

Democratic Voice of Burma

Political Prisoners News

April 2006



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Prisoners being bullied in Rangoon Insein Jail

Mar 04, 2006 - Prison staff at the notorious Rangoon Insein Jail, have been extorting money from inmates and bullying and torturing those who could not afford to pay the money demanded.

Although inmates from all blocks/houses inside the prison have been the victims of extortion, the practice was at its worst at Block-3, according to someone who was released recently from the prison.

“They (prison staff) are extorting money. They (the prisoners) have to pay money so that they won’t have to work hard or not to be transferred (to prisons with worse condition) or to receive medical treatment at the (prison) clinic, to get showers or to be allowed to go to the toilet regularly,” said the ex-prisoner who spoke on condition of anonymity. “The money was collected by the warden of Block-3, U Win Aung. Those who cannot pay the money are being tortured.”

The condition for prisoners is very dire because the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) representatives have not been allowed to inspect the prisons by the Burmese authorities, the ex-prisoner added.

When DVB contacted the authorities concerned at the prison, they kept on referring to other departments and blaming each other and even refused to pick up the phone.

The condition is not only bad at Insein, inmates at other prisons are facing similar situations and some prisoners are being subjected to forced labour without enough food and drink, Tate Naing of Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) told DVB.



Aung San Suu Kyi among those to receive the 2006 Four Freedom Awards

Mar 04, 2006 - Aung San Suu Kyi, Mohamed ElBaradei, and three others will receive Four Freedoms medals from the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute in recognition of their substantial, courageous and personal contributions to advancing freedom in our world.

According to a statement of the institute issued on 3 March, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt and Ambassador William J. vanden Heuvel, Co-Chairs of the Roosevelt Institute, announced the Four Freedoms laureates who will receive the awards on May 13, 2006, in the Abbey of Middelburg, The Netherlands.

“The annual awards, given on an alternating annual basis in Hyde Park, NY, the birthplace and home of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the Netherlands, the Roosevelts’ ancestral home, are presented to national and world citizens of extraordinary achievement whose words and deeds best exemplify the qualities proclaimed by President Roosevelt in 1941 as necessary for flourishing democracies everywhere in the world: ‘Freedom of Speech and Expression, Freedom of Worship, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear.’”

The Freedom from Fear Award was given to Aung San Suu Kyi ‘who has kept alive the hope of freedom, justice and democracy for her people’, the statement says and continues:

“The triumph of her courage in the never-ending struggle against militarism and totalitarianism has made her voice one of the most eloquent for freedom and social justice. She has given power and meaning to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Her continued imprisonment by the military junta that rules her country demands that the world take notice and bring before the tribunals of the world her cause for freedom. Aung San Suu Kyi is fearless, and in her example all peoples and all nations find inspiration to resist tyranny.”



Aung San Suu Kyi’s release will help smoothen transition – India

Mar 07, 2006 - Only when Burma’s democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi is released from house

arrest, would the transitional period to democracy for the country be smooth, said the Indian government.

The comment was made by the Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran during a news conference held at New Delhi on 7 March, one day before the visit of Indian president A.P.J. Abdul Kalam to Burma.

Saran, also a former Indian ambassador to Burma who is accompanying the president said that Aung San Suu Kyi grew up, studied and lived with her mother who was a Burmese ambassador in India and has strong ties with the country. Saran added that his government believes Aung San Suu Kyi is someone who could bring about democracy quickly to Burma as she is the daughter of Burma's independence hero Gen Aung San and that she possesses the ability of her late father.

Saran added that Kalam's visit would be the highest level visit to the neighbouring country in recent years, a response to the successful visit by Burma's ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) chairman Gen Than Shwe to India in 2002.

At the same time, other reports from New Delhi said that Kalam's three-day trip to Burma is part of his efforts to further India's Look East policy, strengthening economic, business, education and cultural bonds.

Describing it as a significant visit with an enormous amount of "substantive content", Saran said an agreement between the two sides for evacuation of natural gas to India would be tied up. The reports added that India has been keen to tap Burma's gas reserves in the Gulf of Bengal and this could be routed through a pipeline to the northeast of India or any other option including converting it into liquefied natural gas (LNG) and shipping it to India – a plan opposed by environmentalists and people affected by the project, claiming it would lead to more damages to the environment and human rights abuses on local people by the junta.

During his visit, the president will pay his respects at the historic Shwe Dagon Pagoda and at the shrine of India's last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar. He will also visit Mandalay, Burma's second largest city and take a trip to the school of traditional medicine there.



Two NLD leaders sent to jail by Burmese authorities

Mar 07, 2006 - Burma's western Arakan State, Sittwe (Akyab) Township National League for Democracy (NLD) chairman San Shwe Tun and organising committee member Aung Pan Tha, were each sentenced to three years in jail by a local court within last week.

The two active NLD leaders were arrested on 20 July and tried at Sittwe court under Act 24-1, on the charge of trading illegal foreign currencies.

"In fact, what the lawyers from outside are saying is – if they (the defendants) are to be punished, they should get 3 months or 6 months. Not more than that," a close family friend of the two told DVB. "Now that they are given three years, people don't know how they were given the punishment."

A local resident told DVB that the two leaders were approached by 'unknown' currency dealers but they refused to buy any money from them. They were arrested, nevertheless. When the authorities searched their homes not a single note of foreign currency was found.

Observers believe that San Shwe Tun and Aung Pan Tha were arrested and imprisoned with trumped up charges because of their vital and active roles in the NLD.



AAPP denounces Burma junta's attempt to 'control' the ICRC

Mar 07, 2006 - Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) strongly denounced Burmese military junta's attempt to restrict the movement of the International Committee

of the Red Cross (ICRC) members by insisting on escorting them with its cronies during prison visits.

The denunciation came in a statement issued on 7 March which says that the insistence of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) that its affiliated agencies accompany the ICRC members during prison visits – is merely an attempt to inflict more tortures and miseries on prisoners.

The spokesman of AAPP, Bo Kyi pointed out that one of the junta affiliated agencies, the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) is never known for doing good things for the people.

“When they (the ruling generals) wanted to assassinate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the majority of USDA (members) were used as their henchmen. If they want to plot bad things against political activists or students, such as informing against them, they use USDA as their henchmen,” Bo Kyi said. “As the situation is thus, they are purposefully trying to make the ICRC despair in carrying out their activities.”

Bo Kyi added that he doesn't doubt the good intention of the ICRC but as long as the junta keeps on controlling and harassing its members, there would be no palpable benefits to prisoners despite its presence in the country.

“For example, the ICRC donates medicines. The medicines do not reach prisoners. They are sold in the black market...Therefore, we are expressing our views that the SPDC is systematically using the ICRC with political purposes.”

The ICRC recently said that the SPDC has suspended its routine visits to prisons and labour camps across the country since the end of 2005. Around 1100 political prisoners are still being detained, according to the human rights watchdog Amnesty International.



Appeal for detained Burmese lawyer Aye Myint rejected again

Mar 07, 2006 - The amended appeal lodged on behalf of Burmese lawyer Aye Myint from Pegu, was unceremoniously rejected by a divisional court at Pegu in lower central Burma within the day of the submission on 7 March.

