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BURMA First-ever biography of dictator launched in European Parliament following human rights hearing

Nirj Deva MEP, Conservative MEP for South-East England, will host the launch of the first-ever biography of Burma's dictator Senior General Than Shwe, by CSW's East Asia specialist Benedict Rogers, at the European Parliament on 30 September.

Benedict Rogers will give evidence of the Burmese military regime's crimes against humanity at a hearing on Burma by the European Parliament Sub-Committee on Human Rights ahead of the book launch.

His book, *Than Shwe: Unmasking Burma's Tyrant*, tells the story of one of the world's most brutal dictators, and of the suffering of the people of Burma under his rule. Drawing on his own personal travels to Burma and its borders, and on interviews with Burmese defectors and international diplomats, Benedict Rogers explores the life of Than Shwe, his developing nuclear program, links with North Korea, arms sales from China, the new capital, Naypyidaw, his skills in psychological warfare and his belief in astrology, and the war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated by Than Shwe's regime.

Than Shwe: Unmasking Burma's Tyrant is published by Silkworm Books and was first launched at the Foreign Correspondents Club in Bangkok on 1 July. The UK launch was hosted by the Speaker of the House of Commons John Bercow at Speaker's House in the Houses of Parliament on 14 July. Former Czech President Vaclav Havel wrote the foreword.

Nirj Deva MEP, Vice-Chairman of the European Parliament's Development Committee and a member of the Sub-Committee on Human Rights, said, "I am delighted to sponsor this book launch as an important opportunity to draw to the attention of the European Parliament, once again, the plight of the people of Burma suffering so much under Than Shwe's brutal rule. Than Shwe is one of the worst dictators in the world, presiding over a regime that is perpetrating crimes against humanity. This book documents Than Shwe's crimes vividly and powerfully, and is a valuable contribution to the case for a UN Commission of Inquiry to investigate Burma's war crimes and crimes against humanity. The time for action on Burma is long overdue, and I hope by hosting this event I will help motivate others in the EU and beyond to support the people of Burma in their struggle to end impunity and win their freedom."

Benedict Rogers said, "I wrote this book in order once again to turn the spotlight on Than Shwe's brutal regime in Burma and help the world understand the nature of this tyrant. I hope that in some way this will be a contribution towards galvanizing international opinion for the establishment of a UN commission of inquiry to investigate the regime's war crimes and crimes against humanity."

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. For further information about the book, please see <http://www.silkwormbooks.com/catalog/info/than-shwe>