



ဒီမိုကရေက်တစ်မြန်မာ့အသံ

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Detained Shan leaders not allowed to see lawyers

Mar 1, 2005 (DVB) - Authorities at Insein Prison in Burmese capital Rangoon barred two lawyers of National League for Democracy (NLD) from seeing detained Shan leaders including U Hkun Htun Oo, chairman of Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD).

Two lawyers of NLD's legal support group, U Aung Thein and U Nyan Win who were assigned by Shan leaders' families to defend their loved ones at the court, went to the prison on the morning of 1 March, but they were turned back at the entrance of the prison.

"Prison authorities told us that we were not allowed to see our clients because of the order from above," U Nyan Win told DVB. "When we told them that we heard U Khun Htun Oo and colleagues are to be tried, the officer in charge just told us that he knew nothing."

The authorities insisted that the lawyers must be authorised by the defendants themselves for the right to defend them, but the lawyers are still not allowed to meet with their clients. U Nyan Win added that he is not even sure whether the Shan leaders are being tried as the authorities refused to answer all their enquiries.

U Hkun Htun Oo, SNLD secretary U Sai Nyunt Lwin, Shan State Peace Council (SSPC) chairman Gen Hso Ten and several politicians were arrested after they attended a meeting at Shan State capital Taunggyi on 7 February. It is still not clear why they were arrested and it is believed that they are to be charged with sedition and defamation of the state. At the same time, it is not known where some of them are being detained.

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My son is not even allowed to see the sky, says a Burmese political prisoner's father

Mar 1, 2005 (DVB) - The eyesight of a Burmese student leader Ko Maung Maung Myint who is being detained at Insein Prison, has been deteriorating fast because he has been kept in a dark prison cell for a long period, according to his father U Aung Myint who went to see him at the prison on 25 February.

"His eyesight is not good because he has to stare at the walls all the time...he is not allowed to look at the sky," U Aung Myint told DVB. 34 year old Maung Maung Myint is unable to read properly anymore because of his deteriorating eyesight.

Maung Maung Myint, a second year student from Hlaing University in Rangoon was first arrested in 1990 for "inciting uprising" against the ruling military junta and sentenced to 5 years in prison. He was arrested for the second time in February 2003 and sentenced to 28 years, for allegedly "defaming the state".

U Aung Myint himself was a political prisoner and he was released only in 1995 and his hard-earned pension money was taken away by the junta once he was freed.

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Lashio NLD MP U Than Htay transferred to Mandalay Prison

Mar 3, 2005 (DVB) - The elected representative (MP) of Lashio Township Constituency-2, U Than Htay who has been detained at the local prison in northeast Burma, was transferred to Mandalay Prison in central Burma on 25 February.

It is not known why he was transferred thus but the authorities usually do so to cause more problems and miseries to family members of prisoners.

"We knew about it not because his family was notified. Someone who saw U Than Htay at the train station and told us about it, and we told the family," said his lawyer Sai Myint Maung. He added that his request to the northern Shan State court to reconsider his client's case was also rejected.

U Than Hay was arrested on 16th August 2004 in connection with his son's business interests. The authorities began proceedings to charge him with violating four counts of the law, two under the Import and Export Law and two under the Wireless Law, on 25 August and the trial started on 1 September. He was sent to prison along with his son.

Observers said U Than Htay was arrested and implicated in the case because the authorities want to undermine his position, as part of the ruling junta's systematic crackdowns on the NLD. Before his arrest, U Than Htay was pressured to resign from the party. He refused to do so.

He was one of the leading members in the campaign spearheaded by the NLD to collect signatures seeking the unconditional release of all political prisoners including NLD leaders Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo.

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Burmese junta released two leaders but no sign of Shan leaders

Mar 5, 2005 (DVB) - The authorities of Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) released two Burmese opposition leaders arrested in connection with the meeting at Shan State capital Taunggyi on 7 February.

The two, democracy party leader U Thu Wai and AFPFL Daw Cho Cho Kyaw Nyein and her daughter were released on 3 March from a guesthouse in Taunggyi where they had been detained and driven back to Rangoon, according to U Win Naing, a friend of U Thu Wai. "They have been detained at the guesthouse in Taunggyi all along," he said.

But, at least 14 people including Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) chairman Hkun Htun Oo and secretary Sai Nyunt Lwin and Shan State Peace Council (SSPC) chairman Gen Hso Ten, are still being detained in various "unidentified" locations in the country.

U Thu Wai told U Win Naing that the commemorative dining meeting, sponsored by Shan State Army-North (SSA-N) and New Generation – Shan State, was attended by representatives from other "ceasefire" ethnic national groups, together with so-called university student Maung Aye Lwin.

U Thu Wai himself was unclear about the fate of the remaining detainees including U Khun Tun Oo and he was also uncertain whether Maung Aye Lwin and party have been detained, U Win Naing added.

It is still not clear why they were arrested and they are still not allowed to see their family members or lawyers.

