

Democratic Voice of Burma
Political Prisoners News
2004 October

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Burma's NLD concerns over U Ohn Than and U Thet Wai

4 October 2004

Burma's main opposition party, National League for Democracy (NLD) on 4 October voiced its concerns over two political prisoners arrested recently by the country's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

58-year-old former political prisoner U Ohn Than who staged a solo protest outside the UNDP building in Rangoon demanding the UN to take effective action on the SPDC for its human rights abuses and the chairman of Sanchaung Township NLD chairman U Thet Wai (aka) Ko Pauk Sa were arrested on the same day on 21 September by the junta.

Although U Ohn Than is not a member of the NLD, the party's Legal Support Team is preparing to defend him but the legal representatives are still unable to meet with neither of the prisoners as it is not known where they are being held by the junta, according to NLD spokesman U Lwin. [TOP](#)

Burmese students imprisoned for attempting to court girls

4 October 2004

4 Burmese students from Ma-U-Pin Technical College, Irrawaddy Division in lower Burma were arrested and imprisoned for two and an half years by the local authorities in late September for trying to court a girl.

According to an eyewitness, two college boys tried to chat up with a girl walking near their hostel by teasing her. The girl retorted and they had an argument but the boys didn't commit any physical violence against the girl.

The girl then reported the incident to the local women organisation sponsored by the wife of local State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) authority chairman.

The authorities arrested and imprisoned the two boys and two other onlookers on 19 September.

The four, Aung Ko Ko Win, Wunna Aung, Pyeit Phyo Win and Win Ko Ko are currently detained at Ma-U-Pin Prison.

Students and exiled Burmese women leaders say that the incident shows how the SPDC sponsored women organisation has been unnecessarily interfering with social affairs in Burma.

According to a Burmese legal expert Naing Ngwe Ya, the charges against the boys are too severe and illegal as they are reserved for physical assaults on victims and rape cases. [TOP](#)

House of sorrow: U San Win and family tragedy

5 October 2004

Daw Tin Kyi, the mother of Nay Lin Soe, one of the political prisoners of Burma, had passed away on 4 October from heartbreak.

U San Win, the husband of Daw Tin Kyi emotionally told DVB that he buried his wife on 5 October with no children and close relatives around him. With a son and a daughter living in exile and another in prison, U Tin Kyi decided to bury his wife one day after her death as 'she had no one close to bury her'.

U San Win, himself a former political prisoner, has been politically active since 1974 and all the remaining family members got involved in politics after the 1988 nationwide uprising.

In 1989, Nay Lin Soe was arrested for the first time and detained for four years in Tharawaddy Prison. He was rearrested in 1998 and sentenced to 14 years in prison.

His sister, Kyi Kyi Soe was arrested in 1989 when she was only 15 years old for her political activities.

U San Win, their father was arrested in 1990. He was released on 28 March 2001. 'When I was released I had no children. The eldest son, Nay Lin Soe was in prison and no information about the other son Min Kyaw Soe.' Said U San Lin.

By then, his daughter had also fled Burma and his wife's health condition deteriorated from the pain of losing children alive. She suffered from depression, and was unable to do anything for herself and other people. 'She lost her life from pining for her daughter,' he said.

Kyi Kyi Soe who has been living on the Thai-Burma border didn't know that her mother had passed away until DVB contacted her. Her response was, "I haven't heard about it. Are you sure that it is true?"

Nevertheless, she didn't break down. "I am feeling saddened by the news it but I don't know what to say," she continued. She said that she had never felt being separated from her mother who gave birth to her except when she was imprisoned, and she was intuitively feeling sad about her mother when she died without her knowing.

She vowed to fight on for freedom for her people despite the tragedy. "My mother might have felt deeply depressed because I was not with her," she said. "I know that she would be suffering for this. But I fled because I was unable to stay at home," she said tearfully.

When DVB asked U San Win if he had informed Nay Lin Soe about the death of his mother, he simply said, "I can't do that. If I do that I am in danger of losing my son also with suicide," he said.

Previously, Nay Lin Soe attempted to commit suicide several times in prison to protest against the inhumane treatments he received from prison authorities of Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

According to Thailand based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), there are around 1400 political prisoners languishing in prisons throughout Burma. [TOP](#)

Four Burmese students released after protests

9 October 2004

Four Burmese students from Ma U Pin Technical College, Irrawaddy Division in the southern delta region arrested and imprisoned for courting a girl were released recently after serving one month of the two and half year sentences, it emerged.

