



Appendix 2

OIFIG AN AIRE GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA

(OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS)

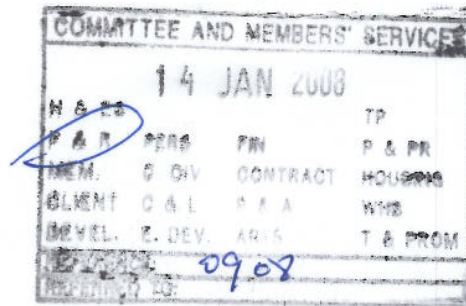
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2

(DUBLIN 2)

Mr. Liam Steele  
Senior Committee Administrator  
Belfast City Council  
Chief Executives Department  
Committee and Members Services Section  
City Hall  
Belfast BT1 5GS

7 January 2008

Our Ref: POL070745



Dear Mr. Steele,

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Dermot Ahern T.D., has asked me to thank you for informing us of the Notice of Motion passed by Belfast City Council regarding the situation in Burma. The Minister welcomes the motion and has noted its contents.

The Minister remains gravely concerned at the situation in Burma. The priority, for a long-lasting and sustainable solution to the situation in Burma, remains the implementation of a sustainable, meaningful and inclusive political process leading to real democratisation and national reconciliation. The main track to achieving this is the process initiated by the UN Secretary General and his Special Representative, Dr Ibrahim Gambari. The Government believes that the opportunity provided by this good offices mission must be seized by all sides. The role of Burma's neighbours in this is essential.

The Government agrees that the situation in Burma, with implications for regional and international security, warrants broader and more concrete Security Council action, including sanctions. Regrettably, there is insufficient consensus in favour of such action among Security Council members, though we do welcome the fact that the Council continues to be engaged on the issue.

In the absence of UN sanctions, that would be legally binding internationally, Ireland has taken a strong position in favour of imposing, and extending, EU sanctions on Burma.

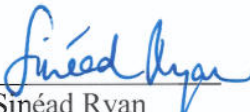
Ireland, with our EU partners, applies a range of restrictive measures to Burma, referred to as the Common Position, since 1996. The Common Position confirmed an arms embargo imposed in 1990. Equally, GSP privileges were withdrawn in 1997 because of forced labour issues. It also prohibits EU-registered companies from making financial loans or credits to named Burmese State-owned enterprise and from acquiring or extending a participation in such enterprises.

On 19 November the General Affairs and External Relations Council adopted further targeted measures on Burma: import, export and investment bans on equipment to the logs and timber and mining of metals, minerals, precious and semi-precious stones sectors. These clearly target the regime and seek to minimise the impact on the people of Burma. Ireland also successfully sought to ensure the flexibility of the sanctions, which can be strengthened further if required. A new comprehensive investment ban is being looked at in this context. Ireland will continue to take a strong position in favour of extending further EU sanctions on Burma as the situation there requires.

Ireland will continue to monitor developments in Burma very closely and to work with EU, the UN and the countries of Asia and to keep the focus of the world on the plight of the people of Burma.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely,

  
Sinéad Ryan  
Private Secretary