

**Democratic Voice of Burma  
Political Prisoners News  
September - 2006**

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## **Reaction of Su Su Nway on hearing news that she is to be given John Humphrey Award**

*31, August, 2006*

“As it is an award recognising the efforts for democracy and human rights and truth (in Burma), I want to say that we are feeling very happy and proud with public leader, Auntie Suu (Aung San Suu Kyi), who are struggling for democracy and human rights and the people of Burma. Although I am glad to hear that I received this award, I am feeling happier to know that it is becoming more obvious that all the people (of Canada) and the world are constantly supporting the struggle for democracy in Burma.

I especially want to thank the elders (leaders) concerned who gave me the award and the people of the country concerned. Although the prize was given to me, I regard it as a prize given to all the people of Burma.

I feel very encouraged by being given the award. When working for the truth, I am feeling very, very proud and happy because the award is like tonic which helps me work harder several folds. I want to say that I will increase my efforts (and) struggle for democracy and human rights in Burma (and) do my best for matters regarding peace of the whole world.”

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## **Mandalay NLD repeats call for release of Burmese political prisoners**

*06, September, 2006*

Members of Mandalay Division National League for Democracy (NLD) today repeated their call for the immediate release of all political prisoners including their leader Aung San Suu Kyi, as an effort to solve the political problems of Burma.

The call came after a meeting held at the end of a meeting which was attended by NLD representatives from 30 Townships. Moreover, representatives also supported the US demand to discuss Burma issue at the UN Security Council.

Mandalay Northwest Township elected representative (MP) Tin Aung Aung who attended the meeting told DVB that representatives also demanded the ruling junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) to hold political dialogues with the NLD, to reopen all the NLD offices throughout the country, to stop all manners of restriction and bullying on NLD members including forced resignation and intimidation.

Meetings between divisional and township NLD leaders have been held every four or six months in Mandalay depending on the urgency, and at the latest meeting, current political, educational, social and economic situations were discussed.

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### **Campaign for release of Burma prisoner Myo Min Zaw**

09,September,2006

A campaign for the release of a Burmese political prisoner, Myo Min Zaw who is being incarcerated in Mandalay Jail in central Burma, is to be highlighted with a demonstration by a New York-based human rights group soon.

The campaign is to be led by AIUSA Group-280 and its members are going to stage a protest outside the Burmese embassy in New York on 15 September with US-based pro-democracy Burmese activist, in tandem with Amnesty International members in other countries.

The protestors will demand the release of Myo Min Zaw and other political prisoners and deliver a petition of more than a thousand signatures to the Burmese ambassador.

Still in his twenties and a second year English Student, Myo Min Zaw was involved in large-scale student demonstrations in 1996, and in 1997 joined the Central Organizing Committee of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions. The ABFSU, outlawed in Burma, has been at the forefront of the peaceful anti-government protests since 1988. Under the alias name of Moe Hein Aung, Myo Min Zaw formed the Student and Youth Unity Front in July 1998.

He was arrested in a government crackdown on 14 September 1998 in Burma and sentenced to 38 years 'for agitating unrest' - a sentence later increased to 52 years.

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### **Finnish PM calls for release of Aung San Suu Kyi at ASEM**

11,September,2006

Current rotating president of the European Union, the Prime Minister of Finland, repeated the union's call for the unconditional release of Burma's democracy leader Aung

San Suu Kyi and urged the country's ruling junta to improve its human rights and democracy records.

Her release would signal a democratic transition in Burma, said Finland's Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen at the end of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) held at the Finnish capital Helsinki. He added that specific demands were made to Burma's military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) at the 5th ASEM but despaired by the fact that no positive result was forthcoming in Burma after two years.

During last night dinner party for thirty-eight European and Asian leaders, Vanhanen also said that although the SPDC foreign minister Nyan Win assured him that there have been some progress in Burma, they are not sufficient, and that many EU leaders are demanding the release of Aung San Suu Kyi.

At a news conference, Vanhanen said he told Nyan Win to set up a precise timeframe for a democratic transition in Burma, to cooperate with the international community, to release all political prisoners and to carry out palpable reforms.

In order to find out the response of Nyan Win, reporters requested an interview with him but he refused although he reportedly responded with a call for more time.