Aye Myint was sentenced to seven years in jail for helping Burmese farmers retrieve their farmlands and pasturelands confiscated by military organisations.

“Daik-U (township court) sentenced him to seven years,” explained Pegu Township National League for Democracy (NLD) lawyer Mya Hla and a colleague of Aye Myint. “An appeal was lodged at Pegu District and it was rejected. And we amended the appeal and submitted it at Pegu Division court and it was also rejected today.”

Mya Hla added that Aye Myint's lawyer San Maung is making preparations to lodge the appeal at the High Court in Rangoon.

Mya Hla was arrested in 2005 for allegedly reporting false news to Rangoon-based International Labour Organisation (ILO) on the confiscation of pasturelands belonging to the villagers of Phaungdawthi in Daik-U Township by the Burmese army. He was sentenced to seven years in jail by the court in September under the notorious Emergency Provision Act – 5J.



10 people sentenced in Burma in connection with anti-Muslim riots

Mar 08, 2006 - 10 people arrested in connection with recent anti-Muslim riots in central Burma, were each sentenced to 2 years in jail by Magwe and Sinbyukyun Township courts on 7 March.

Although the names of all those sentenced are not known, National League for Democracy (NLD) members in Magwe area told DVB that they are sure Sinbyukyun Township NLD organising committee member Thein Aung and youth member Ko Moe were among them.

The majority of those sentenced are from among 70 people being detained at No.1, Police

Station in Magwe, said local residents.

According to unconfirmed reports, three Muslim men who triggered off the riots with the alleged rape of a Burmese woman, were also sentenced to 50 years each in prison. In order to confirm the reports, DVB contacted the authorities concerned at Magwe and Ministry of Information in Rangoon, but they all refused to answer the queries.

The riots which occurred from 16 to 20 February were sparked off by the report of an alleged rape of a Burmese woman from Kokeko Village in Sinbyukyun Township by three Muslim who gave her a lift in their car.

At least one person was seriously injured and there were also reports of some fatalities when security forces opened fire on rioters. Moreover, 5 mosques and 20 Muslim homes were destroyed, according to local residents.

The authorities are still unable to establish whether the alleged rape really occurred, but the riots spread to neighbouring Salin, Chauk, Pwintbyu and Konezaung areas causing deaths, injuries and arrests.



Indian President in Burma

Mar 08, 2006 - Indian President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and a 40-member entourage arrived in Rangoon on 8 March for a landmark trip aimed at strengthening ties between the neighbours.

During his three-day visit, the president will meet with Burma's military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) chairman Gen Than Shwe and other ruling generals, but he has no plan to see any representative from the opposition groups.

Apart from reports of Than Shwe himself welcoming the Indian president at the airport, the junta-controlled media said nothing in details about the state visit.

But the Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran, who accompanied Kalam, told reporters ahead of the visit that the president will look at boosting India's strategic ties with Rangoon with the top of the agenda of signing a deal to bring natural gas from Burma and obtaining further help from the junta to combat a separatist insurgency in India's remote northeast. Another agreement will set up a ground station in Burma to receive data from an Indian satellite used for such things as analysing soil and minerals for use in agriculture.

But India-based Dr. Tint Swe of exiled National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) insisted that the bilateral agreements between the two countries would not benefit the people of Burma in the long run.

In a statement issued on 8 March, the director of New Delhi-based Asian Centre for Human Rights, Mr. Suhas Chakma urged Kalam to demand the release of democracy leader and Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi from her house arrest during his discussion with the SPDC.

"No one is suggesting that the government of India should not engage with the junta but engagement must be critical and the release of Aung San Suu Kyi who has spent 10 years in house arrest must form an integral part of the engagement. It would be unfortunate if President Kalam cannot even demand the release of Suu Kyi, a recipient of Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding, from her house arrest, especially when he undertakes the visit to Myanmar on International Women's Day", stated Chakma.



Burmese prisoner Kyaw Khin in a critical state

Mar 09, 2006 - The elected representative (MP) of Shan State capital Taunggyi, Kyaw Khin who has been detained at a local prison is in a critical state as he has been denied medical treatments for his

deteriorating eyes.

According to his family, 69-year old Kyaw Khin has been suffering from a severe form of ocular pain since the end of 2005. He repeatedly requested the prison authorities to let him see an eye specialist but no action has been taken for nearly four months, and he is in the stage of nearly losing his eyesight, according to his wife Khin Ohn Myint who went to see him at the prison recently.

“He is not like when I met him last time, anymore. As his eyes are not well, he deemed to look quite stressed and very dejected. When I returned (home), I do not feel good. Neither do the whole family,” said Khin Ohn Myint.

She reported the plight of her husband to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) office in Taunggyi, but no palpable help was obtained as the authorities have been banning the ICRC from giving helps to prisoners. She added that she understands the predicament the ICRC is in at the moment and thanks the organisation for its efforts.

Kyaw Khin is currently being detained at Taung-lay-lone Prison outside Taunggyi. He was arrested on 25 February and sentenced to fourteen years under the notorious Emergency Provision Act – 5J and Act 17-20 because some innocuous pamphlets were ‘found’ near him in a classroom.

He was arrested and imprisoned for the first time in 1996 for attempting to form the Committee Representing People’s Parliament (CRPP). The second arrest and imprisonment came soon after he was released from the first detention.



Aung San Suu Kyi among candidates for UN Secretary General post

Mar 09, 2006 - The recent election of women heads of state in some countries, indicates that the world is ready to choose a woman UN Secretary General, said Mr. Kofi Annan, the man who is leaving the post soon – during a ceremony marking the International Women’s Day at the UN HQs on 8 March.

Annan said that candidates chosen for the next Secretary General are men from Asia and 18 women candidates around the world have also been chosen as a test case for the principle of equal rights between men and women. Among them are detained Burmese democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and women leaders and former diplomats from Latvia, Finland and Chile, Annan revealed. A report by the UN also said that women are making scant progress around the world in getting into leadership positions. “Serious obstacles remain that hinder women’s effective participation,” said the report, which called for increased participation to be translated into influence in the decision making process.

Similarly, during a ceremony marking the International Women’s Day at the White House, US Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice praised Aung San Suu Kyi for her bravery and selfless actions and promised to continue to support the emergence of democracy in Burma, according to agency reports from Washington.



Detained NLD leader Tin Oo allowed to view a dead relative

Mar 10, 2006 - Detained National League for Democracy (NLD) vice-chairman Tin Oo who has been under house arrest, was allowed to get out of his house for 30 minutes on 8 March to attend the wake of his nephew.

Tin Oo was allowed to talk to his relatives and offered them words of comforts for 30 minutes and taken back to his home by security agents, eyewitnesses told DVB. But Tin Oo was not allowed to attend the funeral which was held at Ye-Way cemetery on the following day.

“It is true that he came to the house of the wake as it is our neighbour. I heard all about it when I came home,” a NLD leader Han Tha Myint told DVB. “I am sure it is certain as everyone saw him.

The police and the like were also positioned (around the house). It seemed to last 15-30 minutes. He was allowed to come because it was the death/funeral of his nephew, I think.”

