to the will of his enemies. The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness you restore him to full health.***

**Psalm 41:1-3**

### Pray for ...

- Good access for NGOs across the country so that they can meet the needs of the poor
- The military junta to allow NGOs to carry out their work without fear

## Day 30- Hope for the future

The problems of Burma are entrenched, and by human standards are insurmountable. But as Christians we know that in Christ there is hope. The Bible is full of examples of exploitation and oppression and also full of God's promises to overcome and bring justice. We place our hope in Christ. The battle is not ours, but the Lord's.

As one of our Burmese friends wrote:

'Please share this with all our friends and pray for us that we will reap the promised fruit of the Lord....We will stick to the Lord in times of hardships and hopelessness, since we know that He is the only hope for our future.'

***Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.***

**Psalm 127: 1**

### Pray for ...

- The continued recognition of the presence of God being with the people of Burma in their suffering
- God's justice to overcome the oppression taking place in Burma

***Creative World Justice*** is a group of people working for the transformation of unjust situation around the world. We particularly focus on Asia where two thirds of the world's poor live. Our inspiration is Jesus, who used creativity to challenge oppressors and encourage the oppressed. Our vision of justice is the Biblical vision of restoration of right relationships between God and each other.