



INTERNATIONAL HUMAN  
RIGHTS CLINIC

HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM  
AT HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

**International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School urges Korean Human Rights Commission to examine Shwe Natural Gas Project in Burma**

(Cambridge, MA, April 17, 2008) - The International Human Rights Clinic (IHRC) at Harvard Law School filed a petition with the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, urging it to examine Korean involvement in a natural gas project in Burma known as the Shwe Project. Prepared in conjunction with Gong-Gam, a public interest lawyers' group in Korea, IHRC filed the petition on behalf of individuals from Burma now residing in Korea as well as a dozen Korean-based organizations. The individual petitioners' identities have been kept confidential for security reasons.

The petition raises particular concerns about the planned construction of a pipeline to transport the gas from the Shwe Project. Previous natural gas pipeline projects in Burma resulted in severe militarization of construction zones, and have been linked with severe human rights abuses, including the use of forced labor, forced displacement of local residents, and torture, rape, and extrajudicial executions to intimidate the population. These previous projects have traversed much shorter distances, however, than the proposed Shwe pipeline.

Along with a team of clinical students, Tyler Giannini, Clinical Director of the Human Rights Program and a Lecturer on Law at Harvard Law School, has been monitoring the project. "The Shwe Project deserves particular scrutiny because of its size and scale. The history of natural gas development in Burma is already plagued with human rights violations, and this project may adversely affect so many more communities," said Giannini. "The Korean Human Rights Commission should ensure that every precaution is taken so that the Shwe Project does not perpetuate additional violations of fundamental rights."

The petition asks the Korean Human Rights Commission to investigate the Shwe Project and the risk that the Korea Gas Corporation (KOGAS) will become embroiled in human rights violations committed by the Burmese military. KOGAS is a public Korean corporation whose resource development projects are under the control of the Korean government.

Korean industry is playing an increasingly large role internationally in foreign energy resource development, and the IHRC petition specifically asks the Korean Human Rights Commission to issue policy recommendations on mechanisms that would help prevent and monitor human rights abuses in Korean corporate energy projects abroad. Especially in countries like Burma, with long-documented poor human rights records, the need for such mechanisms is critical.

“By thoroughly examining the role of Korean actors in the Shwe Project, the Korean Human Rights Commission can send an important message to KOGAS, the Korean government and other corporate actors that foreign investment should not support or lead to human rights violations abroad,” said Giannini.

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To view a translated English copy of the petition to the South Korean Human Rights Commission, [click here](#). For more information, please contact Tyler Giannini or Michael Jones at the International Human Rights Clinic at [mijones@law.harvard.edu](mailto:mijones@law.harvard.edu), or 617-495-9214.