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Wedding helpers imprisoned by Burmese authorities

Mar 6, 2005 (DVB) - Four National League for Democracy (NLD) members from Rangoon, had been arrested and detained 14 days while helping organize a friend's wedding in nearby town of Twante on 4 March.

Phyoe Wai Lin, Myo Min Soe, Nay Soe and Myo Lay went to Twante to help prepare the wedding ceremony of a friend. By the time they finished the preparations, it was too late and dark for them to return to Rangoon. They went to the local authority chairman U Tun Naing to report their presences as guests and requested him to let them stay at a friend's house for the night but their requests were rejected.

The four were arrested around midnight and taken to a local court at 3.30am on Saturday early morning and tried and sentenced to 14 days in prison. Although the judge decided to let the defendants free as he found out that they indeed reported their presences, he yielded to the pressures of the authorities and passed the sentence, according to local residents.

A Burmese student leader, Zaw Min freed by junta

Mar 7, 2005 (DVB) - One of the renowned student leaders, Ko Zaw Min who led the 1988 nationwide uprising in Burma, was released from Thayet Prison in central Burma on 6 March by the authorities of Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

He was charged with leading student protests in 1991 and given a long-term prison sentence. He was supposed to be released in 1999 after serving his sentence but the authorities continued to detain him with Act 10 (A).

"As for the 1988 uprising, we did what we could from what we knew and learnt, with lots of hope and we sacrificed with our life. Now that I am released, I am happy, but I also know that I am no more 1988. I know that I am arriving at 2005 and I am trying to survive with this knowledge...and I also have my hope in the future...I have to make things happen as soft as possible, and I am preparing for it too. I need to learn the problems as deeply as possible...Then I have to see what I want first. And try to know what I want and try to get it clearly," Zaw Min told DVB soon after his release.

According to his family members, Ko Zaw Min was accompanied to his home in Rangoon by the special police force, and his health condition is quite good despite spending nearly 14 years inside the prison.

As the authorities are releasing prisoners detained with Act 10 (A), another famous student leader Ko Ko Gyi who is also being detained with the same act could be released soon, according to his family members.

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Kantbalu Township MP Dr. Myint Naing released by Burma junta

Mar 8, 2005 (DVB) - Dr. Myint Naing, the National League for Democracy (NLD) elected representative of Kantbalu Township, Sagaing Division, who had been detained with traffic accident charges, was released on 8 March from nearby Shwebo Prison in central Burma.

He was arrested at Shwebo on 9 December 2004 for having a motorcycle accident and sentenced to three months in prison.

A spokesman of NLD told DVB that the arrest and detention of Dr. Myint Naing was an unfair act from the part of the authorities, despite the claim of the ruling junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) that no one is above the laws.

Dr. Myint Naing was taken to court by the authorities after his motorcycle was hit by another motorcycle ridden by a girl. The girl apologised to him and confessed that it was she who caused the accident, but the authorities pressurised her to sue the MP, nevertheless.

Dr. Myint Naing was arrested in November 1990 and detained long-term for attempting to form a rival government. He was released in February 2004 and rearrested nine months later.

Despite the persecutions, he told DVB that he is still keen to work for the good of the people, but expressed his worries for the future of the country with this kind of unfair arrests.

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Burma junta rejects appeals of prisoners

Mar 8, 2005 (DVB) - Rangoon Division court turned down appeals lodged on behalf of U Thet Wai and U Ohn Than who have been imprisoned for staging peaceful solo protests in Burma.

U Ohn Than was arrested on 21 September 2004 while staging a solo peaceful protest in front of the UNDP office in Rangoon. (for visual report see [DVB TV](#)) But Sanchaung Township National League for Democracy (NLD) chairman U Thet Wai was arrested on the same day, with alleged connection with U Ohn Than. They were tried for nearly one month and given a two-year prison sentence each.

The lawyers of NLD appealed against the decision several times and it was finally rejected on 24 February by the court. One of the lawyers U Aung Thein told DVB that they are continuing to lodge the appeals to the Supreme Court.

53-year old U Ohn Than was a graduate from Rangoon University with a Forestry Science degree and he was arrested and detained twice before for his political activities. The latest arrest came after he demanded the release of Burma's democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and for urging the UN Security Council to handle the problems in Burma.

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Another NLD MP U Maung Maung Myint passes away

Mar 8, 2005 (DVB) - The National League for Democracy (NLD) elected representative of No.1, Constituency, Yamethin Township, Mandalay Division, U Maung Maung Myint passed away on 5 March.

64-year old U Maung Maung Myint died while enthusiastically partaking in responsibilities of the NLD, according to party members from Mandalay Division. His health condition deteriorated while he was organising hard for a regional meeting to be held on 3 March at his home.

The MP of No.2, Constituency, Yamethin Township U Maung Maung Than told DVB that Maung Maung Myint was unable to attend the meeting as he suffered an illness similar to a stroke. "He was rested but the meeting went ahead. Later, he was hospitalised and died on the 5th," he added.

His funeral was held on 6 March and it was attended by party members from the division and leaders from other areas. Divisional party members also held a separate memorial service for him.

