

**Democratic Voice of Burma**  
**Political Prisoners News**  
2004 September

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## **Political prisoner U Soe Myint health deteriorates in Insein Prison**

*1 September 2004*

The health condition of U Soe Myint, an elected representative (MP) of National League for Democracy (NLD), currently detained unjustly at Insein Jail in Rangoon is deteriorating, according to Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP).

He is said to be suffering from arthritis due to lack of physical exercises and medical cares, and likely to be paralysed.

U Soe Myint, the elected representative of Minbu Township, Constituency-1, Magwe Division was arrested in September 1998 and sentenced to 7 years in prison for attempting to organise a parliament under the instruction of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

His two sons were also arrested with him and one of them is still languishing in Bassein (Patheingyi) Jail.

According to the spokesman of AAPP, Ko Bo Kyi, there are more than 1300 political prisoners including old and ill people languishing in prisons throughout Burma.

He added that the generals of State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) should release these people immediately if they really mean to help the country and head towards democracy. [TOP](#)

## **The trial of U Than Htay, NLD MP begins in Burma**

*2 September 2004*

The trial of U Than Htay, the National League for Democracy (NLD) elected representative (MP) of Lashio Township, Constituency-2 in Shan State started on 1 September.

U Than Htay has been arrested unjustly in connection with his son's business interests.

The court first questioned the litigant police and the defending lawyer U Sai Myint Maung was allowed to listen to the questioning.

U Sai Myint Maung told DVB that his client is understandably angered by the unfair arrest but he knows that he has to fight for his reputation.

Observers say that U Than Htay was arrested and implicated in the case because the military authorities want to undermine his position as an NLD MP.

U Than Htay was arrested on 11 August because the authorities 'found' some illegal videos and documents relating to him on the premise of his son's business and charged him with laws related to import, export acts.

U Sai Myint Maung said the litigants are likely to build a case implicating U Than Htay in illegal activities, but he will argue and show the public that his client is not committing any crime with evidences available. [TOP](#)

## **Trial of NLD members begins in Rangoon, Burma**

*5 September 2004*

The trial of 4 National League for Democracy (NLD) members who have been detained unjustly started on 30 August at a court inside the notorious Insein Prison in Rangoon.

The secretary of Thingangyun Township, Rangoon NLD U Tin Myint, Magwe Division NLD woman member Daw Than Than Htay, NLD members from Thein Zayat, Mon State U San Ya and Ma Yi Yi Win were charged with unlawful association act 71, Immigration act 31 and emergency provision act 5J.

The defending lawyer NLD Legal Support Group's U Nyan Win told DVB that no witnesses have been summoned since the trial started but the proper hearing began on 2 September.

U Tin Myint and Daw Than Than Htay were arrested on 7 June and U San Ya and Ma Yi Yi Win were arrested at the beginning of August.

Daw Than Than Htay is suffering from gastric complaints and her health is said to be not good.

The trial resumes on 6 September. [TOP](#)

## **U Tin Myint and 3 more NLD members tried in Rangoon**

*6 September 2004*

The trial of four National League for Democracy (NLD) members – U Tin Myint, the secretary of Thingangyun Township NLD, Magwe Division NLD woman member Daw Than Than Htay, U San Ya and Ma Yi Yi Win from Thein-Zayat in Mon State – who have been arrested and detained unjustly, has started on 6 September at a court Insein Prison in Rangoon with three charges against them.

At the same time, the trial of the NLD elected representative U Than Htay and two members of his families who have been detained unjustly, has started at Lashio in northern Shan State with four charges against them.

According to NLD spokesman U Lwin, U Than Htay and relatives were charged in connection with the activities to receive foreign satellite TV programmes with illegal equipments.

The NLD elected representative of Myaungmya in Irrawaddy Division U Aung Kyin quit the party due to pressures piled on him by the military junta. [TOP](#)

### **Burma junta to release Chinese prisoners – no hope for Burmese prisoners**

*8 September 2004*

Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) is preparing to release Chinese prisoners including some criminals to promote amity and improve relation between China and Burma, but around 1500 Burmese political prisoners who have detained unjustly see no hope for their release in the foreseeable future.