70-year old Tin Oo was arrested and detained on 30 May 2005 in upper Burma along with NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi when the convoy they were in was attacked by thugs employed by the ruling junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). Several people were killed and hundreds were wounded, arrested and imprisoned but the attackers escaped unscathed. The junta is still ignoring the calls for the release of all political prisoners.



Journalists demand the release of Burmese prisoner Win Tin

Mar 10, 2006 - Paris-based reporters sans frontiers (RSF) and exiled Burma Media Association (BMA), called for the unconditional release of Burma’s renowned journalist Win Tin who is being detained at the notorious Rangoon Insein Jail.

The call was made in a joint statement issued on 10 March and urged Burma’s military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), to release the much respected journalist in time for his 76th birthday on 12 March.

“Since his arrest on 4 July 1989, U Win Tin, who is serving a 20-year sentence on charges including “anti-government propaganda”, has been deprived of his basic rights, including proper medical treatment and being able to write,” the statement says. “Since the start of 2006 he has no longer been able to receive visits from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).”

Win Tin currently needs treatment for high blood pressure and inflammation of the prostate and his health has seriously deteriorated after 16 years in prison and he has suffered two heart attacks.

“The authorities twice wrongly announced his release, in November 2004 and in July 2005,” the statement adds. “Under Burmese law he has been eligible for release for good behaviour since July 2005”.



24 Shan fighters sentenced to death by Burmese court

Mar 10, 2006 - 24 members of Shan State Army – South (SSA-S) Brigade – 241 including its commander Sa Khun Kyaw who surrendered to the Burmese army earlier this year were sentenced to death by a martial court inside Lashio Prison in northern Shan State near the Sino-Burmese border.

The sentences were passed on 4 March and the prisoners had already been transferred to Mandalay Jail in central Burma, according to Shan news sources.

The Shan fighters were accused of involving in drug-trafficking, murder and the use of child soldier. A spokeswoman of SSA-S refuted the accusations of the junta.



Burmese journalist Win Tin is 76 but no freedom yet

Mar 11, 2006 - Renowned Burmese journalist Win Tin who has been detained at the notorious Rangoon Insein Jail for 17 years, is not allowed to celebrate his birthday which falls on 12 March.

Moreover, Win Tin’s health condition is very poor as he has been suffering from high blood pressures, acute heart condition and diabetes, and he has been given medical check-ups once a month, according to Maung Maung Khin who went to see him at the prison today.

“I see him once every fortnight for 25-30 minutes at a times. He didn’t say anything particular. He just asked me about this and that,” said Maung Maung Khin who also said that Win Tin noted that the door must be knocked until it opens – referring to the National League for Democracy’s (NLD) recent special statement calling for the release of all political prisoners and the start of political dialogues for the sake of national reconciliation. “He was joking about what had happened to him. He was joking

about the time when he was recalled after he was told that he would be released in November 2004 and in July (2005) when he was recalled at the gate of the prison after he was told that he was going to be freed.”

Win Tin is highly respected by his colleagues, pupils and readers as a talented journalist, writer and poet with noble heart full of loving kindness. Recently, Paris-based reporters sans frontiers (RSF) and exiled Burma Media Association (BMA) called for his release for his birthday, but the military authorities in Rangoon are not likely to heed their demand.



Another detained for criticising castor oil project in Burma

Mar 11, 2005 - A Burmese villager was arrested on 8 March for ‘criticising’ the government imposed nationwide castor oil / physic nut plantation project.

30-year old Yeh Aung from Pe-kone Village, Myothit Township, Magwe Division in central Burma is still being detained at the township police station. He was arrested after he attempted to report the corrupt practices of the village authority chairman Yeh Win who misappropriated money gained from the sale of physic nuts he collected from villagers – to higher district authorities.

When Yeh Win found out about this, he told the township authority chairman Paw Kywe to arrest Yeh Aung, according to local residents.

There have been similar problems arising from the physic nut growing project in other parts of Burma. In January, two National League for Democracy (NDL) members from Kachin State were detained for two months for allegedly speaking against the project.

Burma’s military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) is trying to counter the shortage of fuel in the country by producing bio-fuel from castor oil seeds.



63 sent to prison for anti-Muslim riots in central Burma

Mar 12, 2006 - 63 people involved in anti-Muslim riots which occurred at Magwe Division in central Burma in February, were each sentenced to two years in jail and 40 were released.

Among those imprisoned are Sinbyukyun Township National League for Democracy (NLD) organising committee member Thein Aung and youth member Ko Moe, and Awlan, Naing Oo, Htay Win and another youth member from Salin Township.

Three Muslim men accused of raping a Burmese woman from a village in Sinbyukyun Township, which ignited the riots, were sentenced to 57 years each, according to sources close to legal circles. The trials were carried out at No.1, Police Station in Magwe, and all the convicted were transferred to nearby Thayet Jail, a policeman told DVB.

The victim of the rape joined a Buddhist nunnery after she was discharged from the hospital, a local resident said. Troops and security forces had withdrawn their protections of the mosques and local residents are being forced to take guard duties.

Several mosques and properties belonging to Muslims were destroyed and a couple were reported to be killed, and several were wounded seriously.



Annan repeats call for political dialogue and prisoner release in Burma

Mar 13, 2006 - The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan again called on Burma’s military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), to release all political prisoners and start political dialogues by mid 2006.

The call was made in a human rights report on Burma submitted to the 60th UN General Assembly on 23 December 2005.

The report described the detention of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi for more than 10 years, the incarceration of more than 1100 political prisoners, the dire economic condition, the deteriorating education system, the spread of HIV/AIDS, forced labour and other human rights abuses.

Moreover, the report also described the visa bans on UN special envoys Paulo Sergio Pinheiro and Razali Ismail by the Burmese authorities and how discussions on Burma affairs by the international community are limited to the outside of the country.

Therefore, the report called for the reopening of the National League for Democracy (NLD) offices throughout the country, the release of all political prisoners including Aung San Suu Kyi and the resumption of serious political dialogues by mid 2006.



Christian arrested and detained for writing to Burma junta chief

Mar 13, 2006 - A member of Christian evangelical church who wrote a letter to Burma's military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) chairman Gen Than Shwe urging him to end the persecution of his church, was arrested and detained at a police station in Pa-an, Karen State.

Yeh Zaw was arrested on 25 February at a checkpoint in Pa-an and his family was only notified on 9 March, his wife Naw Sa Eh told DVB.

"A police corporal informed me on the phone that he is being detained at a the police station. His health is good but he is not feeling good about it and the like," said Sa Eh. "He is going to be tried on either 22 or 24 (March). Another corporal told me to bring money to hire lawyers and the like. He is charged under (Acts) 420 and 406 he said." Although Yeh Zaw was accused of travelling without identity card, he was charged under Act 420 for lying.

Yeh Zaw was taken away by Pa-an based army personnel and interrogated on 10 March, added his wife but she didn't know why.

Yeh Zaw resided in the compound of Rangoon Insein Kanphawt evangelical church whose members were banned from worshipping recently by the local authorities.



India "interested" in Aung San Suu Kyi's well-being

Mar 14, 2006 - India has taken up the detention of Burma's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi with the military junta at the highest level with President APJ Abdul Kalam telling Senior General Than Shwe that New Delhi was "interested in her well-being", according to reports from India.