Meanwhile, Burma was identified by the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Christian Schleithoff as having a "bad human rights record, particularly in the field of labour rights."

The Helsinki summit as a whole ended today with lofty statements on global warming, world trade and the battle against terrorism but they stopped short of making firm promises.

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## **Security tightened at Aung San Suu Kyi's home**

*13, September, 2006*

Burmese military authorities have again tightened security in front of the lakeside home of detained democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi in Rangoon, and she is allowed to see her family doctor only once in two months.

The spokesperson of her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD) said party members don't know as to why security has been tightened thus. Leaders of the European Union leaders who recently attended the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) at Helsinki called for her release and the international community often demanded her release but there is no shadow of an indication from the ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) for her release.

"As for the security situation, they are placing the full strength. But what we are hearing now is they are placing more than full strength," NLD spokesman Myint Thein told DVB. "They are guarding her with tents and with toll bars. There is a big government compound in front of it (her house) and it is full of security forces (personnel)."

When asked when and why security was increased, Myint Thein said:

"As far as we know from some one who saw it today, it has been increased within a day or two ago. We don't know with which excuse and intention they have done it."

As for her health:

“As far as we know, her family doctor was allowed to see her last week. We heard that her health condition is good. Normally, it was originally set that he sees her once a week or a fortnight. But for the last week, we learnt that he was allowed to see her after a two months gap.”

Myint Thein added that the NLD leaders have been requesting the release of all political prisoners including her whenever appropriate and necessary but the authorities have been rejecting or ignoring their calls. He also said that all NLD members are concerned for her safety as only two women, Pegu Division NLD organising member Khin Win and her daughter are looking after her at the moment.

“Although these (security) forces are for security, we are not feeling confident. To say the truth, we are felling worried every minute over that. She should have been released long time ago. The people in this country should have been cooperating without suspicion and grudges long time ago.”

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### **Detained Sanchaung NLD chair not well**

*14, September, 2006*

The health condition of Rangoon Sanchaung Township National League for Democracy (NLD) chairman Thet Wai who is being detained at the notorious Rangoon Insein Jail is dire, according to sources close to his family.

A family friend said that Thet Wai has been enduring an outbreak of nine boils on his body and prisons authorities barred him from receiving puttees (bandages) and cotton wool. He added that the authorities have also been barring Thet Wai from receiving nutritious food from his family.

“Food has to be given to him through them (prison authorities). Some have to be taken back. It is restricted. As it is only allowed to give him once in 15 days, he is suffering from malnutrition. The boils must have been caused by malnutrition, I think. Ko Thet Wai was arrested on 15.10.2004 and he was ill. He was suffering from ‘leakage of gut’ and received operations on 10.12.2004. After the operations, he was hospitalised again. When he was operated on, he was chained to the bed in Insein Hospital.”

Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) called on the military authorities to allow staff of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) prison visits to provide care for prisoners.

Thet Wai was arrested for allegedly helping Ohn Than who staged a solo protest outside the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Rangoon

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### **Detained Buddhist monk hospitalised in Taungoo Jail**

*14, Sept, 2006*

The abbot of Shwepyithar religious college, Reverend U Zawana who is serving life at Taungoo Jail in Pegu Division, has been taken to the prison clinic for treatments due to his deteriorating health condition, according to sources close to his relatives.

According to someone from nearby Daik-U where the relatives of the monks live, Zawana has been suffering from piles and received operations at Taungoo Hospital early this year.

“It is occurring again. This time he is not allowed out (of the prison for treatments). He is being treated at the clinic inside the jail. It is possible that his condition is not as bad as that of the last time. Or it is possible that it is quite difficult to take him out due to the governor’s position of the position from above.”

Reverend Zawana was arrested for accepting former members of All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF) into monkhood.

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### **Aung San Suu Kyi’s situation latest**

*15, September, 2006*

National League for Democracy (NLD) spokesman Myint Thein explained to DVB the latest situation at the home of detained democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi as follows:

“Yesterday, (I) told you the report that security around Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s house has been increased. Regarding this, our NLD members are very concerned for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (and) I heard that those who are worried went around her compound and the streets in front of her house. Therefore, when we again went to investigate it again, (we found out that) it is true that security has been increased. But, these security measures were for the Thai defence chief’s visit to the Thai Council which is the neighbour of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s home. That is one point. As for the no.2 point, we have learnt that a (NLD) member who has been shopping daily for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has to give her (the purchased goods) through security personnel concerned. When we investigated about it, it happened once on the birthday of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. After that, after being searched for 10-15 minutes, she could put (the goods) into the hand of Daw Khin Win who is in charge at Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s home, we have learnt. Similarly, we have learnt that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s health is good.”