"Since he was elected MP, U Maung Maung Myint had been standing firm for the party. He survived the persecutions with courage. He lost some businesses. He was in the publishing business before. He lost all of them after he became the MP. Despite the losses, he didn't leave the party but stood firm as an NLD MP to the day he died, while still working for the party. It's a great and sad loss," U Maung Maung Than paid tribute to him.

May he rest in peace!

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Some Shan leaders released but no news of their chairmen

Mar 8, 2005 (DVB) - Some Burmese opposition leaders who had been arrested and detained in connection with a meeting held on 7 February at Shan capital Taunggyi, were released by the authorities of Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) on 6 March.

They are U Hkun Pan and U Nyunt Maung of New Generation – Shan State, U Seng Tong of United Nationalities League for Democracy (UNLD), U Kyaw Win (Intha) and some youth. They refused to make comments on the reasons of their detention as they were forbidden by the authorities from speaking to the media.

At the same time, the ruling generals of the SPDC are still not responding to the request for news on the conditions of Shan leaders including Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) chairman U Hkun Htun Oo made by their families.

The families wrote a letter directly to the chairman of the junta, Gen Than Shwe, urging him to give the defendants the rights to defend themselves with the help of lawyers, in accordance with the rule of laws.

"There has been no reply from him. Neither family members nor the lawyers are allowed to know about them. The letter to Gen Than Shwe requests the rights to defend themselves with the help of lawyers and to be tried publicly," said U Aung Thein, one of the National League for Democracy (NLD) lawyers following the case. They went to Insein Prison in Rangoon on 1 March to see the detained leaders but they were turned back by prison guards.

Although it is sure that the Shan leaders were arrested in connection with the meeting at Taunggyi, it is not known exactly as to why they were arrested and whether they are being tried or not. [TOP](#)

Interview with student leader Ko Zaw Min - I

Mar 8, 2005 (DVB) - Ko Zaw Min was one of the renowned student leaders who led the 1988 nationwide uprising in Burma. He spent nearly 14 years in prison and he was released on 6 March 2005 from Thayet Prison in central Burma.

Zaw Min : "I have pains in my heart for around one month now. But I survived with the hope of treating it when I am out like now. I was detained in maximum in accordance with their Act 10 (A). When I had served 5 and a half years of the extended sentences, I was released by the order of the Interior Affairs Ministry team. At around 10am on 6 March, a police commander came to notify me that I was to be released from the detention which was implemented with Act 10 (A). Then, within one day, they returned me home.

Moe Aye : How long were you in prison?

Zaw Min : I was in prison for more than 13 years and nearly 14 years.

Moe Aye : Could you say why and how they arrested you?

Zaw Min : In 1991, 8 Rangoon University student leaders including me were detained in connection with Nobel Peace Prize won by Burma's democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The famous student leaders included Ko Ko Gyi, Ko Thet Tun and Ko Mya San. Me, Ko Mya San and Ko Ko Gyi were "tried" at No.2, Martial Court and sentenced to 20 years. The sentence was validated by their Edict 1/93. I was supposed to be released in September 1999. But, I was allowed to be detained by the order of Interior Affairs Ministry with Act 10 (A). I was released after five and a half years, having detained me thus.

Moe Aye : In how many prisons did you stay during that time?

Zaw Min : I was in Insein Prison in Rangoon for more than two years. In June 1994, I was transferred to Thayet Prison.

Moe Aye : You have been separated from the outside world for more than 13 years. What do you feel now?

Zaw Min : First, I am feeling happy as well as sad. The reason for my happiness is to do with seeing my family members. The reason for my sorrow is – I am sorry for my young student comrades who were inside prison with me. I am sorry that they are still no free. I have the complete desire for their release. As for changes and developments inside the country, I drove past Prome (Pyay) Road in Rangoon and I watched the surrounding areas. People seem to be moving faster and more active now. I saw many material changes.

Moe Aye : What did you have to sacrifice or gained during your time in prison for more than 13 years?

Zaw Min : What I want to say is – as for my sacrifice, we have to sacrifice our lives as never before in history. Especially, we students had to sacrifice most during the AFPFL (post colonial Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League) era, colonial era and BSPP (Burma Socialist Programme Party, 1962-88) era. I never thought that I would be given the long-term sentence and imprisoned for 13 years. It happened during our time. I don't think I could describe it as a grievous thing imposed on us. We need to work with the intention of trying to better the future of the country. We will have to do our best to reconcile. I believe that we have to carry out works by cooperating with the two opposing sides.

Moe Aye : The "Red Bridge" incident occurred on 16 March seventeen years ago. You were released just before that event. What do you have to say about it?

Zaw Min : In 1988, we had to sacrifice our lives and did it with great hope. We did our best as much we could from what we had known and learnt. In the situation, I am very happy to be free. But one thing I know is – I am no more in 1988. I know that I have now arrived at 2005. I am trying to survive with this knowledge.