The students were released after their fellow students protested by smashing furniture of the college. The situation was so intense that the military intelligence agents ordered college staff to guard the compound at night so that students would not rise up.

The problem started when two students teased a girl who walked past their hostel and a row broke out subsequently. The girl reported the incident to a local women organization sponsored by the military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). The two boys and another two onlookers were arrested and given prison sentences by the authorities.

Although the four; Aung Ko Ko Win, Wunna Aung, Pyit Phoe Mun and Win Ko Ko were released, they are not allowed to take exams and they are in danger of losing their education opportunities for life. [TOP](#)

Burmese teacher imprisoned for teaching 'illegally'

11 October 2004

Ko Nyunt Aung, a youth member of Monywa Township National League for Democracy (NLD), Sagaing Division in central Burma had been given a three year prison sentence for teaching pupils without license.

He was summarily tried at a prison court, fined 30,000 kyat and at the same time, given the prison terms with an act relating to an obscure education law.

Ko Nyunt Aung was arrested in early September by the authorities of Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) for giving private lessons to pupils without holding a government license.

Local people DVB that Ko Nyunt Aung was, in reality, arrested and imprisoned for being an NLD member, not for doing anything wrong. [TOP](#)

Journalist Zaw Thet Htway appeal resumes in Rangoon

11 October 2004

The final special appeal for nine Burmese political prisoners including Zaw Thet Htway, the editor of the sports journal 'First Eleven' who were given death sentence, was heard in the Supreme Court in Rangoon on 11 October.

The hearing was presided over by a team of three judges headed by the second highest judge, Major-General Thein Soe and the defendants were represented by renowned pro-democracy lawyer U Naing Ngwe Ya.

He argues that Zaw Thet Htway was framed by a government instigator named U Myo Chit and the charges of rebellion and treason, and the death sentence given to him were not in accordance with the rule of law.

Naing Ngwe Ya added that three of the defendants who were accused of reporting to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) could be released soon.

Zaw Thet Htway's wife Ma Khaing Cho Zaw Win Tin who attended the hearing told DVB that she is hopeful her husband to be released and his health condition quite good despite the tonsillitis coughs. 'He also expects to be free soon but there is the question of fate,' she said. [TOP](#)

Burmese prisoner, Dr. Than Nyein health deteriorates

11 October 2004

The health condition of one of Burma's political prisoners, Dr. Than Nyein who has been receiving emergency medical treatments in Rangoon general hospital, is said to be still deteriorating.

The condition of Dr. Than Nyein, who has been receiving medical treatments in prisoners' ward for about two weeks is not only improving but also the prospect for his release is still very uncertain. He has been negotiating with the prison authority for nearly two weeks for his release but there has been no progress on that front either.

Dr. Than Nyein's wife, Daw Khin Aye who has been visiting her husband daily told DVB that she is very worried for her aged husband as he has been suffering from many kinds of illness since he has been imprisoned.

She added that she wants him to be released so that she could look after him closely. She has been unable to talk to her sad husband freely as military intelligence agents have been closely listening to and noting down their conversations.

Dr Than Nyein was transferred to Tharrawaddy Prison from the notorious Insein Prison in Rangoon for staging hunger strike on 21 September over the extension of his sentence with 10 (a) by the authorities. He was then transferred to the hospital as his health deteriorated to a critical point. [TOP](#)

Burmese prisoners not allowed to see family members

13 October 2004

Prison authorities of Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) at Mandalay (Ohbo) Prison have imposed a 15-day-long ban on family members of political prisoners from meeting their loved ones, coming into effect from 12 October.

Family members of political prisoners who went to the prison on 12 October were told that they are not allowed to meet personally until 27 October but they are to be allowed to give provisional parcels for their loved ones through prison guards.

It is not known nor explained by the authorities concerned why the ban was imposed but family members of prisoners are sorely anxious as there have been many kinds of unpleasant rumours flying around as to why the ban was imposed.

Some people think there has been an escape attempt or a bloody riot, and some people believe that there could be an outbreak of an epidemic within the prison. Some local people think that there have been trials of local officials within the prison and the authorities are imposing the ban to prevent news from leaking out to the outside world.

Burmese villagers imprisoned for reporting forced labour

13 October 2004

Two Burmese villagers from Henzada (Hinthada) Township in the delta region of Burma were each given a six month prison sentence for not carrying out forced labour practice which occurred in their village.

