

Democratic Voice of Burma

Political Prisoners News

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## **Killing them softly & painfully: Another Burmese political prisoner dies in detention**

May 03, 2006 –

Myint Than, one of the Shan leaders who have been imprisoned in the same case as Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD) chairman Khun Htun Oo, had died at the Thandwe (Sandoway) hospital on 2 May.

56-year old Myint Than who had been detained at Thandwe Jail in Burma's western Arakan State was suffering from severe stroke and pains in his chest when he was hospitalised, and he died at around 8pm local time while receiving treatments for his illness.

“He has been in Thandwe hospital for one month and five days,” Myint Than's lawyer Aung Thein told DVB. “It was said he suffered from chest pains and stroke. For his chest pains, they operated on him three times. Despite the three operations, his wound didn't get better and he died at 8.20 on the eve of 2 (May). His son went down to Thadwe from Rangoon by car yesterday.”

Myint Than was arrested on the 9th of February 2005 by the ruling military government's agents and he was sentenced to 79 years in jail under several charges including forming a Shan advisory group and insurrection. The health condition of Myint Than which was always good prior to his arrest, deteriorated when he was transferred to Thandwe Jail.

Aung Thein also added that he is very concerned for the health conditions of other detained old Shan leaders such as Htun Oo who is currently detained at Puta-O, SNLD secretary Sai Nyunt Lwin at Kalemmyo Jail, Sai Hla Uang at Kyaukphyu Jail and Shan State National Army's patron Gen Hso Ten at Khamti, and other younger Shan prisoners.



## **Medicines running out in Burmese prisons**

May 08, 2006 –

The health conditions of inmates including political prisoners inside prisons throughout Burma, have been deteriorating because the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has not been allowed to visit them for nearly four months, according to a report by Geneva-based Asia News Agency.

The ICRC has been unable to supply medicines to the prisons since the organisation was barred from visiting the prisons at the end of last year, Fiona Terry, an official of the Rangoon branch of the ICRC told the news agency.

Family members of the political prisoners also said that there are no medicines to treat malaria, diabetes and liver diseases which often inflict the prisoners and even medicines to treat skin diseases are unavailable.

Moreover, as there are no sufficient anti-malaria medicines at Khamti and Myikyina Jails in remote northern Burma where malaria attacks are frequent, the health conditions of the prisoners are said to be very dire.



## **Death sentences for two Burmese students kidnapped in India**

May 14, 2006 –

Two Burmese students kidnapped at Moreh, Manipur, in northeast India in mid January, were each given the death sentence by a Burmese court in April, it has emerged.

Maung Maung Oo and Chit Thein Tun were kidnapped by the soldiers of Burma's military junta, the State Peace and Development (SPDC) who entered the Indian territory.

“We heard that Maung Maung Oo and Chit Thein Tun were given the death sentence,” Thura,

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The deputy leader of India-based the Burmese Solidarity Organisation (BSO) told DVB. “The two were detained at Monywa jail at the end of March. After that, I heard that they were transferred to Mandalay Prison and they were shut inside isolated cells. They are allowed to see no one. Then, I heard that the two of them were sentenced to death by hanging.”

Maung Maung Oo and Chit Thein Tun were summarily tried and sentenced without having the access to legal representatives. They were also severely tortured by the SPDC military security officers during their detention at the army base in Tamu. Moreover, Chit Than Tun’s wife Hnin Hnin and their four year old daughter Ippopo were also detained. Ippopo was released a month later but another couple, Phoe Zaw and his heavily pregnant wife Aye Myint Mar were arrested for allegedly abetting the two detainees and sentenced to five years each in Monya Jail. Aye Myint Mar gave birth inside the prison on 4 April, said Thura.

“As far as I have heard, to this day, the baby is being kept at the prison with the mother,” said Thura. “We are concerned about the health of the newborn baby. I heard that the young mother has not been allowed to consume nutritious food and take medicines.”

The SPDC soldiers illegally entered India and kidnapped Maung Maung Oo and Chit Thein Tun to show off them as culprits of the explosion at Nanphalon Market in Tamu Township, Sagaing Division in northwest Burma. But their organisation BDO denied involvement and insisted that it has never been involved in any terrorist activity.



### **Three Burmese youths on trial for writing a poem**

*May 16, 2006 –*

Three youths from Pegu in lower central Burma arrested on 29 March for writing and distributing a poem titled Daung Man (the might of the fighting peacock), have been tried behind closed doors inside the local prison, without having access to legal representatives.

The three, Aung Aung Oo of A20 Computing Business, Zeya Aung of King Star teashop and Aung Than, are currently detained in Pegu Prison.

According to their family members, the three are being indicted under the notorious political act 5J, Printing acts, Act 17/1&2 for having contacts with illegal organisations and crossing the border illegally. Pegu Division National League for Democracy (NLD) legal advocate and high court lawyer Aung Tun is attempting to represent them.



### **Burmese authorities extend jail term of two NLD members**

*May 17, 2006 –*

Burma’s military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) has extended the prison terms of Dr Win Aung, chairman of Khin-U Township National League for Democracy (NLD) in Sagaing Division, and two other members by seven years.

Of the three, Dr Win Aung and Khin Maung Win were both sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in July 2005 for violating the Video Law and Printing and Publishing Law while Soe Win Aung was given a three-year sentence for infringement of the Video Law.