Moe Aye : Could you tell us the changes to your mental and physical conditions between 1988 and 2005?

Zaw Min : Firstly, I have been able to do things considerably and become more stable. I have more hope for the future. The reason is I am nearly 40 years old. In this kind of surrounding, I am preparing and hoping to be united as much as possible.

Moe Aye : Famous student leaders from 1988 such as Min Ko Naing, Ko Htay Kywe and now you, have been released. Would the people of Burma be excited like they were in 1988?

Zaw Min : With the current situation, the student leaders from 1988 have been released. It is a cause to be joyous. I am also seeing that the army is becoming softer in some ways. I believe that

one could expect a tidy smooth change or transition. I believe that from our part, we need to prepare ourselves for a smooth transition too.

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Interview with student leader Ko Zaw Min – II

Mar 9, 2005 (DVB) - Ko Zaw Min was one of the renowned student leaders who led the 1988 nationwide uprising in Burma. He spent nearly 14 years in prison and he was released on 6 March 2005 from Thayet Prison in central Burma.

Moe Aye : What can you tell us about the condition of another famous leader Ko Ko Gyi?

Zaw Min : Although me and Ko Ko Gyi are in separate organisations: Ba-Ka-tha and Ma-Ka-Tha , we were like blood brothers. At one time, we were very friendly with each other and shared the same cell. He himself hoped that he will be released on the coming 17 March and I myself also hoped so. Everyone is hoping so too. As for his health condition, some pus and sores are sprouting out on his body. When it comes to his mental condition, he is a strong person. He has no reason to be dejected. Compared to me, he could do tougher things.

Moe Aye : During 1988, there were some differences of views between Ma-Ka-Tha and Ba-Ka-Tha among the top famous student leaders like you. How have your views changed after passing many years of maturity?

Zaw Min : The splits among the union students always stick in the mind of the people. In fact, they were problems caused by not being able to be close with one another. Another thing is, they happened within the short space of time. In the long run, there are many prospects of us doing a lot of good things for the majority and the country. We ourselves have become experienced and matured students. Especially after passing the world of the students, in order to go to the political world, I believe that we have become people who could do things with high standard. I believe that there are some prospects of us becoming united with genuine desire for unity coming from the bottom of our hearts, rather than with "unified" unity.

Moe Aye : Now you have been released from prison after more than 13 years. What would be the main impetus?

Zaw Min : For me, the main impetus for me is – first, my hope desire for the good of my country. And, my stance or principles on the student union. And, the helps from my environment, especially, I had to survived on the helps of my wife; her mental and physical supports. The supports of my comrades around me played a major role.

Moe Aye : Now that you are free, what are your hopes for the future?

Zaw Min : As for the fist point, when I was imprisoned, I left a daughter behind. I will need to give her time a little. Then, having studied the situation properly, I will have to decide. But I don't think that my decision will be based on hard-lined ideology. The reason is – I only have the desire to work effectively with strongly rational mind, based on my experiences and situation.

Moe Aye : What to you want to say to your comrades; students and political prisoners who are remaining inside prisons and their friends and relatives outside?

Zaw Min : They are trying their best to survive with courage. We have the desire to support them as much as possible, mentally and physically. I also want to urge the military authorities concerned to have considerations for their cases. That's all I want to say.

Moe Aye : Now that you are released what do you want to say to your comrades and friends who were with you during the 8888 uprising and the new generation of students?

Zaw Min : First one needs to study deeply various conditions of a problem. Another is, in order to know what one wants to do, one needs to see what one wants. Only when finding what one wants, one needs to do it clearly to get it.

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Burmese father worries for imprisoned son, Nay Lin Soe

Mar 9, 2005 (DVB) - Although the health condition of Ko Nay Lin Soe, who has been detained at Mandalay Prison in central Burma is improving, his mental condition has not improved since he saw

his son last time in mid January, according to U San Win who went to see his son at the prison on 9 March.

"I am worried that he might go berserk like before...He asked me nothing about his relatives. Therefore, I am watching whether he is right mentally...There seemed to be nothing in his head," U San Win told DVB.

U San Win added he was not allowed to give some of the prepared food he brought along for his son and he is worried that the ban could affect the health condition of his son as most prisoners have to depend on food provided from outside for nutrition and survival. "If you eat only what they feed you, you could die within six months," said U san Win who once was a political prisoner himself. He added that food provided from the outside world are neither dangerous nor against the law.

Nay Lin Soe, a student activist who is serving a 59 year prison sentence for his political activities, has been suffering from eye diseases and arthritic pains. When he went to see his son on 13 January, U San Win also told DVB that Nay Lin Soe could not even remember some of his relatives.

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Lashio MP U Than Htay transferred again

Mar 9, 2005 (DVB) - The National League for Democracy (NLD) elected representative (MP) of Lashio Township U Than Htay who has been detained by Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), was again transferred to another prison.

He was transferred from Lashio Prison in northeast Burma to Mandalay Prison on 25 February, and he was again transferred to remote Kalemmyo Prison, Sagaing Division in southwest Burma near India. On the same day, the NLD MP of Taunggyi U Kyaw Khin was arrested and detained.