U Ohn Myint and U Khin Zaw were ordered by their village chairman U Tin Tun to guard the village sentry post at night last year and they refused to do so. They were then taken to court and charged with Acts 187 & 189 and tried for "failing their duties".

When they were released, the two took the village head to court and sued him for forcing them to carry out forced labour and claimed compensation from the authorities. The case was dismissed by the judge Daw Htay Htay Win "for lack of evidence" in August.

U Tin Tun then took the two to court again for "defaming" him. The judge accepted the case and they were subsequently given prison sentences. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) representative in Rangoon, Richard Horsey is said to be examining the case. [TOP](#)

Mandalay Prison sealed off for intra-army trials

14 October 2004

Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) authorities in Mandalay have sealed off the local Ohbo Prison for the trials of its border control officials.

Officials including at least an army commander Colonel Kyaw Kyaw Naing from Border Security Force known in Burmese as Na-Sa-Ka at Sino-Burmese border were arrested recently by the order commander Colonel Myint Lwin.

According to people close to prison circles, the officials are currently detained and interrogated at Ohbo Prison.

Moreover, the relatives of other inmates including political prisoners are currently not allowed to have regular meetings with their loved ones in the prison.

Political observers in Rangoon believe that there has been a serious split within the SPDC by looking at the latest arrests of officers from Na-Sa-Ka which was founded by the "moderate" Prime Minister of the junta, General Khin Nyunt himself.

The disgraced officials had already been replaced by new ones and their homes and properties raided and confiscated, according to local residents at Muse near China. [TOP](#)

Reduction of jail terms for Zaw Thet Htway and friends

15 October 2004

Five of the nine men accused of trying to assassinate the leaders of Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and subsequently overthrow the government have had their jail terms cut after a new court challenge on 15 October.

The appeals of four other men were unsuccessful and they continue to serve life sentences for their alleged roles in plans to overthrow the junta, said their lawyer Naing Ngwe Ya.

All nine had been sentenced to death in November last year, sparking an international outcry and resulting in the commuting of the sentences in May.

Sports magazine editor Zaw Thet Htway, was arrested in July last year after publishing the stories alleging misuse of a four-million-dollar international grant to promote football in Burma, and a fine imposed by the organisers of the Asian Champion Club tournament on a Burmese football team for its failure to participate in the event. His prison term is reduced to two years.

The other men now serving two-year terms were originally sentenced to death in November last year over contacts with the International Labour Organisation (ILO). One extraordinary development in this case is, the judge admitted that it is no crime to contact the ILO as Burma is a member of the organisation.

Those who are still serving life sentences are members of the New Mon State Party (NMSP), an armed ethnic national group which signed ceasefire agreement with the junta and its leaders will directly lodge an appeal to the chairman of the junta, General Than Shwe. [TOP](#)

Prisoners given extended sentences by Burma junta

18 October 2004

Two elected representatives (MPs) of Burma, U Kyaw San and Dr Daw May Win Myint who have been detained by Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) at Insein Prison in Rangoon had been given extended sentences with Act 10a.

Dr May Win Myint, the MP of Mayangone Township, Rangoon who had served her sentence was given a six month extension on 3 October. U Kyaw San who had already served the extended sentences several times was given another one lasting one year.

His wife Daw May Nwet told DVB that her husband is not feeling happy about the way he has been detained and asked the authorities why they did so but they could give no answer.

U Kyaw San has been suffering from eye diseases and had already had operations on his eyes twice. "He is old and his health is not good," she said. Similarly, Dr May Win Myint's eyesight is said to be very poor.

At the same time, the health condition of Dr. Than Nyein who has been receiving medical treatments in Rangoon general hospital is said to be very poor. He is suffering from heart diseases and looking a wreck, according to his wife Daw Khin Aye. [TOP](#)

NLD members imprisoned despite Burma junta's pledge for fairness

25 October 2004

More pro-democracy supporters and members of Burma's main opposition party, National League for Democracy (NLD) had been imprisoned by the country's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) despite its pledge for fairness after a major shake-up within the junta.

U Than Htay, the elected representative (MP) of Lashio, northern Shan State, the NLD chairman of Sanchaung Township, Rangoon U Thet Wei and another man U Ohn Than were given prison sentences on 25 October.

U Than Htay was charged on four accounts – ranging from wireless laws to import-export acts, and given a five year sentence with hard labour and 10,000 kyat fine (in lieu of a two year sentence) by a township court in Lashio, according to his lawyer U Sai Myint Maung. U Than Htay's son was given a similar sentence, and his nephew was charged on two accounts and he was sent to 3 years in prison along with two other people.