Most of the Chinese prisoners were arrested on the Sino-Burma border for violating Burmese laws.

Ko O Wai Aung, an ex-political prisoner now living in Bangkok told DVB that if the junta really wants to show its patriotism, it should release all Burmese political prisoners.

Recently, the Thai government granted amnesty to tens of thousands of prisoners including Burmese nationals to mark the birthday of the Queen of Thailand.

Ko Tate Naing of exiled Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) pointed out that the junta in Burma is, not only ignoring to copy the good example shown by Thailand, but also continue to detain political prisoners who served their terms.

He added that the junta impose many kinds of restrictions on political prisoners even when they are released. [TOP](#)

### **NLD member sent to prison for peaceful activities**

*9 September 2004*

Ko Kyaw Aung , a National League for Democracy (NLD) member was sent to prison by Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) authorities for taking part in the NLD signature collecting campaign calling for the release all political prisoners including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Ko Kyaw Aung alias Ko Aung Myint Tun from Thayagon Village, Mawkyun Township, Irrawaddy Division in southern delta region of Burma had been actively taking part in the campaign when he was arrested on 13 August along with his father in law, U Wan Khin.

They were charged with the failure to register themselves as guests, and tried and sentenced to seven days in prison on 27 August.

U Wan Khin was sent to Myaungmya Prison and Ko Kyaw Aung has also been charged with breaking additional acts.

Ko Kyaw Aung has been living with his wife, the daughter of U Wan Khin for nearly a year in the village, and his arrest has nothing to do with him breaking the law but a blatant attempt to vilify him because he is an active NLD member, according to local villagers.

Naing Ngwe Ya, a lawyer defending political prisoners inside Burma also urged Burmese people to report and consult with good lawyers when they are unfairly treated by the military authorities. [TOP](#)

### **Burma junta arrests NLD members**

*10 September 2004*

The authorities of Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) are continuing to intimidate and arrest National League for Democracy (NLD) throughout Burma in an effort to stem the flow of political awareness in the country.

In recent days, the authorities arrested 3 NLD members from Natmauk Township, Magwe Division, 2 members from Myingyan Township, Mandalay Township, 1 member from Mawlamyaingkyun Township and a private tuition teacher Ko Nyunt Aung from Monywa Township in central Burma.

NLD spokesman U Lwin told DVB that the arrests are connected to the party's signature collecting campaign calling for the release of all political prisoners including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

He confirmed that the NLD won't be stopping its campaign due to this kind of intimidations and threats of imprisonment. [TOP](#)

## Japanese tourists arrested by Burma junta

14 September 2004

Two Japanese tourists have been arrested and detained by Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) for not obtaining visa within the country to visit a ruby-mine town called Mogok in Shan State, upper Burma.

Moreover, the junta's authorities also arrested two people – Ma Zar Chi Oo from 26B Road Japanese Buddhist Missionary Monastery in Mandalay and driver U Maung Maung Gyi who took them to the town and the host and hostess who entertained them.

Ms Agachi and Ms Oyaya-o were taken to Mogok on 1 September for a visit and they were stopped and arrested on their return journey.

The two Japanese nationals were charged with visiting Mogok without obtaining a visa and their two Burmese companions were charged with laws relating to hotel and tourism acts.

The host U Aung Win and hostess Daw Than Shwe were charged with failure to report the presence of strangers to the authorities.

Moreover, the authorities told all people concerned not to leak the news of the arrests to the outside world, according to a tourist guide in Mandalay. [TOP](#)

## Burma junta heard request for appeal by political prisoners

14 September 2004

Burma's central court heard a request for a special appeal for nine political prisoners including the editor of First Eleven sports journal Zaw Thet Htway who were accused of sedition against the military junta in Rangoon, on 14 September.

The request was made to the team of judges appointed by the junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) headed by U Khin Maung Aye and Colonel Khin Myint.

The defending lawyer Naing Ngwe Ya of National League for Democracy (NLD) Legal Support Group told DVB that the junta's lawyers tried to prevent the appeal from being lodged.