U Than Htay's health condition is currently well and he is separately detained in a "special" cell for political prisoners, according to someone close to the prison.

U Than Htay was arrested on 16th August 2004 in connection with his son's business interests. The authorities charged him with violating four counts of the law, two under the Import and Export Law and two under the Wireless Law on 25 August and the trial started on 1 September. He was sent to prison along with his son.

Observers said U Than Htay was arrested and implicated in the case because the authorities want to undermine his position, as part of the ruling junta's systematic crackdowns on the NLD. Before his arrest, U Than Htay was pressured to resign from the party. He refused to do so.

He was one of the leading members in the campaign spearheaded by the NLD to collect signatures seeking the unconditional release of all political prisoners including NLD leaders Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo.

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Forgotten Dipeyin prisoners in Insein health deteriorate

Mar 12, 2005 (DVB) - Some of the political prisoners arrested in connection with 30 May Dipeyin Incident are suffering from ill effects of beatings they received at the beginning of their detentions in Rangoon Insein Jail.

Ko Ne Win of Kyauktada, Ko Myint Htay of Kyeemyintaing and Ko Maung Maung Lay from Tamwe in Rangoon were arrested on 12 June 2003 for allegedly distributing leaflets and they were each sentenced to 7 years in prison. They were severely beaten up and tortured by military intelligence agents.

"Ko Myint Htay is suffering from arthritic pains...Ko Ne Win seemed to be suffering from heart conditions," said Ma Khin Khin Sein, the wife of Myint Htay who went to see them at the prison recently.

She added that all medicines had to be bought from outside of the prison as there is no proper medical care within the prison.

"At Insein Jail, they get no medicine from the ICRC. There is a drug store at Insein called Win Myint Za. You have to buy all kinds of medicines from them... and they could not guarantee whether they would be given to the patients," she told DVB. Moreover, the authorities are also extorting money from family members.

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Detained Shan leaders charged at last by Burma junta

Mar 15, 2005 (DVB) - Detained Shan leaders including the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) chairman U Hkun Htun Oo have been charged with conspiracy against the state, according to a spokesman of Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

SPDC Information Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw San told reporters of the charge at a briefing in Rangoon on 14 March. The charge, equivalent to high treason, carries the death penalty.

Nevertheless, the authorities haven't allowed the defendants to choose their own lawyers or meet them, but forced them to accept the ones appointed by them.

According to a renowned lawyer, speaking on condition of anonymity, told DVB that two obscure lawyers called U Aung Khaing and U Aung Myint are defending the Shan leaders at the trial on 14 March at Rangoon Insein Jail.

U Aung Thein, the legal representative appointed by the families of the defendants told DVB that the authorities are citing national security as the excuse for not allowing the defendants to choose their own lawyers. He insisted that the state only hires lawyers for the defendants when they could not afford to do so. "There is no law that says that the defendant must use only lawyers appointed by the state... The criminal law also states the same thing in article 130 that a defendant could hire a lawyer of his choosing," he said.

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Burmese teacher arrested for teaching "unofficial" history to children

Mar 15, 2005 (DVB) - A Burmese tuition teacher from Twante, Rangoon Division was arrested on 12 February by the local authorities for teaching the "unofficial" version of modern history of Burma.

U Aung Pe was arrested because he discussed with his pupils the role of General Aung San, the father of Burma's opposition leader and Nobel laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in the struggles for independence of Burma from the British colonial power, according to the parents of the pupils and local residents.

He was to be tried at the local township court on 14 March, but it was postponed to 29 March again.

Aung Pe's wife told DVB that the arrest of her husband is an act of lawlessness like the actions of the ousted military intelligence agents.

"As long as there is no order from above, you can't do anything. Now, the law is in our hand, the police station commander U Myint Kyaw told me," she said. "It is against what Gen Shwe Mann said: no one is above the law".

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Charges against Shan leaders cause a stir in Burma

Mar 16, 2005 (DVB) - News of "treason" charge against detained Shan leaders including Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) chairman U Hkun Htun Oo, by Burma's military junta is causing a considerable stir among Rangoon-based political leaders, ceasefire groups in Shan State and ordinary people.

The information minister of State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) Kyaw San confirmed recently that the leaders have been charged with "conspiracy against the state".

One of the lawyers who have been appointed by families of the leaders, U Tin Win told DVB that it is unreasonable and unlawful to charge them thus just because they pointed out mistakes of the junta.

"The SPDC should not do this...it is the violation of human rights," he said.

A seasoned politician in Rangoon, "Amyotharyay" U Win Naing said it is an act of intimidation from the part of the junta with the intention of silencing voices of the opposition.

"Our country is not made up of one race. It is a nation made up of several races. Therefore, it is still difficult to solve the ethnic national problem. But we can't just ignore them and not discuss it. We want to openly put forward our views on how to build a federal union and what form it should be. We also want to put forward our reasonable views so that ethnic nationals could accept them. Although we have the desire to do so... we are being controlled by acts such as 5/96 law protecting the national convention etc., and we are unable to say whatever we wish to", he said.