Supporters of U Than Htay including his lawyer believe that he was deliberately charged with non-political acts without accepting obvious evidences supporting his claim of innocence because the authorities want to undermine him in his pro-democracy activities and support for the NLD. His lawyer is planning to lodge appeals at higher courts.

U Thet Wei and U Ohn Than were charged with Act 515b for "inciting revolt against the state" and they were each given a two year prison sentence. U Ohn Than was arrested on 21 September for staging a peaceful solo protest in front of the office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Rangoon. [TOP](#)

Burmese prisoner Ko Htay Kywe released

26 October 2004

Ko Htay Kywe, one of the famous student leaders of the 8888 nationwide uprising was released from a Burmese prison on 26 October.

He told DVB that his health condition has improved considerably despite a major operation on his stomach recently. Ko Htay Kywe had been imprisoned 13 years and 4 months.

He also said that many political prisoners such as Ko Jimmy, Ko Soe Hlaing, Ko Zaw Minn, Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi and Ko Mya San are still being detained with Act 10a for nearly 16 years.

Ko Htay Kywe himself was supposed to be released in April 1999 but he was continued to be detained with the 10(A) act for five and half years. But he said that he was released unconditionally, allowing him to continue his political activities freely.

Ko Htay Kywe was arrested in June 1991 and charged with Acts 5(J) and 19(A) and sentenced to 15 years in prison. He was then imprisoned in the notorious Insein Prison from 1991 to 1994 and he was transferred to Tharawaddy Prison and just before he was released, he was detained in a special cell for solitary confinement in Insein prison.

Ko Htay Kywe said that political prisoners have been under many kinds of pressures by the authorities and when the ICRC started to check the prisons in 1997, the morale of prisoners was raised and their resolve hardened considerably.

He confirmed that his health condition deteriorated so much inside prison that he was not even sure whether he was going live or die, but he encouraged all the relatives of the prisoners to keep on supporting their loved ones whatever the condition.

He also urged young Burmese to work harder for peace and development of Burma, and he also urged the authorities to release all political prisoners and thanked all the people who are working hard for their release. [TOP](#)

Two innocent civilians released by Burma junta for fear of backlash

27 October 2004

U Ohn Myint and Ko Khin Zaw from Kanyin Ngu Village, Henzada (Hinthada) Township in the Irrawaddy delta region of Burma, who were each given a six month prison term for allegedly defaming the local authorities, were released on 22 October.

The two were released by the order of a court after some army officials mysteriously paid fines imposed on them. Local residents are said to be very interested by the turn of the event as the army has never bailed out anyone imprisoned by the courts.

Observers say that the local authorities and military officers of State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) are worried that they might be persecuted by their own leaders in Rangoon who promised to crackdown on corruption and bullying on the civilians, or the authorities don't want the forthcoming report of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on the junta to attract unwanted publicity as the country is in danger of being punished by the organisation for rights abuses.

The two villagers accused the local authorities of forced labour and took them to court but the case was rejected and they were subsequently charged with trying to defame the authorities and imprisoned without a proper trial. [TOP](#)

Zaw Myo Htet, another political prisoner dies in detention

30 October 2004

Zaw Zaw, also known as, Zaw Myo Htet who was arrested and imprisoned with eight other political prisoners including the editor of 'First Eleven' sports journal, Zaw Thet Htway, for allegedly trying to assassinate leaders of Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), has died in detention on 19 October.

28-year-old university student Zaw Myo Htet was suffering from illness relating to swollen liver and he was transferred from the notorious Insein Prison to the emergency ward of Rangoon General Hospital for treatment on 5 October.

His father, U Tin Maung Oo from Minhla, Pegu Division in central Burma told DVB that his son was given intravenous glucose drip at the hospital but it was too late for him, as his liver had been damaged so much that it was not

functioning properly when he was taken to the hospital. The prison authorities didn't give him any help, and he had to buy medicines by their own means as the hospital was unable to provide any.

When U Tin Maung Oo requested a charitable organisation in Rangoon to arrange a public funeral for his son, he was told that only the prison authorities were allowed to bury his son as they didn't want the news about his son's sufferings and death to leak out. He had to allow them bury his son privately and he was given a death certificate. He then had to hold a Buddhist memorial service at his home with his family and relatives two days later.

U Tin Maung Oo finds it impossible to cope with the death of his son who was due to be released within a year as the court reduced his sentence to two years, and he had served more than one year of his three year sentence. [TOP](#)

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