

## THE SHWE GAS MOVEMENT

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**To:** President Roh Moo-hyun  
The Republic of South Korea

C/O Ambassador Han Tae-kyu,  
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Thailand  
Embassy of The Republic of Korea in Bangkok, Thailand  
23 Thiam-Ruammit Road ,  
Ratchadapisek, Huay Kwang, Bangkok 10320  
Thailand

**From:** Mr. Wong Aung  
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Email: [global@shwe.org](mailto:global@shwe.org)

March 26, 2007

Dear Mr. President,

The Shwe Gas Movement would like to call to your attention to the respective investments of Daewoo International and the Korea Gas Corporation (KOGAS) in the natural gas project in Burma known publicly as the *Shwe* Gas Project.

In a production sharing contract with the state-owned Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE), the aforementioned Korean corporations aim to develop natural gas discovered in the A-1 and A-3 offshore natural gas blocks located off the western coast of Burma.

On this day, March 26, 2007, people in twenty countries on four continents (North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia) are demanding that this project stop due to the serious threat it poses to the human rights of the people of Burma at this time, and specifically to those of Arakan state, Burma; because of the fundamental lack of public participation in these projects in Burma; and because of the uncertainty about how and where the relatively enormous profits from the project will be spent by the State Peace and Development Council in Burma.

The human rights concerns of this project are serious and grave. In the early 1990s, the Yadana gas project was developed by TOTAL of France and UNOCAL Corporation of the United States of America. The project directly resulted in forced labor, land confiscation, displacement, rape, and killings. TOTAL and UNOCAL were subsequently sued in French and US courts, respectively, for what amounted to their involvement in the human rights abuses, and each case was settled out of court. These same questions of complicity, aiding and abetting, and otherwise exacerbating the human rights situation in Burma are raised again by the Shwe Gas Project and directed at Daewoo International, KOGAS, and, by association, the esteemed Government of South Korea

There are already reports of human rights violations in Arakan state connected to the project's exploration phase, including restrictions on fishing in the Bay of Bengal, which violates the right to one's own means of subsistence, recognized in *The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights*. The covenant was entered into force on 3 January 1976 and is widely regarded customary international law. Article 1(2) states "In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence."

In November 2006, EarthRights International (ERI) and the Korean Federation for Environmental Movement (KFEM), in partnership with the Shwe Gas Movement (SGM), sent a letter to Daewoo International and KOGAS demanding the companies conduct

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adequate third party impact assessments for the Shwe Gas Project. Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (EIA, SIA) are required by numerous internationally recognized standards for a project of the magnitude of the Shwe gas project, and Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIA) are gaining prominence as a way to assess the impact a project will have on the broader human rights situation in a country, region, or other geographic designation. Impact assessments are in fact required by the domestic regulations of numerous governments for projects within their borders; they are required by financial institutions such as the World Bank; they are required by numerous responsible corporations in various sectors. To our knowledge, neither Daewoo International nor KOGAS has a policy on impact assessments, despite the large social and environmental impacts of the work the companies undertake. South Korea, on the other hand, has domestic regulations for impact assessments that provide for public participation for projects in South Korea with a large “footprint.” Impact assessments are commonly and ideally made public and they are uncompromisingly required *prior* to the project beginning, not during or after the project’s implementation.

Daewoo International and KOGAS did not reply to the letters we sent, which can only be interpreted as disregard.

We commend the South Korean authorities for the investigation into Daewoo International’s trading relationship with the State Peace and Development Council in Burma, and the subsequent indictments of the fourteen high level executives for violating trade restrictions, and we are hopeful for an appropriate outcome. However, the Shwe Gas Movement, representing the people of Arakan state in Burma, feel that the Government of South Korea has not taken the concern for justice far enough: We are asking you to please stop the Shwe Gas Project in Burma; to withdraw the investments of KOGAS, and to apply appropriate pressure on Daewoo International to do the same.

We understand South Korea’s need for natural resources such as natural gas, but we are certain that your faculties of reason do not allow you in good conscience to directly compromise the lives and livelihoods of thousands people in Burma, and indirectly compromise the lives and livelihoods of the millions who suffer under the wider repression of the SPDC in Burma, for the acquisition of a non-renewable natural resource. Surely there is another way. We respectfully urge you to please find it, in the interest of human rights and humanity, democracy and development, peace and prosperity. We thank you in advance for your attention this, and we warmly welcome a response from your administration.

Respectfully Yours,

Mr. Wong Aung  
Global Coordinator, The Shwe Gas Movement

Cc: Daewoo International;  
Korea Gas Corporation;  
EarthRights International;  
Shwe Gas Movement Bangladesh;  
Shwe Gas Movement India;  
The Arakan Oil Watch;

The Other Media (India);  
Human Rights Watch;  
The Korean House for International  
Solidarity;  
The Korean Federation for  
Environmental Movement