A year later, they were all tried inside Shwebo jail and their sentences have been further extended by seven years. Sagaing Division NLD Organizing Committee member Khin Than, verified the report as follows:

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“Dr Win Aung’s sentence was extended by another seven years on 7 May under Section 5-J (The Emergency Provisions Act of 1950) and U Khin Maung Win’s sentence was also extended by another seven years, so both are now serving 17-year jail terms. Ko Soe Win Aung also received another seven-year jail term under Section 5-J so he is serving a 10-year jail term. I was told that the sentences of all three were extended by seven years under Section 5-J. I heard the news from Shwebo through Dr Myint Naing, Sagaing Division NLD Organizing Committee member, who contacted me by phone.” When asked why the sentences were extended, Khin Than replied:

“I do not know why the sentences were extended. Dr Myint Naing informed me that their sentences were extended under Section 5-J. Under the circumstances, I think it shouldn’t have happened.”

Dr Win Aung’s lawyer was not informed about the proceedings carried out inside the jail before the sentence was extended. NLD Legal Affairs Assistance Committee member Nyan Win said this matter is not in conformity with existing laws.

“One thing that needs pointing out is that Dr Win Aung’s lawyer was not present at the hearing which was held inside closed doors. This should not happen in the judicial system. It should be an open court as they were given heavy sentences. I think it is not right to hear the case in this manner.”

Sagaing Division NLD members told DVB that Dr Win Aung, Kin-U Township elected representative (MP), is very active in NLD affairs and performed his duties exceptionally well during Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s Sagaing Division visit before the Tabayin incident. He was arrested for allegedly distributing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s Sagaing Division tour video and Kyemon U Thaug’s book on (the late dictator) Ne Win’s conspiracies.



### **Aung San Suu Kyi wins New Statesman’s ‘Heroes of our time - the top 50’**

*May 18, 2006 –*

Detained Burma’s democracy icon and Nobel laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi won poll position of London-based news magazine the New Statesman’s ‘Heroes of our time – the top 50’, with three times as many nominations from the readers as the great South African leader Nelson Mandela in second place.

The two great leaders are followed by Bob Geldof - Pop star turned poverty campaigner, John Pilger - Writer and broadcaster who also reported the dire situation in Burma and Margaret Thatcher - British Conservative prime minister (1979-90) in third, fourth and fifth places, respectively.

The extraordinary thing about the poll, according to the magazine, is the response from the readers as it was ‘surprising in its range and unpredictability as it was overwhelming’. For instance, Margaret Thatcher, scourge of trade unions and, more generally, of the liberal left, was described by a reader as someone who ‘brought a major shift in 20th-century politics’ within a decade.

In an online article accompanying the poll, 60-year-old Aung San Suu Kyi is described as ‘lovely and delicate, like the strings of scented jasmine always looped around her hair,’ but her tenacity, courage and other abstract qualities are not forgotten either. ‘The men in army fatigues and dark glasses who have oppressed her for so long may try to stamp out this flagrantly feminine opponent, but still she rises, unbowed and resolute.’

At the same time, it portrays her as a normal human being who has to overcome many tragedies, difficulties and weaknesses, and someone who is not afraid of speaking her mind for truth, to the irritation of some.

“Death has, paradoxically, been the making of Suu Kyi; it has stalked and claimed her loved ones and supporters. But each tragedy seems only to tighten her grip on life and her cause. The heady

idealism of post-colonial liberation sustains her still,” said author of the article Yasmin Alibhai-Brown. “They (Burmese generals) may put Suu Kyi away, but cannot make her go away from the international stage. Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991, she leads without armies, media manipulation or economic might,” said Alibhai-Brown. “Yet she remains in her tower, inviolate. In this increasingly grubby world of expedient and violent politics, the miracle is not that Suu Kyi survives but that she continues to matter so much. Not since Nelson Mandela’s long incarceration has a political prisoner drawn so much and such consistent support from millions the world over.”



### **Interview with NLD Lwin on UN Gambari’s meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi**

*May 20, 2006 –*

United Nations undersecretary-general for political affairs, Ibrahim Gambari, today met with Burma’s detained democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi in Rangoon. Earlier in the day, Gambari, held talks with Burma’s military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) leader, Senior General Than Shwe, at the country’s new administrative capital Kyappay near the central town of Pyinmana.

The following is DVB’s interview with NLD spokesman U Lwin on the meeting of Gambari with Aung San Suu Kyi. Lwin first confirmed the reports of the meeting:

Lwin: It is true. There were many people who saw it.

DVB: Yes. When was she seen, uncle?

Lwin: They said that it was 1.30pm (local time).

DVB: Yes. How long did it last?

Lwin: I don’t know that. The situation is like this. When we met (Gambari) yesterday, many things were said/discussed. Therefore, (when we asked him) if you tried to meet her (Aung San Suu Kyi), I did, he said. I haven’t received the letter of response. Why not try again, (we said), I will, he said. He said, he has to see the elders (military leaders) today, in the morning. He will mention that there again. He said thus. By looking at this, it seems that his request was obliged.

DVB: Yes, uncle. When you saw him yesterday what did you mainly put forward (to him)?