"I have discussed Aung San Suu Kyi. India has a lot of friendship with her father (teh late General Aung San). Naturally our people are interested in her well- being," Kalam told reporters on his return to India. "The general said he'll take up India's interest... about the well-being of Aung San Suu Kyi with his team and he'll come back to us".

But Indian officials said Aung San Suu Kyi was not discussed during the delegation-level talks, but brought up separately when State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) chief Than Shwe was seeing off the Indian president at the airport during a one-on-one between the two leaders at the farewell call when Kalam was leaving Burma after a three-day visit March 11.

One of the exiled National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) ministers, Dr. Tint Swe who is based in India told DVB that he is not encouraged by the actions of the Indian government for the emergence of democracy in Burma by pointing out at the president's failure to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi and hold serious discussions on the emergence of democracy.



23 people arrested for 'religious' dispute in Burma's Arakan State

Apr 14, 2006 - At least 23 people were arrested and detained at Booswemaw Village, Taungup Township in western Burma's Arakan State, as a 'religious' dispute had to be 'solved' by the army. The problem started when an ex-convict, former Booswemaw village authority secretary and the village religious committee (Gawpaka) ex-chairman Tun Khin, returned from the prison having served a 60-months sentence for forced labour practices. Tun Khin stated that he could not accept the new village religious committee which was formed in his absence, but the villagers told him to show them where the 6000 'tins' (bushels) of communal paddy had gone while he was the committee chairman, if he wanted to rejoin the committee.

When Tun Khin was unable to produce a proper account, he accused the village monastery's abbot Rev. U Wimala and his religious committee members of being political activists, who oppose the government and the like, and he requested the army and police to arrest them.

Soldiers and policemen arrested 23 religious committee members on 5 April without properly enquiring the true motive of Tun Khin and the detainees are still not allowed to see their family members.

Local residents told DVB that although they were accused of being political activists, none of the committee members are of the main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), but of pro-military junta party National Unity Party and the Union Solidarity and Development Associations.



Detained Rangoon MP Dr. Than Nyein not well

Mar 16, 2006 - Detained Rangoon Kyauktan Township's elected representative (MP) Dr. Than Nyein has been suffering severe blood pressure and his condition is made worse by the increasing heat of the dry season, according to his wife Khin Aye who went to see him at Prome (Pyay) Prison recently.

"There's no improvement. The pressure was rising over 90," Khin Aye told DVB. "With the permission of the governor and a special card, they are checking his blood pressure, once in the morning and once in the evening. The situation is that bad. I am still buying medicines for him prescribed by the specialists from Rangoon before."

Moreover, Than Nyein has also been suffering from liver complaints, urinal problems and gastric complaints and he had to take medical check-ups every six months with specialist doctors, but he has not been allowed to see them for more than a year.

Khin Aye added that all the diseases could develop into cancers.



Detained solo protester Tun Lin Kyaw suffers severe TB

Mar 16, 2006 - Tun Lin Kyaw who has been detained at the notorious Rangoon Insein Jail for staging a solo protest, is seriously ill with tuberculosis.

Tun Lin Kyaw who comes from Rangoon Dagon Township has no relative to see him at the prison and his health condition has also deteriorated as the result of severe malnutrition, according to the National League for Democracy (NLD) lawyer Myint Thaug.

"He is being hospitalised in Insein Prison. His health condition is not good. No one has gone to see him at the prison to this day. He lost contacts with his relatives. He was detained on 14 December 2004 and he has been detained for nearly 1 year and three months," said Myint Thaug.

Appeal submitted on behalf of Tun Lin Kyaw to the district court was rejected and preparations are being made to lodge a new appeal at the divisional court and other higher courts.

Tun Lin Kyaw staged a solo protest outside the town hall of Rangoon Kyauktada Township and sentenced to 7 years in jail.



Ex-Burmese political prisoner beaten to death: Mother tells horror

Mar 18, 2006 - An ex-political prisoner who was released at the end of 2003 from the notorious Tharawaddy Jail in lower central Burma, was beaten to death by members of police and fire fighters in Rangoon on 17 March.

40-year old Thet Naing Oo from Kyimyintaing (Kemmindine) Township was beaten up by members of police and fire fighters in charge of the security of nearby Thiri Mingala Market after a quarrel, his mother San Yi told DVB.

“He went to have tea at a teashop in Thiri Mingala Market and after that he went for a pee as he was feeling desperate. He was beaten up by people from the municipal for doing that. As he was incensed by the attack, he came home – I didn’t know that – and picked up weapons and went out to have a fight with them,” said San Yi tearfully. “When they tried to capture him, they shouted ‘thief, thief’, nobody came, I was told. Only when they shouted ‘pickpocket, pickpocket’ the municipal and the fire brigade (people) beat him up to his death and they were still thrashing/attacking him when he was on the trishaw (to be sent to the hospital). On top of that, he was also handcuffed. The boy who saw it said that even when he was down, they kept on thrashing him mercilessly. They landed one blow after another and his knees gave in. The person who saw it told me. While he was unconscious with handcuffs on the trishaw they kept on thrashing him to the point of his death.”

Thet Naing Oo never regained consciousness and he was declared dead at 11.40am local time on 18 March by the doctors at a nearby hospital. San Yi reported the incident to the local police station but no action has been taken against those who committed the horrific act and three friends of the victim were also detained. When DVB contacted the local police station about the incident, a policeman on duty refused to make any comment.

Thet Naing Oo was a student from Rangoon University when the nationwide pro-democracy uprising occurred in 1988. He was sentenced to 10 years in jail for his role and he was released at the end of 2003.

The remains of Thet Naing Oo is still being kept at Rangoon General Hospital mortuary and his funeral is planned at 2pm on Monday, 20 March.



Political prisoner fear for their safety at Pa-an Prison

Mar 18, 2006 - 10 high-ranking detained former Burmese military intelligence agents were recently transferred to Pa-an Prison, Karen State in eastern Burma, causing serious concerns for the safety of three political prisoners who have been detained there.

The prisoners are worried that the former military agents, regarded as their archenemies, might cooperate with the prison authorities and bully them, according to sources close to the prison. The three political prisoners are students Nanda Sit Aung, Ne Kyaw and Wunna Soe who were each sentenced to 17 years in jail for distributing leaflets denouncing the junta-sponsored Nyaung-Hnabin ‘National Convention’.

They were transferred from Rangoon Insein Jail in mid 2005 for staging hunger strikes to protest against the unfair treatments they received in the hand of the prison authorities.



Murder of Thet Naing Oo shows lack of rule of law in Burma – Min Ko Naing

Mar 19, 2006 - The recent murder of ex-political prisoner Thet Naing Oo by members of police and fire fighters in Rangoon, shows the lack of the rule of law in Burma, renowned student leader Min Ko Naing said.