Naing Ngwe Ya argues that the accusers were set up by a shady character known as U Myo Chit to rebel against the junta and that he has neither been prosecuted as the main culprit nor called in as witness by the court.

Nevertheless, Naing Ngwe Ya is optimistic that the court would allow him to lodge an appeal on behalf of the defendants and they would eventually be cleared and released.

But the junta has rejected the appeal of three NLD members in Chin State, according to Chin State NLD chairman U Van Liang.

The three have been imprisoned by the junta for trying to stop the military intelligence agents from taking pictures of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi during her visit to Chin State last year. [TOP](#)

## U Nyan Thaung, a NLD leader released in Burma

16 September 2004

U Nyan Thaung, Mayanggone township chief NLD organiser in Rangoon Division was released from Insein prison on 16 September.

He is suffering from heart condition, diabetes and urinal diseases thus he needs at least two or three months to rebuild his health before he carries on his activities.

U Nyan Thaung expresses that he wants all political prisoners to be freed, and he vows to continue the struggle.

Along with 7 NLD members, he was arrested for rallying to organize Manyangon Township NLD youth group in 1997.

They were given seven years in prison by Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

Five out the eight, including U Nyan Thaung, have been released but U Khin Maung Myint died of torture in Kale jail.

The remain two are Dr. Than Nyein, the elected representative of Kyauk Tan Township, Rangoon and Dr. May Win Myint, the representative of Mayanggoneone Township in Rangoon who have been recently charged with the Act 10 (a) and to be detained indefinitely, just before they are due to be released after serving their previous sentences. [TOP](#)

## **Military commander orders local officers to counter NLD activities**

*20 September 2003*

Sagaing Division military commander ordered the local authorities in Kalay to take counter-action against NLD's signature campaign for release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo.

The commander visited Kalay during third week of September and met local authority and USDA members, civilian wing of the regime. He ordered them to counter the NLD's signature campaign by forcing local residents who had joined the NLD campaign to say that "they did a mistake".

DVB contacted Kalay Township NLD member of Parliament U Do Htaung for comments on the news. "I am sure people will not say "they made a mistake" but they will simply say they hadn't join our campaign," he said. But, he added that, if they are forced, they might have to say it. What choice do they have?

But we, the NLD did not break any existing law when we asked people to join our signature campaign, U Do Htaung told DVB. We did not forced any one. But if the authorities want to take us to the court for this, what law are they going to use against us, he questioned.

According to local residents in Kalay, some NLD members who are active in the signature campaign have been arrested and tortured. But local authorities claimed that they had arrested them for other reasons. On 23 July, Ko Aung Aung, NLD's signature campaign organizer from Kalay was arrested and tortured. The local authorities said he was arrested for singing a song that could disturb peace. He sang a song at a friend wedding along with some other youth.

The authorities had beaten Ko Aung Aung the whole night before he was being released the next morning, a local NLD member told DVB. [TOP](#)

## **Dr Than Nyein on hunger strike and transferred Tharawaddy prison in Burma**

*22 September 2004*

Dr. Than Nyein (67), the elected representative of Kyauk Tan Township, Rangoon started a hunger strike on 19 September inside prison according to his wife Daw Khin Aye.

'When I visited Insein prison to meet him on 21 September, I was told by prison authorities only by then that he was transferred to Tharawaddy prison. I was neither allowed to meet him nor to deliver food for him when I went Tharawaddy.' Daw Khin Aye told DVB.

'He told me when I met him last time on 13 September that he has decided to stage a hunger strike if his detention is further with Act 10 (A)', said Daw Khin Aye.

On 19 September he was told that his detention is prolonged for another additional two months.

'It is inhumane torture to extend the imprisonment with Act 10 (A) to a person whose health condition is deteriorating and who had already served the sentence. I don't want to be killed by the authorities but by myself. That's why I have decided to stage a hunger strike even though I am not in good shape' Dr Than Nyein told his wife when they met last time.

She is very concern about his health and she has informed about it to International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Dr Than Nyein is suffering from liver problem, heart disease, high-blood pressure and has an appointment with a doctor for liver check up on 28 September.