Myint Thein added that he explained the latest situation at Aung San Suu Kyi’s home thus because NLD members and those who have great respect for her are very worried for her.

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### **Unofficial translation of 88 Generation Students’ statement on the decision to discuss Burma issue at the UN Security Council**

*16, September, 2006*

The statement of 88 Generation Students regarding the decision to discuss Burma issue at the United Nations Security Council.

Date: 16.09.2006

1. We welcome the decision to take the decision to discuss Burma issue at the United Nations Security Council as the crucial step in substantiating Burma's democracy and national reconciliation.

2. All domestic forces, regional countries and the international community as a whole had urged and are still urging for the discussion of Burma's national reconciliation, by both quiet and loud means.

3. As for the United Nations, it has come to this situation of taking the decision to discuss the issue at the Security Council after trying the resolutions at the General Assembly every year.

4. In solving Burma's political difficulties (problems), no one person, no organisation could do it unilaterally.

5. Therefore, when trying to substantiate Burma's national reconciliation, in order to include all political forces concerned, we again seriously urge (all) to contrive with great understanding and patience.

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### **Student Win Maw Oo's death marked in Rangoon**

*19, September, 2006*

Burmese activists in Rangoon today marked the 18th anniversary of the death of Win Maw Oo, who was shot dead by Burmese soldiers, at her family's home in Hlaing Thayar with a memorial service.

The religious ceremony was attended by 88 Generation Students including Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, Lay Lay Mon and Jimmy.

"I got a phone call from the hospital. She was still conscious at the time," Win Maw Oo's father Win Kyu recounted how he learnt of his daughter's fate. "She gave them the names of her father, mother, home address, telephone number. At the hospital, after the operations, she was put inside the intensive care room. After she died, she was not conscious. I had to retrieve her corpse from a doctor. When I asked the cause of her death, the doctor said shrapnel wounds. Only then was I able to retrieve her corpse. Then, I was told to bury her within 24 hours...I also had to sign a pledge saying that she was not involved in (political) activities. When we buried her, as for her family, her younger sisters and brothers weren't able to see her corpse. At the funeral, there were only 25 people at most. We had to do it behind locked door."

"I still miss my daughter every day," said Win Maw Oo's mother Khin Htay Htay Win. "Today, I want to cry like the way my daughter cried. They said that they opened fire in the sky. But they aimed at her straight. That's why she died straight away. In my heart, my daughter did it for the country; she gave up her life for the country. I can't forget her any day. I have been crying uncontrollably for 18 years. I don't know what more to say."

Win Maw Oo was one of the hundreds of protestors killed in Rangoon after the military coup on 18 September 1988.

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## **Recycled lies of Myanmar: No political prisoner says junta**

*19, September, 2006*

The newspapers of Burma's military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) recently claimed that there are no political prisoners in the country.

"The USA and allies falsely accused that over 1,000 political prisoners were detained in Myanmar (Burma). In fact, no one is detained for political reasons in Myanmar," said a statement published in the junta's mouthpiece, the New Light of Myanmar Tuesday. "Those who violated the existing laws, criminals and felons and terrorists are detained in accordance with the laws concerned"

The paper also claimed that "restrictions are placed upon Daw (Aung San) Suu Kyi as she has constantly been demanding for confrontation, defiance of all orders, utter devastation, resorting to four kinds of sanctions and reliance on external elements all of which will lead to harming the national unity, national stability and national development as well as hindering democratization process. Thus, she was restricted at home under section 10 (B) of the Law Safe-guarding the State from the Danger of Destructive Elements."

But Ko Ko Gyi, one of the 88 Generation Students and a former political prisoner himself, told DVB the lack of the rule of law in Burma would not be able to promote democracy.

"What I mean is, the military government itself has officially confirmed and said that there are people detained in connection with politics in this country. In the statement issued at this time, it is said that there is no political prisoner. I am very surprised to see the people who are in charge of the country violating their own laws thus."