“In the case of Ko Thet Naing Oo, what it shows is when someone is behaving out of hand, the authority’s armed organisations could arrest and take action on him. He could be fined if necessary. But they have no right to beat him up to death,” said Min Ko Naing. “No one has the license to beat him to death. It should be solved in accordance with the laws. Another thing – what is happening in our country is the bad custom of people behaving badly when they are in uniform – it is very sad/regrettable. It is not good if seen by foreigners. It is not in accordance with the behaviour of a civilised nation. Whatever reason you are wearing the uniform, it is to carry out your duties. Therefore, normally you have contacts with the public. When you try to solve the problem, you have to solve it within the limit of your duty. For example, in the international community, fire brigades are organisations formed to rescue human beings out of natural disasters. Therefore, they are fire brigades formed with the intention of protecting the lives of the public and citizens. This kind of organisations should never carry weapons for whatever reason and endanger or threaten the lives of the public. I want to talk about this matter daringly on behalf of all the people.”

Meanwhile, San Yi, the mother of Thet Naing Oo told DVB that she is going to sue those who killed her son.

“I want (the authorities) to name those who killed and tortured my son to death. I want the truth,” San Yi said. “Therefore, I will sue them with (Act) 302 for murder. I will try to get justice out of those who killed my son. On our part, we have the plan to make the truth apparent so that they could not lie to us. It is for the truth. What can we do? We are not telling them to do the wrong thing. We want them to tell the truth. Let it happen – that is all we will say.”

At the same time, the authorities arrested two eyewitnesses and friends of the victim. Win Myint (38yr) and Khin Maung Zaw (21yr) were transferred from Kyimyintaing (Kemmendine) police station to Dagon police station in Rangoon today, and they are to be tried on 20 March for allegedly obstructing government officials on duty. They are still not allowed to see their family members.



Burmese prisoner Than Win Hlaing barred from reading

Mar 20, 2006 - Prison authorities at Tharawaddy Jail in lower central Burma, had barred detained Burmese writer Than Win Hlaing from reading, according to his wife Moe Moe Kyi who went to see him at the prison.

Than Win Hlaing was given lengthy jail terms for writing a biography of Burma’s national hero, General Aung San, and he is still not allowed to receive treatments for stones in his bladder.

Moe Moe Kyi added that the condition inside the prison has deteriorated so much and inmates are feeling dejected since the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was banned from visiting prisons at the beginning of this year.

“They are feeling dejected because the ICRC is not visiting them. How shall I say – they are feeling rather bad that they are not getting some materials they were expecting, I was told. Because the ICRC is not coming, the health conditions (of many prisoners) are very dire.”

She added that the medicines given to Than Win Hlaing in prison were completely different from those prescribed by the doctors for his condition.

The ICRC recently said that the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) SPDC has suspended its routine visits to prisons and labour camps across the country since the end of 2005 due to the insistence of the junta to let its affiliated agencies accompany the ICRC members during prison visits.

Around 1100 political prisoners are still being detained, according to the human rights watchdog Amnesty International.



Murder most foul: Thet Naing Oo's murder is abuse of power – NLD lawyer

Mar 20, 2006 - The murder of ex-political prisoner Thet Naing Oo, perpetrated by fire brigade and police members at Rangoon Kyimyintaing (Kemendine) Township on 17 March, is the abuse of power by the authorities, said a National League for Democracy (NLD) lawyer Nyan Win.

“As they were beating him up until he died; the intention was to make him dead, therefore, it fits in with intentional (premeditated) murder in accordance with Act – 302. They do not have the rights to shout ‘thief’ and do this kind of thing,” said Nyan Win. “It is abuse of power. They don’t need to beat him up or have the power to do so. It implies that it is a premeditated murder. In our view, the rule of law is very weak. When I heard about this kind of thing, I feel that there is no law (in Burma). When people who uphold law (and order) use laws which are not given to them, the rule of law becomes weak. Whether they are fire brigade (members) or not, there is no law that empowers them to handle criminal cases. They only have the power to put out fires. There is no power given to them by the law to handle this kind of case. It is abuse of power. They are practising power not given to them.”

Meanwhile, the authorities are continuing to detain two friends of Thet Naing Oo, Win Myint and Khin Maung Zaw at nearby Dagon police station and they are reportedly being indicted under Act – 333 for allegedly interfering with (the police?) on duty. They were not allowed to attend the funeral of their friend. At the same time, the police are trying cover up evidences as usual.

DVB contacted Kyimyintaing Police Station, but the police officers on duty refused to answer queries.

Nevertheless, a member of Rangoon Division Police Force, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that the police officers on duty when the incident occurred were Corporals Tin Maung Oo and Myo Min Oo, and they were on patrol with some reserve members of fire brigade from Sayyoedan and Nyeinchanyay (Peace) Wards.

No perpetrators of the crime are being taken action against yet, and the police are pressurising some eyewitnesses and trishaw drivers to provide false statements for them, according to local residents.



Burmese Christian Yeh Zaw transferred to Pa-an Prison

Mar 20, 2006 - A member of Rangoon Insein Township Phawkkan evangelical church, Yeh Zaw who was arrested at a police checkpoint in Karen State capital Pa-an on 25 February was transferred to Pa-an Jail on 16 March.

Yeh Zaw was arrested after he returned from the Burmese border town Myawaddy where his brother in law lives, to Rangoon and he was later separately interrogated and beaten up by the army personnel based in Pa-an. Although he was arrested for not carrying identity card with him, he was charged under Act (420-406) for lying, according to his wife Sa Eh who went to see him at the prison recently.

“I went to see him yesterday and as I was followed by the police, he dared not say much. He was afraid,” said Sa Eh.

Yeh Zaw was arrested and detained because he wrote a letter with other church leaders to the ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) chairman Gen Than Shwe to end religious persecutions of the local authorities on his church members



Murdered ex-political prisoner Thet Naing Oo buried

Mar 20, 2006 - The funeral ceremony for ex-political prisoner Thet Naing Oo was held at Hteinpin cemetery in western Rangoon on 20 March and it was attended by more than 1000 mourners including the National League for Democracy (NLD) members, veteran politicians, student leaders and other supporters of democracy.

The remains of Thet Naing Oo was cremated after people paid their last respect to him by citing prayers and laying down flower garlands. He was beaten to death by members of Rangoon Kyimyintaing (Kemmdine) Township reserve fire brigade and Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) on 17 March during a brawl.

Thet Naing Oo was actively involved in the 1988 nationwide pro-democracy uprising and subsequently joined the armed student group, the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) in the jungles. In 1998, he was captured by the authorities and sentenced to 14 years in prison and released in November 2002.

"He has a good heart and carries out duties for other people," his mother San Yi told DVB. "I believe that he is an invaluable son who does not care for his own life in order to selflessly carry out his duties for the majority. Whatever difficulties he faced, as he went to the jungles, I always missed him and felt sad. He is always in my mind. But on the other hand, I am feeling proud for a son who selflessly works for the benefits of the majority by sacrificing his life and left this world. I can comfort myself in the thoughts that he is a valuable son."

Intelligence agents and security personnel also came to the funeral and took the pictures of the mourners.



Burma opposition groups call for investigations into Thet Naing Oo's murder

Mar 21, 2006 - Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) and foreign affairs committee of All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABSFU), called for investigations into the recent lawless and brutal killing of a former political prisoner by the authorities in Rangoon.

The call was made in statements issued on 21 March after Thet Naing Oo (a.k.a.) Pya Laung, a former student leader and political prisoner, was brutally beaten up and killed by scores of police and fire brigade members of Kyimyintaing (Kemmdine) Township in Rangoon on 17 March during a brawl.

