



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice Myanmar

MMR35778
21 December 2009

On 20 November 2009 RRT Country Advice sent a request to DFAT, asking Post to respond to a three questions relating to the treatment of locally-engaged staff at the British Embassy in Rangoon (Yangon) by the Burmese authorities.¹

On 21 December 2009 DFAT responded with the following:

Questions

A. Is Post aware of any allegations of spying for the UK made against locally-engaged staff in the British Embassy in Yangon between 2004 and 2008?

Following the September 2007 protests there were two opinion articles in state-owned media in Burma suggesting that locally-engaged employees at Embassies were corrupted by their foreign currency salaries into forgetting their love of their country. Opinion articles in the state-media are officially sanctioned and generally interpreted as providing evidence of regime policies and beliefs.

B. Is Post aware of whether locally engaged staff in the British Embassy in Yangon suffered intimidation or harm by the junta, the USDA, the Swan Arr Shin, etc, due to their employment at the British Embassy?

Post is not aware of locally-engaged staff in the UK Embassy in Rangoon having suffered from intimidation or harm from the authorities over the past three years. We are aware that locally-engaged employees of the UK Embassy have come to the attention of the authorities, including approaches by the authorities seeking information from them on details of their employment.

C. Is the Post aware of whether locally engaged staff in the British Embassy in Yangon experienced extreme difficulty obtaining documents from Burmese authorities in order to depart Burma between 2004 and 2008?

Post is aware that some locally-engaged staff at the UK Embassy in Rangoon have suffered extreme difficulty obtaining travel documents, but other locally engaged staff at the UK Embassy have been able to obtain travel documents.²

List of Attachments

1. RRT Country Advice 2009, *RRT Country Information Request MMR35778 – Myanmar (Burma)*, 20 November.

¹ RRT Country Advice 2009, *RRT Country Information Request MMR35778 – Myanmar (Burma)*, 20 November - Attachment 1.

² Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2009, *DFAT Report No. 1089 – Burma: RRT Information Request: mmr35778*, 20 November - Attachment 2.

2. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2009, *DFAT Report No. 1089 – Burma: RRT Information Request: mmr35778*, 20 November.