Lwin: If I have to say what we mainly said is, it is not possible to tell all. The reason is, as for No.1, he said he will give a press conference when he departs from here. It is not good for us to do that before he does that. Another thing is, it is clear that he knows about us overall (knows our overall situation). Therefore, we have to wait what he has to say. That is No.1 point. As for No.2 point, what we said had many on the historical background. He is not someone who is very familiar with the matter (on Burma). Therefore, there is no one among his assistants who understands the matter properly. We wasted our time by explaining the background. These are the things. Therefore, the main thing is, as you know, it is clear that he is trying to do his best to solve the problems... What that person (another UN spokesman?) said earlier was, he (Gambari) is not going to give the press conference. As far as I know, it depends on whether he is going to give (the press conference) or not. But he told us that he is going to give it. We can’t give something he doesn’t. But I had already told you what should be known in what we did yesterday.

DVB: As for the press conference, is he going to hold it in Rangoon or is he going to say when he is in Bangkok?

Lwin: No, in Bangkok.

DVB: OK. As he met with you yesterday, and today, he met with General Than Shwe and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and he met with you personally, how do you assess his trip in general?

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Lwin: As for his trip, this person is considerably successful in what he does. In order to make this successful, the obligation of the other side (the military junta) is quite...(indistinct) a lot...

DVB: therefore, the UN is in the position to continue (the job)?

Lwin: Yes. But (we) don't expect that this will happen very quickly. You can say, slowly. As they are handling, we can't hurry them. I will tell you what I see? It sounds that he is taking the role of Razali (former UN special rapporteur to Burma) and the like. But, isn't he the UN elder (high-ranking official)? As after Kofi Anna, it is him, in this kind of situation, he is in a better position than that of Razali, to tell the UN Security Council and the like.



### **Political prisoner Thet Oo not well in Insein Jail**

*May 21, 2006 –*

The health condition of political prisoner Thet Oo, who is being detained at the notorious Rangoon Insein Jail, has been deteriorating, according to his wife Pyone Pyone Aye who went to see him at the prison recently.

Thet Oo has a stone stuck in his urinal tract and his family members are very concerned for his condition as he receives no proper treatments inside the jail.

“The stone builds up inside his urinal tract and he is able to urinate,” Pyone Pyone Aye told DVB. “We are buying medicines from outside for that. The situation inside (the prison) is not good. We can't give what we want to, not only for Ko Thet Oo, but for all. But if the condition really deteriorates, it would not be easy to treat. And the ICRC doesn't inspect (can't go inside the prison to check the condition of inmates). If the ICRC did so, we could tell them and their doctors will carry out a check-up straight away. If they needed to be done numerically, they would do that straight away. You could buy medicines. In there, there is no medicine for them. There were two prescriptions (for Thet Oo?). The first one, I had to buy medicines for immediate use. The other copy, I could only use it in the coming fortnight. I have to say that the situation is quite bad for all (prisoners).”

Pyone Pyone Aye added that although she is allowed to see her husband every fortnight, she is facing more difficulties as prison authorities are increasing search and confiscate essential food and medicines brought into the prison.



### **UN Gambari says Aung San Suu Kyi is well**

*May 21, 2006 –*

Detained Burma's democracy leader and Aung San Suu Kyi is not only in good health but also still very strong mentally, the undersecretary general for political affairs, Ibrahim Gambari who met her recently told reporters waiting for his return from the military-ruled country at Bangkok Airport on Sunday.

Gambari met Aung San Suu Kyi for an hour on Saturday at the ruling junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) government guesthouse in Rangoon.

But Gambari added his meeting with her did not mean her release was imminent.

“She is well, but of course she is still under restriction,” Gambari told Reuters at Bangkok airport after his 3-day mission to the military-ruled country. “She feels she has a contribution to make and I hope she will be allowed to make it,” Gambari said.

On the evening of his departure from Burma, Gambari also met with Rangoon-based diplomats and explained the situation of his trip to them. He reportedly urged the SPDC chairman Gen Than Shwe

to speed up democratic reforms and improve human rights condition. Moreover, he demanded the general to allow Rangoon-based UN staff to carry out their duties freely. Gambari hasn't revealed the details of his trip and they are likely to be seen in his report to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

Although Burmese opposition groups inside, outside the country welcomed the junta's move to allow Gambari meet with Aung San Suu Kyi, some observers believe that it is merely a ploy to delay or ward off any UN Security Council's action on the junta.

"As for the SPDC, whatever you say, it has allowed (Gambari) to meet with all (the NLD leaders and Aung San Suu Kyi) to make it apparent in the eye of the international community that it is cooperating with the UN," insisted Dr. Thaug Tun, the UN representative of the exiled National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB). "We have to wait and see, to what extent the cooperation between the SPDC and the UN will go. Will the cooperation head towards real national reconciliation and dialogues? We have to wait and see, to what extent the cooperation with the UN will go. Whatever it is, we welcome this kind of cooperation with the UN."

But a former Thai ambassador to the UN Asda Juyanama, said that the junta is trying to give the impression to the international community and the UN that Burma not a country with closed door. He added that it is hard to expect changes in Burma as the SPDC government is a military junta which is very afraid of the people. The release of Aung San Suu Kyi won't come easily, nor would the requests for political dialogues, he warned. He also insisted that the main purpose of the junta accepting the trip of Gambari is to reduce the chance of the UN Security Council taking action on Burma.