Sao Harn Yawngwe, son of a Burma's former president Sao Shwe Thaik insisted that detained Shan leaders were only discussing how to better the country, not plotting against the state.

"Ethnic national groups have signed the ceasefire agreements with the junta for a long time, and it hasn't discussed with them how to better the country once. If they keep on going like this, the prospect for the future is not good".

He added that the junta is likely to continue to intimidate other ceasefire groups such as United Wa State Army (UWSA). "If they do so, there will be troubles ahead," he warned.

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Another renowned Burmese student leader Ko Ko Gyi released

Mar 17, 2005 (DVB) - Ko Ko Gyi, the vice-chairman of All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU), who had been detained since 1991 by Burma's military junta, was released from Rangoon Insein Jail on 17 March.

He was sentenced to life imprisonment, but the sentence was commuted to 10 years with edict 1/93 in 1993, and he was transferred to Thayet Prison in 1994. When he had served his revised sentence in 1999, the authorities continued to detain him with Act 10A. He was again transferred to Insein Prison from Thayet on 10 March before he was released.

Ko Ko Gyi spent nearly 14 years of his life inside the prisons.

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Sagaing Division NLD chairman U Kyaw San detained

Mar 17 2005 (DVB) - The chairman of Sagaing Division National League for Democracy (NLD) U Kyaw San has been summoned and detained by the local authority in Rangoon, at around 11am local time on 17 March.

"We were visiting upper Burma to see his sister who was having operations on her eyes. It happened the next day after our return to Rangoon," said Kyaw San's wife Daw May Nwet. "Some of our son's Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) friends came to drop some goods at our home. We knew nothing about it. Only in the next morning, did we know that they were DKBA's possessions".

She added the authorities came to confiscate these items, and took U Kyaw San away for keeping "illegal" goods at his home, as the head of a family. He is currently detained at Insein police station for some "questioning". "I don't know if he is going to be released or not," said May Nwet.

U Kyaw San was sent to prison for nearly 10 years for welcoming the Nobel Peace Prize for Burma's democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and he was released only last November.

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Interview with Ko Ko Gyi after his release

Mar 17, 2005 (DVB) - *"We cannot build our country with anger and selfishness"*

Ko Ko Gyi: "In fact, hatred and selfishness are anger. Anger does control the person who keeps it and it spreads and burns the surrounding areas. We could not build our country with anger and selfishness. If we strongly believe that and bury hatred and selfishness, we should start to meet, discuss and cooperate for the sake of future of our country and people. That is the main thing. Even a student like me who had been detained for a long time has the desire that strong, why can't other people have that feeling also? I do hope and believe that it is possible for sure.

As for my political belief, I want a peaceful and smooth political transition. I have been trying to make that possible throughout my life. I still believe in this. Politics is an art. It is very subtle. You can't sort problems unilaterally by violent means. Only when all the parties concerned in politics work together with great compassion and patience, would the future of the country be peaceful and beautiful – that is what I believe.

Moe Aye: You had spent around 14 years in prison. Do you feel aggrieved by this? Are you angry for the losses?

Ko Ko Gyi: "When I was detained initially, I was feeling rather frustrated. After passing many months and years – some military intelligence agents said something when we were at interrogation centre. They said how much they loved the country with their lives and how much they sacrificed their lives and the like! I was able to have a chance to show how much I love my country and my people by sacrificing all my youth, my family and social life – that is how I regard myself.

Moe Aye: Student leader Min Ko Naing is now freed. Zaw Min, Htay Kywe and now you are freed. You all spent 13,14,15 years in prison. Have you ever thought at the beginning of your detention that you would be detained that long?

Ko Ko Gyi: "It is true that I never thought that I would be imprisoned that long. The reason is – there were times when we were very surprised by the authorities' actions. Our actions were meant to solve political problems of our country peacefully. They gave us 20 years for our activities in 1988. Then, they read out the release warrant that at the gate of the prison that I was to be released after serving 10 years of my sentence with general amnesty. Then, they extended my sentence and continued to detain me with Act 10A. I was very surprised by that for sure. Whatever you say, these things had happened. My personal feelings when compared to the situation of more than 50 million people, sacrifice and loss like mine are not very unusual. I believe that I have to pay for this with content. I am ready to continue to pay for this.

Moe Aye: If the new generation of Burmese students asked you what have you done to deserve life sentence – what would you say?

Ko Ko Gyi: "If I have to tell the new generation of students about this, they will feel that it is unbelievably like a mythical story. The reason is – if I have to talk about what we did in the circumstance at the time and the punishment we were given, I think the students will ask me with suspicion whether we are telling the truth.

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I'm ready to sacrifice my life again for people of Burma, Ko Ko Gyi insists

Mar 17, 2005 (DVB) - Ko Ko Gyi, the vice-chairman of All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABSFU) who had been detained since 1991 by Burma's military junta, was released from Rangoon Isein Jail on 17 March.