'There are a lot of cases for political prisoners' families that they are informed about their beloved death only after they died. Hence I am very worried for his life and I hope he is still alive by 28 September, the appointment time with the doctor, if he continues the hunger strike.' Daw Khin Aye expressed her fear.

Dr. Than Nyein, along with seven other NLD members, was arrested in October 1997 and sentenced to 7 years imprisonment for joining a trip with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to Mayangone NLD branch office in Rangoon.

Few months before his arrest, authority accused him of opening a clinic without permission and revoked his medical license.

Five out the eight have been released but only Dr Than Nyein and Dr Daw May Win Myint representative of Mayangone Township in Rangoon remain in prison while U Khin Maung Myint died of torture in Kale jail.

They two were recently charged with the Act 10(A) {of the State Protection Law, an arbitrary law that gives the authorities sweeping power to detain anyone they consider a threat to national security} and to be detained indefinitely, just before they were due to be released after serving their previous sentences for 7 years. [TOP](#)

## Burma's another solo protestor ended up in prison

22 September 2004

A 58-year old former political prisoner, U Ohn Than staged a peaceful solo protest in front of the UNDP's office in Rangoon on 21 September.

He was arrested by the military intelligence agents within an hour.

According to several eyewitnesses, he had planned his demonstration at the same time as UN General Assembly in New York. He also demanded the UN to find the solution for Burma's conflict seriously.

He was holding a poster which said: "UN should help convene the parliament based on the result of the 1990 election." He also distributed a paper which outline how the problem in Burma could resolve. The paper is written both in English and Burmese, several eyewitness told DVB.

Less than one hour after he staged his solo protest, several military intelligence agents arrived to the place and took him to custody. They have also arrested U Thet Wai, NLD Sanchaung Township Chairman. But it was not clear why he was arrested.

DVB asked the NLD spokesman U Lwin to get more information about this.

"Yes, U Ohn Than had staged a demonstration. He had done very peacefully and systematically. He distributed some leaflet and paper. When the police came and arrested him, he just followed with them calmly. They have also arrested our NLD's Chairman from Sanchaung Township in Rangoon. We don't know whether his arrest was related to U Ohn Than's demonstration or not."

It is still not clear where they have been taken or how many have been arrested.

When asked U Lwin about the paper that U Ohn Than distributed, "It is his own roadmap for Burma. He was basically asking the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to recognize the Committee Representing the People's Parliament (CRPP). And then, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi should form the government based on the parliament. He was talking about forming a parallel government inside Burma."

U Ohn Than worked for forestry department in Burma for more than 18 years. During 1988 uprising, he was leading the strike in Shwe Ku, Kachin State. He was later imprisoned for 8 years. He got out of prison in 1996, and in 1997 he distributed human rights journal. Because of that, he was arrested again and imprisoned for another 7 years. He was released in 2003.

[TOP](#)

## Interview: Wife told how husband arrested

22 September 2004

U Thet Wai, NLD Sanchaung Township Chairman in Rangoon was arrested on 21 September shortly after the arrest of solo protestor U Ohn Than who staged a protest in front of the UNDP office in Rangoon.

DVB talked to Daw Than Than, wife of U Thet Wai and She told us how her husband was arrested:

"It was about 10 pm. They came and knocked our door. They were about 4 including our local authority officer U Chit Than and the intelligence officer Zaw Myo Aung. They asked my husband to come with them for "short period".

**DVB** : Do you think his arrest is related to solo protestor U Ohn Than?

**Daw Than Than** : I don't know about it but uncle Ohn Than did visit our home time to time.

**DVB**: How is your family situation right now?

**Daw Than Than** : I am worried about my family. We have three children and they are all attending high school. It is not easy to survive in Burma. Even when we are two, we had so much financial problem. Now, I am alone and it will be harder. Our eldest son is at 10 grade and his education fee alone cost 10,000 Kyat per month. Luck that some people help us by lending money and so on.

[TOP](#)

## Lin Lin Tun's health deteriorating in Burma's prison

22 September 2004

The health condition of Lin Lin Tun who is currently detained at Mandalay prison is in serious, according to a source close to the family.