What should the UN and the Burmese opposition continue to do? Thaug Tun:

"As for the UN, I don't think it will let itself be exploited by the SPDC or just let the international pressure reduce or let the path for the UN Security Council to take up Burma issue be diverted. But, during the imminent period, if there is no positive response better than the dialogue, there are discussions among the Security Council members to discuss Burma issue at the Security Council. From our part, there are some co-ordinations. There is a possibility that Mr. Gambari will report and discuss his findings on his trip to Burma at the Security Council. Therefore, as for us, what we want to say is, it is possible that as for the SPDC, they accept their expectations and (meet?) On the other hand, if you look at the benefits we have gained from this trip, Aung Suu Kyi and the NLD leaders were able to express their standing on the national reconciliation to UN high-ranking officials face to face and I believe, this will be beneficial to pro-democracy groups."



### **Detained NLD MP Than Nyein not allowed to receive medical treatment**

*May 23, 2006 –*

Detained elected representative (MP) of Rangoon Kyauktan Township, Dr. Than Nyein is still not allowed to receive medical treatments.

Than Nyein, who is continued to be detained with Act-10A on five consecutive occasions with 60 days each time, is suffering many types of illness and it has been nearly 2 years since he was allowed to see specialist doctors, according to his wife Khin Aye who went to see him at Prome (Pyay) Prison in central Burma.

"When I went to see him this time, he said that they came to tell him with (Act) 10A five times," Khin Aye told DVB. "They came to stick a letter on (the wall of) his cell saying five times, outside the door. I think that is extraordinary. I didn't hear 10A mentioned elsewhere."

Khin Aye said that she was unable to discuss with her husband about the letter as guards were with them when they saw one another. But she said she is still hoping and praying that her husband will be

released soon as he has been detained beyond his release date for more than five times.

The National League for Democracy (NLD) lawyer, Nyan Win said he himself is not sure as why the letter was stuck on the wall outside Than Nyein's cell.

“We don't know who wrote the letter, which (department) signed it and the like. Legally, if you punish someone or extend his sentence, you must notify him. Now that they stuck/put up (the letter) on the wall, how could we resume that it is notification? As I said before, if it an extension (of the sentence), the person affected must know about it. As it is stuck without the knowledge of the person affected, we don't regard it as an official letter.”

Nyan Win added that an appeal was submitted on behalf of Than Nyein on 28 March but there has been no response from the authorities concerned.

“The court of appeal must need to hear the appeal when it gets it...or else it is not in accordance with the law.”

He added that Act-10A is different from other political laws.

“The working right is with the supervising organisation (government), not the court. It is the appeal of (to?) the ruling power. There is only one (chance of?) appeal, to the government. We are submitting the appeal to the government for Dr. Than Nyein, with the address of the Prime Minsiter.”

Than Nyein was arrested in 1997 and sentenced to 7 years in jail for trying to form a NLD youth organisation for Rangoon Mayangone Township.



### **US diplomat Hill calls for release of Burmese political prisoners**

*May 23, 2006 –*

A top US diplomat said on Tuesday that Washington is ready to improve relations with Burma's military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) if it makes a move toward the release of political prisoners, including democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi.

US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, who was in Bangkok for a regional meeting, reiterated Washington's stance days after a top United Nations official, Ibrahim Gambari visited the military state, meeting with government leaders and Suu Kyi.

“We have called for her release, we have called for the release of the many hundreds, even thousands of political prisoners, we've called for a resumption of dialogues,” Hill said. “If we see a movement in this direction, if we see an effort, of course we'll respond.”

Moreover, Hill recently also urged China to work more closely with the international community to foster reforms in Burma.

We'd like to see some effort by China to work more with us in trying to effect positive change in Burma to put Burma on a stronger platform for growth in the future,” he said.

According to him, Burma, once the star of Southeast Asia, is now “the source of ills and poses risk to the entire region including drugs, cross-border migration, infectious disease”.

US President George W. Bush last week extended financial and other sanctions against Burma. The sanctions, which were due to expire on May 18, have been in place since 1997.



### **Truism: Suu Kyi's release will not cause instability – Burma police chief**

*May 23, 2006 –*

Support for Burma's detained democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi has faded and her release from house arrest is unlikely to pose a threat to political stability, the country's ruling military junta, the

State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) police chief, Ma-Gen Khin Yi said Tuesday, according to reports from Kuala Lumpur.

Khin Yi, who is in the Malaysian capital to attend a regional security conference, claimed that Aung San Suu Kyi was unlikely to be able to draw large gatherings as support for her has dwindled over the years.

“Some members of the NLD have resigned so I don’t think she has a lot of support,” he said, referring to Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy party. The security situation in the country “is very good. Our police force can handle everything. There is peace and tranquility in Myanmar (Burma),” he said.

Khin Yi said Aung San Suu Kyi was safe and in good condition, but refused to say if she will be freed this month, noting that the decision is not his but the junta’s. At present, she is in virtual solitary confinement at her residence in Rangoon, allowed no outside visitors except occasional checks by her personal physician, and no telephone contact.

The junta allowed a meeting between her and a top visiting U.N. official, Ibrahim Gambari, on Saturday for about 45 minutes. He was the first foreign official allowed to see her in more than two years.

“As for us, the NLD, we do not react to the individual subject (or) comment. And we only head towards new progress based on the progress of today. We only want to speak and act things that encourage this,” NLD spokesman Myint Thein told DVB. “Especially, after the visit of Mr Gambari of the UN, while we are trying to find solution for the future with which good methods to choose, we do not want to carry out things that cause stumbling blocks. We always want to carryout activities beneficial to the nation in long-term, by peaceful and gentle means. I repeat, we want to take the journey that goes forward. We do not want to do things that go backward.”