In an interview with DVB just hours after his release, Ko Ko Gyi told DVB that he feels no bitterness towards his jailers and torturers.

"Anger does control the person who keeps it and it spreads and burns the surrounding areas. We could not build our country with anger and selfishness," he reflected. "If we strongly believe that and bury hatred and selfishness, we should start to meet, discuss and cooperate for the sake of future of our country and people."

He insisted he has always wanted a peaceful and smooth political transition in Burma throughout his life. "I still believe in this. Politics is an art. It is very subtle. You can't sort problems unilaterally by violent means. Only when all the parties concerned in politics work together with great compassion and patience, would the future of the country be peaceful and beautiful," he said.

Asked if he feels angry and aggrieved by the losses he suffered, Ko Ko Gyi stoically replied, "I was able to have a chance to show how much I love my country and my people by sacrificing all my

youth, my family and social life... these things had happened. My personal feelings when compared to the situation of more than 50 million people, sacrifice and loss like mine are not very unusual. I believe that I have to pay for this with content. I am ready to continue to pay for this.

Ko Ko Gyi was arrested on 11 December 1991 and given life sentence on 25 March 1992 by No.2, Martial Court. It was commuted to 10 years with edict 1/93 in 1993. On 11 June 1994, he was transferred to Thayet Prison. On 20 September 1999, he was notified of his due release but continued to be detained with Act 10A until his release. He was transferred to Insein Prison from Thayet on 10 March before he was released.

When he was arrested, Ko Ko Gyi was carrying out his duties as the vice-chairman as well as those of the chairman, as its chairman Min Ko Naing had already been detained by the authorities.

Ko Ko Gyi was born on 18 December 1961 and brought up in South Okkalapa Township of Rangoon. He studied electrical engineering at a technical college before he studied the newly introduced subject International Relationship and International Administration at Rangoon University in 1984.

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Another Burmese MP detained while U Kyaw San staging hunger strike

Mar 18, 2005 (DVB) - U Kyaw Min, a member of Committee for Representing People's Parliament (CRPP) was arrested at his Rangoon home by the authorities of Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) on 17 March.

A CRPP member told DVB that special police agents came to his home around midnight and told him to follow them for some "questions". But it is still not known why he was arrested and where he is being detained.

52-year old U Kyaw Min is the elected representative (MP) of No.1, Constituency, Buthidaung, Arakan State, and a working member of Human Rights and Democracy Party.

Meanwhile, Sagaing Division National League for Democracy (NLD) chairman U Kyaw San who was arrested on the same day at his Rangoon home, is staging a hunger strike, according to his wife, Daw May Nwet.

"When I went to see him this morning, he told me that he has not been eating since yesterday evening. Don't come and give me food, he was shouting like that. I heard that but did not see him. He is being detained at Insein Police Station," she told DVB.

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Another NLD member arrested and imprisoned

mar 20, 2005: Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) arrested another National League for Democracy (NLD) member despite its promise for the national reconciliation.

U Salin, a member of Maymyo (Pyin U Lwin) Township NLD, Mandalay Division in central Burma was arrested and sentenced to 2 years in prison on 15 March for allegedly shouting abuses at the junta-sponsored Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA).

According to a Maymyo resident, U Salin was, in reality, imprisoned for his active role in Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's previous trip to southern Shan State. U Salin was transferred from the police detention centre in Maymyo to Mandalay Prison.

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No Justice in Burma

mar 22, 2005: U Salin, a member of Maymyo (Pyin U Lwin) Township National League for Democracy (NLD) was imprisoned with 2 year sentence on 15 March for allegedly hurling abuses at leaders of Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA). The association is affiliated to Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

According to his daughter Ma Mee Mee, U Salin was in fact imprisoned for his active role in Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's previous trip to Northern and Southern Shan State. Ma Mee Mee told DVB about the arrest of her father as follows:

Ma Mee Mee : My father was actively involved in that trip. They sentenced him to 2 years in prison without swearing at the USDA as they alleged. It is a deliberate ploy from their part. He is not allowed to say anything to defend himself.

DVB : How did they arrest U Salin?

Ma Mee Mee : My father was going out on a bicycle to attend to some businesses when he was accosted by someone from the police station and told to 'follow him to the police station for some questionings'. They never released him. They detained him.

DVB : When he was tried – were you allowed to attend the hearing? Could you tell us how they tried him?

Ma Mee Mee : We hired a lawyer. The only result in the end was the loss of money. He was imprisoned nevertheless. We have evidences from our side. But we were not allowed to submit them. They tried him two or three times and sent him to prison. They sent him to Mandalay Oh Bo Prison.

DVB : Does it mean that U Salin was being watched by the military intelligence (MI) agents and USDA members from Maymyo during Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's trip or was it a deliberate ploy?

Ma Mee Mee : Yes. Yes. While he was actively involved, the MI always watched him near the house and the shop. It was also a deliberate ploy.

DVB : Does your family have a plan to appeal in accordance with the law?