"When you want to solve and approach a problem, in stead of pointing finger at the outside world and say because of this and that person, it is best to find the root answer to the problem domestically and concentrate on it," added Ko Ko Gyi

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## **Inteview with Burmese student leader Ko Ko Gyi**

*19, September, 2006*

Burma's ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) newspapers have claimed that there are no political prisoners in Burma and those being detained are only criminals.

In this connection, we interviewed a former long-term political prisoner and a leader of the 1988 Generation of Students, Ko Ko Gyi.

A: The truth is that if we are now in a phase where efforts are being made to develop genuine democracy - an era where foundations for democracy are being built,

then rule of law is most important now. This is because democracy never flourishes in a situation where there is no rule of law. It is already 18 years that our country has been without a Parliament and where representatives elected by the people do not have the right to legislate. The existing laws are the ones enacted by the military government after it staged a coup. Let us study the laws enacted by the military government. The first paragraph of the State Law and Order Restoration Council Order No 11/92 clearly states that all political prisoners, with the exception of those who endanger the security of the nation, must be released immediately. What this means is that the military government acknowledges through legal tender the presence of political prisoners in this country. Hence, I was taken by surprise by the statement today about the lack of political prisoners in our country because it is tantamount to the leaders in charge of the country repudiating their own laws. The laws enacted by the military government legally acknowledge that there are political prisoners in Burma. I personally spent 14 years in prison as a political prisoner.

Q: Ko Ko Gyi, judging from the military government's newspapers today, SPDC seems to be relying on China and Russia - the two countries that voted against the UN Security Council action. What is your opinion?

A: When we study the attitude of our major neighbouring country - China - in the way it casts its no vote at the UN Security Council, we can see that the Chinese ambassador had said that if the UN Security Council were to discuss Burma because of the issues of peace, human rights, refugees, narcotics, and HIV/AIDS, then the council may also have to discuss the other countries with similar issues. It is evident from that statement that China acknowledges that there are problems associated with human rights, refugees, narcotics, and HIV/AIDS in Burma.

Q: Observers say the report in the paper made it seem that the military government did not care about the UN Security Council discussing the situation in Burma and at the same time it also sounded like a plea when it said that the situation was not as bad as alleged.

A: When we try to approach a problem and find a solution, it is better not to point fingers at others outside the country but to best seek the answer and find the root cause inside one's own country. Over the years, the international community has continued to keep track of and shown greater interest in our country. We are encouraged by it. The fact is that the solution to our problem lies within our country, and it all depends on the patience, magnanimity, and willingness by those who hold the reins of power as well as the people who are part of the political process in our country to resolve it. The international community and neighbouring countries are concerned about our country. When we met, China told us that it wanted to see national reconciliation in Burma. The military government should seriously consider the fact that all neighbouring countries and regional countries are concerned about Burma and share the same desire in wanting to see national reconciliation and peaceful change even though their approaches to the problem may differ slightly.

## **KNU prisoner Ricky Thet released by Burma junta**

*20, September, 2006*

A Karen National Union (KNU) member, Lt-Sgt Ricky Thet who has been imprisoned since 1982 at the age of 29, was released from Thayet Jail in central Burma today.

Ricky Thet was captured by the soldiers of the then ruling semi-military government, the Burma's Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) while he and other KNU members, Mahn Ngwe Aung, Myo Aung, Richard and Tookie, attempted to seize control of the Burmese broadcasting building in Rangoon.

The leader Ngwe Aung and Myo Aung were killed during a shootout with soldiers guarding the building. Thet, Richard and Tookie were captured alive and sentenced to death and the sentences were later commuted to 25 years in 1989. Richard and Tookie are still being detained.

Thet told DVB that the condition within the prison was dire, especially healthcare was very poor with acute lack of medicines.

"Now at the prison for health matter, many people are seriously ill. There are no medicines. There were many people who died for no obvious reasons. At the moment, the health condition of U Kyaw Thaung is very dire. He is even unable to walk," said Thet.

He was allowed to see his family members for the first time in November 1997 and planning to join them in Demoso, Karenni (Kayah) State. "I have to start my life from (square) one," said Thet when he asked what he was planning to do, now that he was free.