When asked about the prospect of the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, Myint Thein said:

“We are hopeful, quite hopeful, because we believe that if were are to carry out pragmatic things for better prospect in the future, only the option of the release of Aung San Suu Kyi remains. We think, we don’t have to wait until 27 (May) when we reach six months (of the extended detention). We hope that (she) will be released soon.”

Aung San Suu Kyi has spent about 10 of the last 17 years in detention, mostly under house arrest. Her latest detention was last extended in November 2005 for six months and is set to expire on May 27 but the SPDC has not said whether the term will be extended. She was rearrested and detained on 30 May 2003 when her supporters were brutally attacked and killed by the junta-sponsored thugs in an ambush at Dipeyin in upper Burma.



### **Release Aung San Suu Kyi if she doesn’t pose any threat as claimed – NLD**

*May 24, 2006 –*

Burma’s main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD) called on the ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) to immediately release its detained leader Aung San Suu Kyi, if she doesn’t pose any threat to the stability of the nation as claimed.

The call followed the comment of Burma’s police chief Maj-Gen Khin Yi who claimed that support for Aung San Suu Kyi has faded and her release from house arrest is unlikely to pose a threat to political stability as she is unlikely to be able to draw large gatherings. “Some members of the NLD have resigned so I don’t think she has a lot of support,” he said without explaining that most of there were pressured or forced to resign by the authorities.

Khin Yi made the comment recently at the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur where he was attending a

regional security conference.

“If you study chief police Khin Yi’s word, we believe that there is no reason to detain someone deemed to be harmless/not dangerous. The police chief himself said at Malaysia that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has no political power anymore, that there would be no demonstration if released, and that there is no support for her. According to this comment, according to this (the law), there is no more fear that (she) might pose threat to the nation...in this case, we can assume that it is not viable to continue to detain her with this law.”

Another NLD leader and lawyer Thein Nyunt insisted that someone like Aung San Suu Kyi should never have been detained with the so-called “Law to Protect the State from the Dangers of Those Saboteurs Seeking to Damage It”.

“From the beginning of the detention, she is the victim of the Dipeyin Affair (Massacre), the victim of violence. She is someone who should be the litigant. There is not reason that this person is likely to threaten the security of the state. They (the authorities) were unable to provide evidence that she threatens the security of the state, from the beginning of the detention. When they first detained her, they said they detained Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for her own safety. As they have to take the responsibility of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s security, (her case) is not applicable to ‘the law to protect from the dangers of those saboteurs seeking to damage it’. As it is the case, the people responsible said that the security of the state is not more in danger because of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, she should be released without extending (the detention) on 27 May.”



### **Book of the Dead: AAPP publishes biographies of dead Burmese prisoners**

*May 23, 2006 –*

Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners published a book containing the biographies of Burmese political prisoners named ‘Eight Seconds of Silence: The Death of Democracy Activists Behind Bars’.

“After the 1988 Revolution (nationwide uprising), whether we were inside the prison or outside the prison, we used observe an eight seconds silence as a way of salute whenever pro-democracy activists died,” said the Secretary of AAPP Tate Naing when asked why the book was named thus. “Mainly, we want the international community to know the truth about our comrades who were tortured to death in the prisons. That is our first intention. We also published the book with the hope of helping the international community prepare and prevent these things from occurring.”

The book gives detailed accounts of the circumstances of the deaths of 127 political prisoners who had died inside the prisons and labour camps or who are still unaccounted for and those who were released just before they died.



### **Meikhtila NLD call for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi**

*May 25, 2006 –*

Mandalay Division’s Meikhtila Township National League for Democracy (NLD) in central Burma welcomed the meeting of Aung San Suu Kyi with the UN undersecretary general for political affairs Ibrahim Gambari and called for her immediate release during a meeting on Friday.

“We decided to welcome the action of the SPDC (the ruling junta State Peace and Development Council) allowing the UN deputy secretary Mr. Ibrahim Gambari and democracy leader Aung San Suu

Kyi,” Meikhtila Township NLD secretary Myint Myint Aye said.

“Decision/Resolution 2., this act should not be for just (reducing) the pressures from the international community and the UN Security Council only, but an act (a token) of the goodwill, and we urge the SPDC to continue to carry out this kind of constructive acts. Decision 3., In order to have a smooth the international relationship and for national reconciliation, we urge the SPDC to immediately release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who is the necessity of the main role (plays the vital role). Decision 4., we decided to demand the SPDC to solve the ongoing problems by peaceful meaning in order to alleviate the sufferings of ethnic nationals who have been fleeing to the border regions due to military conflicts.”



### **Another on trial in connection with the ‘poem’ case in Lower Burma’s Pegu**

*May 25, 2006 –*

A textile printer named Sein Hlaing has been detained for trial in connection with the case of three youths from Pegu in lower central Burma arrested on 29 March for writing and distributing a poem titled Daung Man (the might of the fighting peacock).

Sein Hlaing is being detained and interrogated for printing a T-shirt with the image of a fist, which was found with one of the detained youths Aung Than. The other two detainees are Aung Aung Oo of A20 Computing Business, Zeya Aung of King Star teashop who are currently detained in Pegu Prison.