The spokesman of AAPP Tate Naing told DVB that the murder of Thet Naing Oo boils down to extra-judicial killing and it is abuse of power and a heinous crime. He also demanded the authorities to pay 'worthy' compensations to his family and to immediately release two eyewitnesses and friends of the victim, Win Myint and Khin Maung Zaw who are being detained and charged with obstructing the police on duty.

The spokesman of ABSFU Min Naing maintained that the killing was not an ordinary case of murder but a premeditated murder of a political activist, which clearly shows the lawless state of Burma despite the claim of the military junta that there is no one above the law. He also demanded the authorities concerned to reveal the truth about the slaughter and to take actions against the perpetrators.

Meanwhile, the National League for Democracy (NLD) members at Taungdwinggyi, Magwe Division in central Burma also urged the junta to carry out investigations into the killing of Thet Naing Oo during a monthly meeting.

Several political activists had been tortured to death by the police and intelligence agents in the past, but the murder of Thet Naing Oo by the henchmen and cronies of the junta occurred for the first time within the sight of the public in Burma's biggest city during recent years.

On May 30, 2003, the NLD supporters, members and leaders including Aung San Suu Kyi and her deputy Tin Oo were brutally attacked by a thugs hired by the junta at Dipeyin in upper Burma. Scores were killed and several hundreds were severely wounded and detained. No action has been taken against those who committed the crime either. The military commander who was in charge of the area when the massacre occurred, was subsequently promoted to the rank of prime minister of the ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) government.



UNESCO calls for Burmese journalist Win Tin's release

Mar 22, 2006 - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Director-General Koï chiro Matsuura renewed the call for the release of renowned Burmese journalist U Win Tin, laureate of the 2001 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, who has been in jail since July 1989.

In a statement issued on 21 March, Matsuura said that Win Tin is approaching his 80s with poor health condition and that he should be released at least on humanitarian grounds.

Matsuura also voiced his other concerns over the condition of the former editor of the daily newspaper Hanthawati, vice-chair of Burma's Writers' Association and founder of the National League for Democracy (NLD) who is being detained at the notorious Rangoon Insein Jail.

Paris-based reporters sans frontiers (RSF) and exiled Burma Media Association (BMA) recently called for his unconditional release on his 76th birthday in early March – an important milestone of his life he was not allowed to celebrate.

Win Tin was given the false hope of release a couple of times, including an occasion when he was rearrested on the threshold of the prison, just seconds before he was about to breathe the free air. Opposition groups and human rights organisations said that this kind of callous action is a deliberate effort to torture him psychologically.

Win Tin was arrested in 1989, tried in a closed military court and sentenced to 14 years in prison for allegedly being a member of the banned Communist Party of Burma. He is continued to be detained with extended sentences.



US and Asian rights group condemn Burma over death of Thet Naing Oo

Mar 22, 2006 - The US government condemned Burma's military government, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) for the beating death of former political prisoner Thet Naing Oo.

“This incident is the latest in a string of increasingly violent acts targeting members of the political opposition that highlight the brutality and repressiveness of the Burmese regime,” said US State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack.

The 40-year-old Thet Naing Oo was beaten by police officers and members of the fire brigade at Kyimyintaing (Kemmendine) Township in Rangoon on 17 March. He was declared dead the following morning in a local hospital.

US officials have called on the ruling military regime, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) to renounce violence against its own people and to release all political prisoners. McCormack also urged the junta “to engage all elements of Burmese political life in a meaningful dialogue that empowers the people to determine their own future.”

Meanwhile, the Hong Kong-based Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) said that “the latest murderous assault by government officials in Burma demonstrates that its government has failed even in its stated objective to create a disciplined society” and it was “just the latest in a series of reports coming from [Burma] of government officials assaulting ordinary people over trivial incidents”.

Two eyewitnesses to the assault and friends of the victim, Win Myint and Khin Maung Zaw who were also beaten, have been taken into custody and charged with obstructing government officers. They are still not allowed to see their family members.

Thet Naing Oo's mother San Yi told DVB that the authorities are still taking no actions on the real perpetrators of the crime, only some witnesses. He also said that she is determined to get justice for her son.



Burmese farmer Phoe Aye sent to Paungde Jail for attack on soldier

Mar 23, 2006 - A Burmese villager from Paungde Township, Pegu Division in lower Burma, who attacked a drunken army officer with a machete was sent to the local jail recently.

Phoe Aye, a farmer by profession who was feeling aggrieved by various persecutions and bullying behaviours of the Burmese soldiers, attacked alcohol-laced Sgt. Win Cho from Light Infantry Battalion – 66 based in nearby Pauktaw, after the latter came to Kanyutkwin Village and taunted its inhabitants on 16 March.

According to local residents, the authorities are planning to charge Phoe Aye with obstructing government officials on duty. Although he was to be tried on 23 March initially, the trial was postponed to 30 March. The residents stressed that Sgt. Win Cho was not seriously hurt and he even didn't have to go to the hospital.

Phoe Aye is still not allowed to see his family members causing serious concerns among his loved ones. The local farmers are said to be very angry by the soldiers who confiscate their farms, force them to grow unprofitable summer paddy and physic nuts, steal their irrigated water and subject them to forced labour.

Meanwhile, the authorities still haven't taken any action on the police and fire brigade members at Rangoon Kyimyintaing (Kemendine) Township, who beat a former political prisoner Thet Naing Oo to death on 17 March.



Burma prisoners watchdog marks 6th anniversary of its formation

Mar 23, 2006 - Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) on Thursday marked the 6th anniversary of its formation by issuing a statement, calling for the cessation of tortures on political prisoners in Burma and their immediate release.

During six years of its existence, the AAPP has been able to continually monitor conditions at interrogation centres, police-controlled labour camps and prisons through out Burma and report them to the international community.

The statement also says that not only has the AAPP been able to publish reports on the tortures and conditions of political prisoners, but also carry out international rallies for the release of political prisoners. The organisation was also able to give valuable psychological and material supports to family members of the prisoners, says the statement.

More than 1000 political prisoners are still languishing in labour camps and prisons throughout Burma and more than 100 had died, according to the statement



The new lies of Myanmar: murdered victim portrayed as drunken lout

Mar 23, 2006 - The newspaper published by Rangoon municipal department described former political prisoner Thet Naing Oo who was recently murdered brutally by the police and fire brigade members as a drunk, causing anger and outrage among ordinary people including the victim's relatives.

The paper said that the police and fire brigade members who 'knew their duties' tried to contain Thet Naing Oo who was an out of control, drunken lout, but as he tried to resist arrest, Thet Naing Oo was arrested by means of violent beating with the help of trishaw drivers also 'who knew their duties'. In fact, Thet Naing Oo was drinking tea before he was killed.

When DVB contacted the newspaper, an official who doesn't want to be named told DVB that the paper was forced to insert this piece of prevarication by the order of the special branch (SB) of the police.

Residents in Rangoon told DVB that they are feeling outraged by not only the murder of Thet

Naing Oo but also the lies told about him by the authorities.

“It is very unfair. It is an unjust torture and an insult,” said one resident.

“I regard it as an act of unbearable intimidation and bullying,” said another.