Ma Mee Mee : We discussed the matter with a lawyer. He told us that we will surely lose here if we appeal. We will also lose at Mandalay. We will also lose if we report our case to Rangoon. We will just waste our money. Daddy also told us not to appeal for him.

DVB : How is your father's current health condition?

Ma Mee Mee : His health is quite good. He has no particular disease. I don't know what kind of disease he would contract once he is inside the prison. It won't be like living at home there. He won't be able to eat properly there. If I think about his time in prison, it only makes me sad.

DVB : How do the rest of the family members feel about the imprisonment of your father?

Ma Mee Mee : If I have to say the truth we are feeling very aggrieved. He was punished without committing the crime. If it is true (we are wrong), we will accept the punishment willingly. He has been working within the legal boundary. He never said anything against them. We are feeling very aggrieved as they have done this to us. Our family business is slowing down as our father is not with us. He said words of comfort to us. He assured us that he will continue to the same activities once he is free. He is not afraid. He does not do what is not right. He said the truth. He said he has nothing to be afraid of.

DVB : What do you have to say on the unfair imprisonment of your father?

Ma Mee Mee : All I have to say is I am feeling very aggrieved. My father had already known that if he did that he would face a situation like this. He comforted us not to give up but continue to do our duties.

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Shan leaders allowed to see families but don't like junta lawyers

Mar 22, 2005 (DVB) - The detained Shan leaders including Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) chairman U Hkun Htun Oo and secretary U Sai Nyunt Lwin were allowed to see their family members on 22 March in Rangoon Insein Jail.

According to someone close to the family, Shan leaders were taken to the court for trial. U Hkun Htun Oo told the court that he doesn't like the lawyers appointed by the authorities to defend them and requested the permission to choose the lawyers of their choice.

One of the lawyers appointed by U Hkun Htun Oo's family to defend their loved ones, U Aung Thein told DVB that according to the existing laws, U Hkun Htun Oo has the right to choose a lawyer of his choice.

"In previous eras, it was included in the basic laws and article 130 of criminal laws says that one has the right to hire a lawyer of one's liking," he said.

U Hkun Htun Oo and ten other Shan leaders have been charged with conspiracy against the state, by Burma's military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). The charge, equivalent to high treason, carries the death penalty.

Nevertheless, but they were not allowed to choose their own lawyers or meet them, but forced to accept two obscure lawyers called U Aung Khaing and U Aung Myint at the trial.

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NLD MP, U Kyaw San still not allowed to see wife

Mar 22, 2005 (DVB) - The detained National League for Democracy (NLD) elected representative (MP) and the chairman of Sagaing Division NLD U Kyaw San who was arrested recently at his home in Rangoon, is still not allowed to see his wife.

His wife Daw May Nwet who went to see him at Insein Jail on 22 March told DVB that she was not only barred from seeing him, she had to bring back all food for him as prison staff refused to give them to him.

"They told me that he is still being interrogated and they didn't allow me to see him...If you are allowed to, you will be notified by Insein police force, they told me," she said. "I took something to eat for him. I was thinking of persuading him to eat even if he is refusing to do so. I brought them all back as I was unable to see him. I brought food for him and if something happens to him it is your responsibility, I told them."

U Kyaw San started to stage the hunger strike the day after his arrest in protest of the unfair action of the authorities. Food brought to him on 21 March were also taken back and it is assumed that U Kyaw San is still on hunger strike and Daw May Nwet is very concerned for his health. It

is still not known why U Kyaw San was arrested and detained by the authorities.

Similarly, the NLD MP of Taunggyi, U Kyaw Khin who was arrested on 25 February, is still being detained at an unknown location causing anxieties to his family members, according to NLD members in Taunggyi.

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NLD U Than Htay not allowed to see family

Mar 22, 2005 (DVB) - Burmese authorities are barring family members of U Than Htay, the detained elected representative of Lashio Township from seeing him at Kalemmyo prison in northwest Burma.

"I just phoned U Than Htay's wife. She told me that she was not allowed to see her husband at the prison because her turn had not arrived due to a list," a colleague of U Than Htay, U Tun Shwe told DVB. "I don't know why...I have never heard about this. I don't know what this list is. It could be a special list."

U Than Htay was transferred from Lashio Prison in northeast Burma to Mandalay Prison on 25 February, and he was again transferred to remote Kalemmyo Prison, Sagaing Division in southwest Burma near India.

U Than Htay was arrested on 16th August 2004 in connection with his son's business interests. The authorities charged him with violating four counts of the law, two under the Import and Export Law and two under the Wireless Law on 25 August and the trial started on 1 September. He was sent to prison along with his son.

Observers said U Than Htay was arrested and implicated in the case because the authorities want to undermine his position, as part of the ruling junta's systematic crackdowns on the NLD. Before his arrest, U Than Htay was pressured to resign from the party. He refused to do so.

He was one of the leading members in the campaign spearheaded by the NLD to collect signatures seeking the unconditional release of all political prisoners including NLD leaders Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo.

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