All of them have been tried behind closed doors inside the local prison, without having access to legal representatives. Pegu District assistant judge Tin Htut has been cross-examining them every two days and 15 out of 22 witnesses for the prosecution have been cross-examined.

According to their family members, the four are being indicted under the notorious political act 5J (Emergency Provision Act), Printing acts, Act 17/1&2 for having contacts with illegal organisations (Unlawful association act) and crossing the border illegally.



### **Golden khamauk Shwe Maung harassed by Mandalay authority**

*May 26, 2006 –*

Shwe Maung from Mandalay in central Burma who was imprisoned for moulding figure of a khamauk (Burmese bamboo hat), the symbol of the National League for Democracy (NLD), has been harassed by local members of Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) and the special branch (SB) police.

“I buy and sell lands. For that, in order to hurt me, they have been trying to make the neighbours misunderstand me by (saying that) my money comes from this (political) party and that,” Shwe Maung told DVB. “They have been watching my house from the front and back with many people. They threatened me with arrest and confiscation. They are also spreading the propaganda now. They also interrogated other agents who deal with me and asked them; what do you buy for him. If you buy for him you are in danger, you know and the like. After selling the lands, I dreamed of setting up a good carrying truck (business) for my cousins to drive. I studied the truck with car dealers and the news reached them (the authorities). Then they said if I bought the car it will be confiscated. Now I bought an empty house at the west end of the new town. Then, they accused me of buying it with the money of a party to turn it into an office. The whole office (of the authorities) came down with the intention of arresting me. Then when they studied it properly, they found no incriminating evidence, I learnt. They know that I am an honest person and doing business with pure heart. Knowing that, they have been threatening to confiscate (my business) on this and that day.”

Shwe Maung from Mandalay Htundone New Town was sentenced to three years in prison in 2002 for moulding the statue of the golden khamauk. He had to serve the full sentence and released in November 2005.



### **Aung San Suu Kyi still not free**

*May 27, 2006 –*

The visit of Burmese police officers to the home of detained democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi in Rangoon at 5pm local time on Friday was not for a normal meeting with her but it could be to notify her of the extension of her detention for another six months, according to a report from Rangoon.

Although there have been no independent confirmations, sources close to the ruling military government told the German news agency DPA that the report of the extension could be true.

When we contacted the National League for Democracy (NLD) leaders at midnight, they said that they haven't heard about it yet and that they hoped she will be released on Saturday evening.

Similarly, a 88 Generation student leader who has been watching the situation closely told DVB that there was a report of that in the Bangkok Post newspaper, but it turned out to be the same report by the DPA.

Whatever it is, there is still a 50:50 chance that Aung San Suu Kyi will be released, and it is necessary to wait until the onset of Saturday evening, the student said. He added that if she is not released by then, the report is true, and the students and the public must take up the responsibilities and carry out their necessary activities.



### **NLD youths stage peaceful protest in Rangoon**

*May 27, 2006 –*

Around 400 National League for Democracy (NLD) youth members today marched towards the home of detained democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and staged a peaceful protest to show their displeasure at the extension of her detention to another year.

At around noon, the protestors marched in an orderly way from the NLD HQs at Shwegondaing Road towards Aung San Suu Kyi's home in the University Avenue after holding a ceremony marking the 16th anniversary of the 1990 election, which the NLD won a landslide victory but never allowed to rule.

But members of security police, fire brigade and pro-junta Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) blocked the roads and barred them from reaching her home.

"We set off after the end of the ceremony. When we reached 'Hermitage', they blocked us with two cars and told us to march with three people in tandem," said a female youth member who took part in the march. "Then when we did that the two cars followed us from behind. Just before we reached Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's compound, just beyond the park, they they set up barbed wire barriers.

"There were about 200 of us. They began to stop us in front of Mya Yeik Nyo Hotel. But despite their attempt to stop us, we pushed ahead and continued with the march until we reached the garden near her home. It was not long after that they blocked the road. About eight truckloads of security personnel, five detention cars to carry away those arrested, five truckloads of fully armed personnel, and a fire engine came to the scene," said another youth.

"They surrounded us and told us to go home. We told them that we will stay there until 4pm (locale time) and we negotiated with them," said the other youth.

“There, when we asked them to allow us to meet with the old lady (Aung San Suu Kyi) peacefully, they told us that we have no rights to do so as she is not free yet. At 3.35pm, we all dispersed peacefully. In the end, we all chanted the health of Aung San Suu Kyi and returned.”

“We shouted May Daw Aung San Suu Kyi be healthy (Longlive Aung San Suu Kyi) four times,” said the female youth.

The other youth said that there were some intimidations from the authorities and the latter also planted some civilians to cause problems among the protesters.

“People in civilian clothes came in two Dyna cars and they came down from the cars and mingled with us. To avoid trouble, we controlled our people to show restraint. We had to do that to ensure everything was peaceful. We pushed ahead and continued our march and there was no untoward incident there,” he said. “There has been no arrests until the time we left the place. The incident boosted the morale of the youths and they also learned that they could still do things without violating the law. We are now thinking of continuing our work within the framework of the law if in case she does not get released”.



### **NLD issues statement on extension of leader's detention**

*May 27, 2006 –*

Burma's main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD) headquarters has issued a statement strongly condemning the extension of Aung San Suu Kyi's detention.