He was not forced to sign any pledge but told not to go anywhere but home and to report to the local police station when he gets there and to notify the police before he goes anywhere.

## **NLD members detained at Burma's Nattalin without evidence**

*22, September, 2006*

The local authorities at Nattalin, Pegu Division in lower central Burma, arrested two National League for Democracy (NLD) members, Hla Shwe and Yeh Myint over the stabbing of the former local authority chairman.

On 30 August, the former ward chair Yeh Win Tun was stabbed by a group of unidentified people, and without finding out the real culprits, four policemen led by district control officer Lin Htin and police private Aung Gyi arrested Yeh Myint's wife straight away as he was not at home. On 10 September, Hla Shwe's wife was arrested and four days later Hla Shwe himself was arrested and taken to Tarpun police station, a local resident told DVB.

Yeh Win Tun has been finding faults with Yeh Myint for two years since he was the local ward chairman, and whenever there was a crime in the area he piled all the blames on Yeh Myint, the local resident said. Although he is no longer in power, Yeh Win Tun is still

bearing grudges on NLD members with the power of his brother Thein Win who is the secretary of the local ward authority.

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## **88 Generation Students issue statement on the detention of leaders**

*Sep 28, 2006*

Unofficial translation of the statement of 88 Generation Students on the detention of leaders Min Ko Naing, Htay Kywe and Ko Ko Gyi.

“Statement of 88 Generation Students regarding the taking away (detention) of 88 Generation Student leaders Ko Min Ko Naing Ko Htay Kywe and Ko Ko Gyi.

28 September 2006

1. 88 Generation Student leaders Ko Min Ko Naing, Ko Htay Kywe, Ko Ko Gyi were taken away from their respective homes by authorities concerned at around 7 o'clock in the morning on 27 September 2006.

2. The said 88 Generation Student leaders had been actively and selflessly involved in activities for the emergence of national reconciliation and democracy which are currently the main needs of Burma.

3. If the taking away of these three student leaders is for a constructive discussion, it should be on the basis of equality and reciprocal recognition.

4. The whole of Burma and the international community are very concerned by the taking away of these three student leaders without prior notification.

5. Therefore, in order to continue to substantiate the national reconciliation with good intention and by peaceful means, we seriously urge (the authorities) to immediately issue a clear statement explaining as to why the three 88 Generation Student leaders Ko Min Ko Naing, Ko Htay Kywe were taken away.

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## **Pinheiro calls for the release of 88 Generation Student leaders**

*Sep 28, 2006*

UN human rights expert Paulo Sergio Pinheiro on Thursday demanded that Burma's ruling military junta release three pro-democracy activists who were detained hours ahead of a ceremony to mark the anniversary of the country's opposition, according to a report by AFP.

Pinheiro, the UN special rapporteur on the human rights situation in Burma, said that Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi and Htay Kywe must be released “immediately.” The activists, who were detained on Wednesday, had been scheduled to attend a ceremony commemorating the 18th anniversary of the formation of detained opposition icon Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy, at its headquarters in Rangoon.

Pinheiro noted that the trio had previously served time in prison for their pro-democracy activities since they played a leading role in a student revolt in 1988 against Burma's military dictatorship. He said that he was "extremely worried" about their fate, particularly because he had received mounting reports over recent years of human rights violations during pre-trial detention.

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### **Demands for the release of Burmese student leaders grow**

*Sep 29, 2006*

Norwegian Burma Committee (NBC), Norwegian Church Aid and PD Burma denounced the recent detention of three prominent Burmese student leaders Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi and Htay Kywe, and demanded their immediate release in a joint statement issued today.

The statement said that the detention of the students shows that the Burmese authorities do not want to hold political dialogues with the opposition. Similarly, 88 Generation Students (Exile) in a statement issued today insisted that the detention of the trio without proper excuse is an act of lawlessness, and denounced the action. It also pointed out that the arrest of students who have been peacefully working for the emergence of democracy, clearly shows that there is no security in Burma for the people. In conclusion, the students also demanded the release of their leaders.

Burmese activists who have been staging a lengthy hunger strike outside the UN building in New York, yesterday delivered a letter to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan requesting the Security Council to discuss the detention of the student leaders when it discusses Burma issue. At Washington, activists are planning to stage a demonstration demanding their release. At New Delhi, activists demonstrated with the same purpose today.

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