“I am very angry, uncomfortably angry,” said another.

“The government doesn’t tell this news as it is. Not the true news. We heard about this from the BBC, VOA, DVB by listening to the radio. As long as you have this kind of thing, how are we to live freely and peacefully? As long as we have this kind of unjust tortures, arrests and murders, our Burma will come to no good.”



Tortured: Another political prisoner dies at Burma’s Tharawaddy Jail

Mar 24, 2006 - Ko Oo, a political prisoner who had been detained at the notorious Tharawaddy Jail in lower central Burma near Rangoon, died on 23 March as he was not allowed to receive medical treatments in time.

Since the beginning of his detention, Ko Oo had been suffering from gastric complaints and severe pains all over his body due to the tortures he received in the hand of military intelligent agents. Ko Oo’s condition started to deteriorate seriously in February and his family members requested the prison authorities to allow him to receive proper medical treatments at an ‘outside’ clinic, but it was refused. Only when his condition deteriorated beyond repair, Ko Oo was sent to an outside hospital to receive operations. But he died an hour after he arrived at the hospital, at 5pm local time.

Ko Oo was allowed to be buried ‘freely’ on 24 March, according to his former colleague Nyein Maung.

Ko Oo, who held strong political beliefs, was the secretary of Thayet Township’s National League for Democracy (NLD) in central Burma, and he was arrested in 1998 for his active political activities.

“He was arrested because of his strong politics. He was very active in the NLD,” Nyein Maung said. “He carried out his duties without fail. He is someone who carries out his duties with consistency. His has strong political beliefs, stronger than us; that’s why he was imprisoned thus. My feeling is, it is like loosing a limb (for the party). He was very reliable for the township. He was also very good socially and very loyal to the NLD. Because of his loyalty, he was charged with trumped up charges.”

Ko Oo was arrested and detained twice and during the second detention, he was told that if he quit the NLD he would be let off scotch-free, but he refused to do so and continued to be detained – thus paid for his beliefs with his life.

Many inmates have been dying in Tharawaddy Jail from various causes since the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was barred from visiting prisons and hard labour camps at the end of 2005.



Former political prisoner Tin Tun dies

Mar 25, 2006 – Ex-political prisoner and former Asian boxing champion Tin Tun, died on 24 March from tuberculosis he contracted in prison, according to his son Phone Myint Tun who is now living in Japan.

“He had been very ill since the previous three days and hospitalised after he lost consciousness. Since then, he never regained consciousness and died at noon yesterday. He died after the TB virus entered his brain. He had been suffering from TB and gastric diseases. He died one year and nine months after he was released from prison,” said Phone Myint Tun who himself was jailed as a political prisoner from 1991 to 1995 sharing a prison cell with his father. He also expressed his sorrow at the

death of his beloved father and added that although he was unable to attend his father's funeral, he is very proud for the man who made Burma proud through his sporting achievements and sacrificed his life for the good of the country.

Tin Tun was arrested for copying and distributing *Khitpyaing Journal* (New Era, a political news journal published by exiled Burmese activists) in 1993 and sentenced to 20 years in prison. He was released on 20 June 2004 on medical ground as he was suffering from severe coronary arteriosclerosis at the time with other diseases. He was even unable to walk properly.

Tin Tun was 62 years old when he died. He is survived by his wife May Shin, two daughters and a son.



Political prisoners not allowed to receive medical treatments

Mar 26, 2006 - Two students, Saw Win and Aye Aung who are being detained at Kalemmyo Prison in northwest Burma, have been barred from receiving medical treatments even though they are suffering serious illnesses.

According to someone who went to see the two prisoners recently with Saw Win's mother Mya Yi, Saw Win has been suffering from severe backache and Aye Aung from gastric complaints, but there is no proper doctor to treat their illnesses. The damp cells in the prison is not helping their conditions either although the weather is getting hotter due to the onset of the summer season. The two are not allowed to communicate with each other as they are kept in cells situated on the extreme sides of the prison.

Other political prisoners being detained at the jail are, Northern Shan State Lashio Township's elected representative (MP) Than Htay, Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD) secretary Sai Nyunt Lwin, Sagaing Division Chaung Oo Township National League for Democracy (NLD) secretary Kyaw Swe, and Kye Ngwe from Kalewa, detained for reporting forced labour practices to the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Saw Win and Aye Aung Win expressed their sorrow and condolence at the recent passing away of the MP of Kalemmyo Dr. Thein Win who is known as the ICRC of Kalemmyo. They only learnt about the sad news during the last prison visit.



Burmese police detain NLD auditor Aung Thein

Mar 26, 2006 - Aung Thein, chief auditor of the National League for Democracy (NLD), has been arrested at his home in Rangoon Thaketa Township on 24 March evening by the Police Special Branch (SB). Family members said they were not sure why he was arrested and where he was taken to.

Although Aung Thein was temporarily suspended as a member of the NLD in 2005, he continued to carry out his duties in democracy matters. Family members are worried for Aung Thein because he is almost 70 years old and his health is not good.

Sources close to family members said Aung Thein's family is worried after hearing the stories of Aung Hlaing Win, who died due to torture at an interrogation camp, and Thet Naing Oo, who was beaten to death near Thirimingala Market in nearby Kemmendinge Township by police and auxiliary fire brigade members.



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Burma's opposition calls for Aung San Suu Kyi's release and dialogues

Mar 27, 2006 - Burma's opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) called for the release of its leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners including Shan leader Htun Oo, and consider its requests in the special statement – for the sake of national reconciliation and unity.

The call was made in a statement issued on 27 March during a ceremony marking the 61st anniversary of the resistance of the people of Burma against the fascists in 1945. The ceremony was attended by 400 people, including Western diplomatic officials and UN representatives. The NLD also urged the junta to create an appropriate political climate and initiate substantive political dialogue with the opposition.

Similarly, Burma's Veteran Politicians who personally took part in the struggle against fascism held a similar ceremony and urged the ruling generals to hold meaningful dialogues with the opposition in a statement. The generals should learn from the fact that 61 years ago, the founder of modern Burma Army, General Aung San opposed the fascist Japanese together with ethnic national leaders, said the veterans.

They also insisted that only when the generals work with the election winning NLD and ethnic national leaders, would the existing problems of Burma could be overcome.



Special tribunal set up over murder of former Burmese prisoner

Mar 28, 2006 - A special tribunal has been set up by the Burmese authorities to 'find out the truth' about the murder of former political prisoner Thet Naing Oo by Rangoon Kyimyintaing (Kemmendine) Township police and auxiliary fire brigade members, according to the victim's mother San Yi.

"Some authorities from the top formed a special tribunal and some big fishes from the prison supervision department, the general administrative department, chief director, deputy police chief came down, " San Yi told DVB. "They asked me to follow them to Kyimyintaing police station where the tribunal was held and I did. They asked me to listen to the statements of their witnesses and those from the litigant side."

San Yi said that she was also asked to give a statement and she told all what she knew and demanded the authorities to take action on the real culprits in accordance with the rule of law.

"They told me not to worry. They warmly told me that they were doing that at the moment. If you want, you could come and listen. You are given a special permission. You are not needed to be questioned anymore, they told me thus."