NLD spokesman Myint Thein read out Statement No. 05/08/06 as follows:

“1. Using Section 10(B) of the Law Safeguarding the State from the Danger of Subversive Elements, the authorities had kept under house arrest NLD General Secretary and Nobel Peace Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of General Aung San who is a national martyr and father of the Burmese Defence Services, for the first time from 19 July 1989 to 10 July 1995, and for the second time, from 21 September 2000 to 6 May 2002.

2. Again, on 30 May 2003, after coming under a brutal attack at Kyi Village of Tabayin Township in Sagaing Division, the authorities, using the same law, detained Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for the third time. The period of detention officially ends at midnight on 26 May 2006. International institutions, including UN Secretary-General Kofi Anan and incumbent ASEAN Chair and Malaysian foreign minister, had called for an unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

3. We have also heard that the Burmese police chief had also told a regional security conference in Kuala Lumpur that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi no longer had political influence and that releasing her would not have any significant impact on national security.

4. But, we are saddened to hear the news that the authorities have once again used the same law to continue detaining Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The extension of her detention is not valid since it cannot be shown that her release affects national security and the extension can affect the efforts being made to achieve national reconciliation.”

When asked what he would like to comment about the high expectation for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi not taking place and what the NLD would do in the future, U Myint Thein said:

“Of course, there are many speculations. What is surprising is that quite a number of people are still optimistic. They say the release did not come about because the [election] anniversary is being celebrated today and that she may be released tomorrow. We have also received messages about preparations being made to release political prisoners. Personally, I do not know what to say because

we have been victimized so many times. But, we will continue to work flexibly and soft-handedly, in other words, politically, for national reconciliation. We will continue to do whatever is necessary through political, non-violence means.”



### **NLD saddened by Aung San Suu Kyi's ongoing house arrest**

*May 27, 2006 –*

The house arrest of Burma's democracy leader and Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi has been extended by one more year.

Her detention was extended by six months last year and the ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) had extended it again while leaders at home and abroad and democracy forces were expecting her to be released after completing last year's term.

Although no official statement has been released as to why the detention was extended, reporters believe that the police officer who entered Aung San Suu Kyi's residence at around 5pm local time yesterday had delivered her that extension notice.

Democracy forces and the international community at large cannot understand why the detention was extended particular after the SPDC chairman, Senior General Than Shwe, himself, had said he was prepared to turn over a new leaf and National Police Chief Khin Yi had hinted that there could be no instability in the country in releasing Aung San Suu Kyi, and especially after UN Secretary-General Kofi Anan had appealed for her release in the last 24 hours.



### **NLD to lodge appeal over extension of leader's house arrest**

*May 29, 2006 –*

Burma's main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD) HQs plans to file a legal appeal over recent extension of the house arrest of its leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Democracy leader and Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi is continued to be detained under the so-called 'Law to Safeguard the State Against the Dangers of Those Desiring to Cause Subversive Acts', and appeals could be lodged under the same act and the NLD is planning to submit the appeal to the ruling government accordingly.

“One could appeal under Sections 19 and 20 of the Law to Safeguard the State Against the Dangers of Those Desiring to Cause Subversive Acts. The law also says where the appeal should be lodged. We will continue to carry out the appeal as described in the law. We are making preparations for it. We have to collect documents and the like. When we get them all, we will put forward them to the NLD elders to submit the appeal.”

The NLD also lodged an appeal to the ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) when the detention was extended six months last time.

“Yes, we also submitted (an appeal) for the previous six months,” said Nyan Win. “But there was no response to the appeal. Now it has been six months. As it has been extended, the previous order is not applicable anymore. We need to submit appeal for the new order.”

Asked what the NLD plans to do if the government doesn't respond to the appeal, Nyan Win said:

“If they can't accept it by legal route, we have nothing else to do but to remind them. It is the duty of everyone to follow the contents of the laws. We will follow this path. If they don't follow it or open (the appeal), that is the responsibility of those who do not do it.”

detention.

“There is no fairness in this. If you are to deny someone of freedom, the person must be informed and the public must be notified. As it is not notified, we see this as the failure of the duty,” insisted Nyan Win.

Meanwhile, the SPDC foreign minister who is also called Nyan Win, currently attending the non-alliance nations meeting at Kuala Lumpur, said that the continuing detention of Aung San Suu Kyi is the domestic affair of Burma, not of the international affair and dismissed criticisms from the international community.

“If you look at it normally, you might be able to say that this is a domestic affair, but this kind of unjust detention and lawless actions demand the attention of the international community,” insisted NLD communication official Myint Thein. “Similarly, within 24 hours the UN Secretary General himself called for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as a way of showing that there is progress (in Burma); this kind of action shows that the matter is no more of domestic affair only... what we have always been demanding is the dialogue path. This dialogue is not the dialogue with foreign people. It is a demand for us, them (the generals)” and the ethnic national groups to meet. We have already accepted that solution to domestic matter should be found domestically. Therefore, we need to understand that despite the calls for solving domestic matter domestically, (the junta) is unable to do so, that’s why the outside world have to come in and help inevitably.



### **Burma’s NLD to sue junta over detention of Aung San Suu Kyi**

*May 29, 2006 –*

As the recent extension of the detention of Burma’s democracy leader and Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi is not in accordance with the existing law, her party will counter-sue the ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) over the matter.

