



မြန်မာ့အဖွဲ့အစည်း၊ ပရာဟာမြို့

## PRESS RELEASE

### **14 tons of rice to help fight famine in Burma contributed through a public collection**

**Prague, 9.3.2010. The fundraising campaign "LET'S HELP THE BURMESE" received CZK 120,000 from individuals around the country to aid in the purchase of food for those suffering from the famine in Burma; starvation threatens up to 100,000 Burmese people from the Chin State. This collection campaign, launched last year by the organization Burma Center Prague o.p.s., will continue for the next two years.**

“First of all, we consider the collection a great success, and we want to express particular thanks to the Czech public, and to all who generously contributed,” said Sabe Soe, director of Burma Center Prague. “Selected resources help save lives and reduce the suffering of the Burmese people.”

The donated funds are enough to purchase about 14 tons of rice, estimated to be sufficient sustenance for thousands of people for a month. The primary cause of the famine in the Chin State is the flowering of the local bamboo, *Melaocanna baccifera*; this flowering attracts rats and as they rapidly overpopulate, they destroy the crops. This natural phenomenon is repeated every 50 years. Burma Center Prague has consistently drawn attention to the famine prevailing in northwest Burma, and to the failure of the Burmese regime to address the devastation. The regime's policies have further worsened and expanded the effects of the famine.

This disaster has also struck neighboring regions in India. Unlike the Indian government, which, due to the predictability of this phenomenon, has made the necessary arrangements to provide for their people during this famine, Burma's military government in the Chin State does not offer any aid whatsoever. During the last famine in this area in 1958, 15,000 people died of starvation.

Given the difficult terrain, inadequate infrastructure, and the reluctance of the Burmese military regime to offer aid, local populations must hike across the border to India in order to receive assistance. There, several organizations have built bases where rice can be distributed. Funds collected through the “LET'S HELP THE BURMESE” fundraising campaign are used for the purchase and distribution of rice at these bases on the border between India and Burma.

The Chin people are members of one of the main ethnic minorities living in Burma. They inhabit the mountainous and difficult-to-access northwestern part of the country. In 2008, the Czech government resettled about 40 of these Chin refugees in the Czech Republic under the UNHCR program, and the Burma Center Prague has been providing intensive assistance for these refugees' integration into their new culture.

Burma Center Prague o.p.s., the organizer of the “LET'S HELP THE BURMESE” campaign, was founded in the Czech Republic in 2006 in order to aid the Burmese community in the Czech Republic and internationally. Its mission is to contribute to the democratization of Burma, to support human rights there, and to improve the situation of the people in Burma and those Burmese in exile.

### Ways to support the “LET’S HELP THE BURMESE” campaign:

- Send an SMS from a Czech mobile phone with the words DMS BAMBUS to 87 777. You will be charged CZK 30, CZK 27 of which will go directly to the project.
- Send an SMS from a Czech mobile phone with the words DMS ROK BAMBUS to 87 777. You will be charged CZK 30 *monthly*.

Service operated by DMS Donors Forum, provided by ATS Praha. For more information on how you can donate, please visit [www.darcovskasms.cz](http://www.darcovskasms.cz).

- Request a permanent monthly donation be sent to transparent fundraising account **no. 4547242001/5500**, which Burma Center Prague, o.p.s. has established for the “LET’S HELP THE BURMESE” fundraising drive at Raiffeisenbank Bank (account holder name: Burma Center Prague o.p.s.).

### International Bank Transfer

IBAN: CZ3655000000004547242001

Name of payee: Burma Center Prague

Address of payee: Jaresova 397/10, Praha 4, 14900

Bank of payee: Raiffeisenbank a.s., Prague, Czech Republic

Swift/BIC: RZBCCZPP

To learn more about the campaign and way that you can help the Burmese, please visit [www.dmsbambus.cz](http://www.dmsbambus.cz). If you are interested in obtaining an interview with the director of Burma Center Prague, Mrs. A. Sabe Soe, please contact the office using the information below.

### Information for journalists:

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**TRANSITION**  
Transition Promotion Program



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