



Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development

APWLD NGO on the Roster in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

Asia Pacific WOMEN OPPOSE WAR!

Today, APWLD unites with thousands of women all over the Asia Pacific region, joined by men, as they march together to call for peace.

We don't need another war.

The women and men of the countries from this region are already waging wars of another kind.

There is the ongoing war against the increasing poverty brought about by the unfair trade policies pushed through the World Trade Organization (WTO), by the US and its allies. Because of the opening up of trade restrictions, the former exporter countries of rice, corn, carrots, and other vegetables (e.g. Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand) are now flooded with these same products from other countries. As agricultural industries in these countries go into slump, the farmers lose their primary sources of living. Women peasants are forced to leave their farms, and to take low paying jobs as domestic workers, or in the so-called informal sector (vending, home-based industries, etc.). This trend of heavy food importation in the region, not only threatens the lives of the women and men farmers, but also the food sovereignty of the peoples in this region.

The women of Shan and other ethnic communities are fighting a daily war against the systematic rape of their mothers, sisters and other members of their communities by the military junta in Burma. The report "*Licence to Rape*" has documented 173 incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence from 1996 to 2001. These rapes involved 625 girls and women and were committed by military troops in Shan state. But even as we talk about the US war against Iraq, there are still reports of rapes and gang-rapes of Shan women by the military troops, while the military junta continues to deny complicity in any of these brutal acts.

There is an ongoing war in Thailand, as the Thai police proceeds with its manic hunt-down of drug dealers *basing on the questionable and loosely "blacklisting" of the so-called suspects*. *Less than a* month after the program has been launched, 1,140 drugs suspects have already been killed. The Thai officials explain most of these cases as instances of drug dealers killing each other, to avoid the risk of betrayal if their accomplices were to turn themselves in. However, given the pressure of the Thai government on the police *and the provincial authorities* to produce results within its three month "all-out-war on drugs," the trend would instead indicate that due process of law is being blatantly ignored. This almost random persecution of people *suspected to be* associated with the drug dealing industry has brought fear into the lives of people *especially those* living in the *hills* and along the borders. These communities have always been the easy targets for such arbitrary and unfounded accusations. *Moreover, it is frightening to learn that a great number of women have fallen victims to the drug oppression operation in Thailand.*

There is an ongoing war against multinational companies as they encroach upon the traditional lands of the indigenous communities in the region, logging and mining their lands and their sources of livelihood away. The local communities of Buyat Bay, in a remote region of Indonesia, have been fighting the operation of the US-based Newmont Mining Corporation. This is the same mining company, which has been declared an enemy of the people in the Cordillera region in the Philippines.

There is an ongoing war against the escalation of US-sponsored militarization in the countryside of nations suspected by the US of harbouring terrorists.

All the regions of the world should be free from war.

The women, men and children of Iraq have been facing their own war for decades against the cruel dictatorship of Saddam Hussein.

Our call for peace is joined with our call for freedom for the Iraqi people from the oppression of Saddam.

Our call for peace is also our call for freedom from the arrogance, domination and greed of the colonial power, the US.

Our call for peace is also a call for respect of the sovereign right of each nation to determine its economic and political life.

It is a call for the recognition and respect of women's human rights in Burma and in every other nation.

We don't need another war. We need peace. Not peace out of fear, nor peace from the oblivion of the enemies. But peace based on justice, on equality, and on respect for the human rights of both women and men.

Today, International Women's Day, we let our collective voices ring and shout:

Women Oppose War!

**Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development
(APWLD)**

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Chiangmai, Thailand

For further information contact APWLD at apwld@apwld.org or at <http://www.apwld.org>