



PEOPLES COALITION ON FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

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Repeal the 2012 VFV Law in Burma! Carry out a genuinely pro-people land reform policy!

The People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS) joins the international clamor demanding the repeal of the 2012 Vacant, Fallow, and Virgin (VFV) Lands Management Law in Burma.

Since its inception, the VFV Land Management Law has been used to facilitate large-scale landgrabs throughout Burma. It denies the [Burmese rural peoples, which compose 70% of the county's population](#), their customary and communal land rights by declaring all lands without official land titles as "vacant, fallow, and virgin," in order to herald these lands for use of domestic and foreign investment. [This has long been disputed in the country](#), yet the government of Burma has opted to bolster the law to fast track the turnover of these lands to corporate landlords.

The law was amended in September 2018, requiring land tillers to register for land use permits with 30-year validity within six months. Deadline lapsed on March 11, and now more than 20 million hectares of land – a third of Burma's total land area – have become subjected to private interests. About 75% of the "VFV" lands are territories of ethnic minorities. And considering that [95% of the VFV land residents surveyed a month before the deadline of registration had no knowledge of the law](#), majority of the people in these areas are subject to penalties up to 500,000 kyats (US \$328) of fine and/or two years in jail for "trespassing" the lands they customarily owned.

[There are, in fact, reports of local authorities filing charges against villagers for violating the VFV Land Management Law, and more are expected to arise with the amendment in implementation](#). These cases are ongoing despite the [confirmation of a member of the ruling party National League for Democracy \(NLD\) executive committee that the law is yet to be enforced until the bylaws are completed](#). PCFS condemns the criminalization of occupying the land that the Burmese people have cultivated for decades even prior the law's existence. The Coalition denounces such harassment that aims the massive displacement of rural communities.

PCFS slams the Aung San Suu Kyi-led Burma government for pushing this law and its impracticable amendments – a far cry from its promise of protecting the land rights of farmers. In fact, the VFV law was made stricter. Four years since NLD broke the country's military junta, the government has opted to abide with the trends on land policies perpetuated by international and development finance institutions that undermine food sovereignty and deny the land rights of farmers and Indigenous Peoples. No [plan to amend the law or even the constitution](#) will be able to resolve landlessness in Burma if the development framework is to "draw more investment."

We condemn the Aung San Suu Kyi government for implementing the VFV law. We call its attention to carry out a genuinely pro-people land reform policy that can not only alleviate the widespread poverty



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especially in rural areas, but also address the country's peace situation. [Burma is riddled with armed conflict with ethnic minority groups that seek liberation and self-determination](#). Given this context and with the VFV Land Management Law in order, [the refugees – who are already made vulnerable by the ongoing civil wars – have no more lands to return to](#).

PCFS is one with the rural peoples of Burma in calling for the repeal of the 2012 VFV Land Management Law. We call our members, networks, and fellow food sovereignty advocates to support the struggle of the rural peoples in Burma in defense of their ancestral lands and natural resources!
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