But she said that many people who beat up her son have not been arrested.

"They told me that seven people are being detained. I don't know who they are. On our side, we have only one witness. Two people gave their names as witnesses. I don't know where one person is. The other had gone to Ma-U-Pin. They (the two missing witnesses) are travelling here and there. They

are cross-examining the only available one.”

When asked about the other two detained witnesses and friends of the victim, Win Myint and Khin Maung Zaw, San Yi said that they had already been interrogated and allegedly had confessed. “You will see them tomorrow. Come to listen at Insein (Jail), they told me. According to what they said, I will meet them at Insein. They are to be tried at Insein. I don’t know whether they have already tried them.”

40-year old Thet Naing Oo was assaulted on 17 March by a mob led by the police and fire brigade members on the pretext of catching a pickpocket, and he was declared dead on the following day at the local hospital.



Aung San Suu Kyi’s former PA dies of cancer in NY

Mar 29, 2006 - Exiled Burmese painter Saw Nang (a.k.a.) Khin Nyein Kywe, who used to carry out her duties as the personal assistant of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, has died of cancer in New York on 26 March at the age of 48.

Saw Nang left Burma in 1993 and absconded to Thailand and subsequently came to live in the USA.

Her colleague and fellow artist, Cartoon Win Tun said that Saw Nang was actively involved in the 1988 nationwide pro-democracy uprising as an artist and continued to do carry out her creative duties until the onset of her illness.

“After the last (military) coup, a group of young artists like us published journals. She was involved in the publication of Ayaung-thit (New Colour),” said Win Tun. “Her name never came to the forefront. But she was involved in the publications of journals during the uprising. After that, when Daw Suu (Aung San Suu Kyi) was to form a party, it was to be accompanied by/formed with a kind of media group. When U Win Tin (detained famous journalist) was to form a media group, she was among our youth group... When Daw Suu was arranging for an office, she was appointed Daw Suu’s PA. At the time, she was jointly working with Ma Theingi (author and doctor). Ma Theingi was in charge of the management. She worked as Daw Suu’s PA. Her last activity was when she sketched illustrations for poems in Udag magazine. She said that she would continue to do so. She could not continue when she had cancer.”



Myanmar promise and the rule of mob: Thet Naing Oo’s mother barred from attending tribunal

Mar 29, 2006 - San Yi, the mother of murdered former political prisoner Thet Naing Oo, was not allowed to attend a ‘special’ tribunal after she was given a ‘special’ permission to attend a ‘special’ tribunal set up to investigate her son’s death.

On 28 March, San Yi told DVB that she was given a special permission by the police Special Branch (SB) members, to attend the tribunal at the notorious Rangoon Insein Jail on 29 March.

“They told me not to worry. They warmly told me that they were doing that (find out and take action on the real killers of her son) at the moment. If you want, you could come and listen. You are given a special permission. You are not needed to be questioned anymore, they told me thus.”

But when she arrived at the gate of prison this morning (29 March), San Yi was barred from attending the tribunal and told to go home. She left the prison in despair and disgust as she had high hope that she would be allowed in as promised. On the other hand, Burmese authorities, including the generals, are known to have broken almost all the known promises they had given.

Meanwhile, the two detained witnesses and friends of the victim, Win Myint and Khin Maung Zaw and some other witnesses stood at the tribunal for cross-examinations, according to reports from other

sources.

Moreover, SB members came to the homes of Win Myint and Khin Maung Kyi and videotaped every part of the houses, causing alarms to the inhabitants.

The 'special' tribunal had been set up by the Burmese authorities to 'find out the real truth' about the murder of Thet Naing Oo by Rangoon Kyimyintaing (Kemmindine) Township police and auxiliary fire brigade members.

San Yi said that she was also summoned and asked to give a statement, but she added many people who took part in the brutal murder of her son have not been arrested.

"They told me that seven people are being detained. I don't know who they are. On our side, we have only one witness. Two people gave their names as witnesses. I don't know where one person is. The other had gone to Ma-U-Pin. They (the two missing witnesses) are travelling here and there. They are cross-examining the only available one."

Observers said that witnesses are too frightened to give evidence to the tribunal for the litigating side for fear of retaliations from the authorities, and people believe that the truth will never be out at the tribunal.

40-year old Thet Naing Oo was severely beaten up on 17 March by a mob led by the police and fire brigade members on the pretext of catching a pickpocket, and he was declared dead on the following day at the local hospital.



Lawless Burma: Police beat up and detain innocent civilians at Daik-U

Mar 29, 2006 - A team of policemen at Daik-U, Pegu Division in lower central Burma brutally beat up four innocent civilians of the same family in public on 19 March, causing outrage among the local population.

The incident started on the night of 18 March when a relative of the four victims, Naing Too from Ward-3 was forced to guard a security checkpoint by the local authorities. As the police beat up those who fell asleep during the night, Naing Too kept awake by playing guitar to entertain his fellow guards. On the following day, two policemen Min Aye and Tin Soe Win came to arrest Naing Too at his home for causing noisy dins while on duty. But Naing Too tried to resist arrest by locking himself in the house. The two policemen then smashed the door open with bricks but they were confronted by sword wielding Naing Too who wounded Myint Aye on the head, requiring him seven stitches at the hospital. Fifteen minutes later the whole local police force, numbered around 60, came to arrest Naing Too but he managed to escape. Then, the police beat up Naing Too's 70-year old father Tun Shwe who was not well, mother Yin Myint, younger brother Zeya San and his wife Ni Ni Mar for letting off the accused.

"The old man was handcuffed and his longyi (sarong) fell off and he was dragged out onto the street stark naked," a local resident told DVB. "Then, they all beat him up mercilessly with sticks, kicked him with their feet. There is nothing to salvage from his face...they then arrested four of them and like kidnapping they said that they will be exchanged with Maung Naing Too".

The police are also pressurising and intimidating other relatives of the family. The local resident who witnessed the brutality of the police said it reminded him of the brutality of the fascist Japanese military police Kempetai during WW2.

Recently, a former political prisoner Thet Naing Oo was brutally beaten up by a mob led by the police and fire brigade members of Rangoon Kyimyintaing (Kemmindine) Township. He died on the following day.



Burmese students' hunger strike in Delhi continues

Mar 30, 2006 - The 100-hour long hunger strike, in protest of Indian government's close tie with Burma's military regime, staged by three Burmese students at New Delhi is into its fourth day. The strike started on 27 March (Burma's Armed Forces Day) and it has been taking place on a pavement of the busy Parliament Street in central Delhi. The protestors surround themselves with placards which say it is shameful that the Indian president shook hands with Burma's murderous military leader Than Shwe, cut the ties with murderous SPDC, India, support democracy, do not just support oil and gas etc. A picture of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi also accompanies them.

Passers by come and read the placards and foreign and domestic reporters take photographs of the protestors who also distribute leaflets urging the Indian government not to just look at cheap gas but the faces of 50 million people of Burma.

The hunger strike is only the first step of a series of planned protests aiming for the change of the current policies of the Indian government towards Burma, the leader of the strike Ngwe Toe told DVB. He also urged other Burmese pro-democracy activists living in other countries to stage demonstrations outside the Indian embassies and consuls.



THE END