We are going to carry out legal actions so that we could counter-sue (the SPDC) over the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi and we have the rights to do thus legally, NLD spokesman and lawyer Nyan Win was reported as saying. He added that the NLD is very saddened by the reports of the extension of the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi another year and described the action as the junta ignoring the hope of the people. We have more hope this year than last year for the release of Daw Suu, but now our expectations are down the drain, Nyan Win said.

On Sunday, the traffic to Aung San Suu Kyi’s home in the University Avenue in central Rangoon were closed and no one except local residents were allowed to enter the street. Barbwire barriers and security personnel had been placed in the area since early Saturday. All the residents in the street have to tell the security personnel where they are going before leaving the area, an unidentified resident told AP.



### **The confession of a jail warden of Burma’s Tharawaddy Jail - 1**

*May 30, 2006 –*

A prison warden from Tharawaddy Jail in lower central Burma told DVB what really happened during the cholera outbreak in 2005 in which nearly 20 prisoners died unnecessarily.

“That was the time of prison governor U Myint Swe. The swine which was bred for the benefit of outside prison staff died. We don’t know with which disease this pig died of. So we had a discussion

on what to do with the dead pig. The prisoner governor said, these prisoners, they don't know what is happening. Just sell it (the dead pig) to these starving creatures/animals. If you sell it to the outside, nobody will buy it. Your dead pig is only dead meat therefore just sell it inside. Prison governor U Myint Swe, deputy-governor U Myint Soe, the chief warden U Myo Win, the chief prison supervisor U Win Myunt were all in it. They are of the same gang. The main thing is every thing is done if the governor says done. So his order was followed. We distributed (the meat of the pig) with profit. We told them (prisoners to pay when their relatives come to see them and we sold (the meat) 500 Kyat a viss and we were also able to eat (make profit) a little bit. Not long after that, a day after the cooking/consumption of the pork, the cholera outbreak started. I think about 17 people died.”

When asked how the prison authorities dealt with the deaths of prisoners, the staff said:

“As it happened inside the prison and the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) didn't enter (was not allowed to check) the prison, as we were with our respective superiors, we had to make up a story that said that the cholera started when a prisoner brought in ‘stomach-softening’ food from outside. As we are civil servants, I will tell you honestly. If you cremate a human being and a dog uncovers it, you will blame the dog. (Always blame the underdogs when things go wrong?) The situation is like this.”

When asked about the reports about the use of prisoner labour to make joss sticks for companies such as Lotayat, he gave the details as follows:

“Yes, it is true. As for this joss-stick business, there were pig breeding businesses. There, they gave vet two stars (promoted to the deputy position). When they gave this person two stars, he became the deputy prison governor. Someone under his supervision, a man named U Htay Win, he now lives in Tharawaddy New Town. This person's relatives in Kyoppinkauk are in joss-stick business. As he is the deputy-governor and familiar with the joss-stick business and he learnt how to exploit the unpaid labour of prisoners, from then on, the joss-stick making business thrived at Tharawaddy Jail. What Lotayat claims is their joss sticks are blessed as they are made by people who practice vegetarianism and wear clean (unadorned) clothes. Inside the prison, we can't afford to eat meat. So all are vegetarians and on top of that, they wear clean clothes (unadorned convict uniforms). So its claim seems to be true. But I don't know how (the joss sticks) are blessed. The joss sticks come out the prison in the rough form and when they reach them (companies), they spray scents on them and distribute them to the market.”



## **Japan, Norway, EU demand Aung San Suu Kyi**

*May 30, 2006 –*

Japan, Norway and the European Union expressed their great sadness over the continuing detention of Burma's democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi by the country's military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), and demanded her “immediate” release.

In a statement issued today, the Japanese foreign ministry said that the Japanese government seriously expected that the Burmese military government, would release political prisoners including Aung San Suu Kyi and start political dialogues and progress in democratic reforms, but very saddened by the lack of progress and the extension of the detention.

In a statement issued Monday at the German embassy in Rangoon on behalf of EU, it condemned the decision by the SPDC government to extend Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest. It said the decision must be seen as yet another sign that the Burmese government is unwilling to compromise and to move in the direction of an all-inclusive democracy. It also called on Rangoon to release Nobel laureate and all other political prisoners and to engage all political and ethnic forces of the country in a genuine dialogue with a view to bringing about true national reconciliation and the establishment of democracy.

A non-government organisation, the Australia-Burma Council also called on the Australian government to put on stronger pressure on the SPDC for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners. The NGO also said there is no other way but to pile more pressure on the SPDC by looking at how it rejected the request of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's request for her release.

Similarly, the Norwegian Prime Minister and government expressed their 'great regret' at the continuing confinement of the Nobel winner and demanded her immediate release 'in the strongest possible terms'. The spokesperson from the Norwegian foreign ministry, Anne Sandsten told DVB that Norway has been following closely the situation in Burma and urging the military government to hold talks with the National League for Democracy party led by Aung San Suu Kyi and ethnic national groups. She added that the Norwegian government believes that the best method for the national reconciliation process is dialogue.

The exiled National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) also strongly denounced the continuing detention of Aung San Suu Kyi and insisted that the act shows the junta doesn't respect the wish of the people of Burma and the international community. The NCGUB also urged the international community especially the neighbouring countries to help solve the problems of Burma at the UN Security Council.

