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**Statement by Freedom House
OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, 1 October 2007**

Ms. Moderator,

We would like to use this time to call upon the Participating States of the OSCE to express their solidarity with the human rights defenders working to end the repressive military regime in Burma. In the Copenhagen Document the then CSCE declared its commitment to ensure the rights of the individual to know and act upon human rights and fundamental freedoms; to respect the right of everyone to see, receive and impart freely views and information on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights to disseminate and publish such views and information; and to respect the rights of everyone to study and discuss the observance of these and to develop and discuss ideas for improved protection of human rights. This is exactly what the people of Burma are demonstrating for now, and it is time for the OSCE Participating States to call for an end to the crackdown by the military regime.

In the framework of the Helsinki process, human rights defenders of the West continuously urged their governments to speak up in support of more effective protection of the human rights of their counterparts working behind the iron curtain. This show of solidarity gave hope and strength to dissidents risking their life every day.

I would like to recall everyone's memory about Elena Bonner, wife and colleague of the legendary Russian human rights defender Andrei Sakharov and a courageous activist of fundamental freedoms in the Soviet Union. She, like Aung San Suu Kyi, suffered house arrest with her husband for five years in Gorky. A prominent figure of the now well-known Russian dissidents, she was heartened to carry on her work as the international community expressed solidarity with her and pushed the Soviets to transform the regime that imprisoned her. The actions of human rights defenders in the former Soviet Union, such as Bonner, helped to focus and solidify international opinion and contributed to the fall of the oppressive Soviet regime. Today, as we discuss gender issues at the HDIM, we should join together in support of another strong woman, Aung San Suu Kyi and her brave followers who have given so much to advance the cause of human rights in Burma.

Another important topic for our discussions that will have been under review this week while eagerly waiting for reports on the Burmese situation is freedom of media. Although likely just the tip of the iceberg, the world could, for the first time, see the suppressive violence of the military regime in Burma as a result of people's access to the internet and other electronic media. The importance of this cannot be stressed

enough and should strengthen the resolve of ODIHR to call for more open and unrestricted access to such sources of media in the Participating States of the OSCE.

The people of Burma deserve our support. Their demonstrations have been peaceful, exhibiting the principles of nonviolence that the shipyard workers in Gdansk, the Women of Srebrenica or the youth in Belgrade exemplified. We believe, the nonviolent struggle of people reinforced with international support through the Helsinki process is what ultimately led to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The brutal reaction by the Burmese military junta now should trigger the international community to stand in support with the Burmese civil society to express free will through peaceful assemblies and free association. The Burmese people are expressing their democratic desire in a peaceful manner and it is time that OSCE Participating States demonstrate solidarity with them.

Therefore,

We urge the participants of the 2007 OSCE/ODIHR Human Dimension Implementation Meeting to display support to the Burmese nonviolent struggle against a repressive military dictatorship.

We call upon the OSCE Participating and Partner States to demand objective, thorough, and unhindered media reporting in Burma, and press the Burmese government to grant unrestricted access both domestically and internationally to uncensored media sources.

We call upon the OSCE Participating States to demand and show political, economic and diplomatic support to the unrestrained exercise of freedom of peaceful assembly and help begin the process immediately that leads to free and fair elections in Burma.