He is suffering from heart disease and gastric complaints and getting worse lately, the source said. Although his health condition is informed to the authority, it is not taken seriously.

He can't move one of his hands and needs a vital medical treatment, the source said.

Lin Lin Tun was detained in September 1998 together with his father U Soe Myint, the elected representative of Minbu Township, Constituency-1, Magwe Division.

He was then sentenced to 42 years in prison for allegedly distributing leaflets, having contacts with exiled opposition groups and breaking publishing laws.

His father U Soe Myint (58) is serving 28-year sentence and he is suffering from diabetes, heart condition and high blood pressures and he was paralysed at the beginning of 2003. [TOP](#)

### **Burma's court sentences four NLD members for 7 years**

*23 September 2004*

Burma's court at Insein prison in Rangoon sentenced four NLD members for 7-years imprisonment on September 23 for their political activities. NLD's spokesmen U Lwin confirmed the news.

The four NLD members are NLD's Thingangyun township secretary **U Tin Myint**, Magwe Division's Women Committee member **Daw Than Than Htay, U San Ya and Ma Ye Ye Win**, member of NLD from Mon State. U Lwin told DVB that they were charged under section 5 J of the Emergency Provision Act.

"This is very disturbing sign. They are arresting people while the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is asking them to release political prisoners," U Lwin said.

When sentencing the NLD members, the court did not use testimony of the members during the trial. Instead, they based their decision sole on what military intelligence officers presented them. "This is totally outrage", U Lwin told DVB.

Two of those sentenced, U Tin Myint and Daw Than Than Htay were arrested since June and U San Ya and Ma Ye Ye Win were arrested early August for their political activities.

NLD's spokesmen U Lwin said they will continue to appeal the decision to the Divisional court and then up to High Court.

"We will try as much as we can within the law," he said. [TOP](#)

### **Japanese Buddhist missionaries sentenced in Burma**

*24 September 2004*

Three Japanese Buddhist missionaries were sentenced to to three-years in prison by a court in Mandalay on 22 September for visiting "tourist restricted zone". People closed to the case told DVB that their translator, Ma Zar Che Oo and the driver U Maung Maung Gyi were aslo sentenced to three-year and two students, Ko Ko Htike and Ko Wanna Aung were sentenced to one-year in prison for helping the missionaries.

One monk and two Buddhist nuns from Japan are visiting Japan-Myanmar Buddhist Missionary School in Mandalay. They travelled to Mogok, 200 km northeast of Mandalay on 11 September. Mogok is restricted zone for tourist. The group spent one night in Mogok and on their way back to Mandalay, all of them were arrested at a check point near Mandalay and brought to court immediately, the source in Mandalay said.

They were charged under "foreign visa act" and "hotel and trasportation act". But it was not clear why they faced such a long-term in prison and whether they have been given free access to lawyer. [TOP](#)

### **Dr Than Nyein sent to hospital after hunger strike in prison**

*26 September 2004*

Dr Than Nyein (67), elected MP from NLD, who had been on the hunger strike, was sent to Rangoon Hospital on 26 September because of his health. His wife Daw Khin Aye told DVB that she met him on that morning at the hospital prison ward and gave him some food.

Dr Than Nyein had been on hunger strike since 19 September to protest the extension of his prison term. He was then transferred to Thayawaddy prison, 78 miles north of Rangoon.

His wife told DVB: "The authority called me this morning and said they had moved him back to Rangoon Hospital. They said it was because of his back pain and liver disease which need regular attention from the doctor and they cannot do that at the Thayawaddy prison".

Dr Than Nyein and seven other NLD leaders were sentenced to 7 years in prison in 1997 for helping Daw Aung San Suu Kyi visit and meeting with the public. He was supposed to be release in July but the authority extended his prison term for six-month.

"He said to me earlier that he cannot take this kind of un-justice and he will stage a hunger strike. He also told me that his health is not good and he won't live any longer if he continues to stay in prison," Daw Khin Aye told DVB.

It is still not clear whether the authority will drop his prison term extension and release him after the medical treatment. Daw Khin Aye said: "he had served his prison term, his health is no good and he should be release immediately". [TOP](#)