

Democratic Voice of Burma  
Political Prisoners News  
August - 2007

- 
- Pagoda official dies in custody** *Aug 09, 2007*
- Man arrested for ILO claim released** *Aug 13, 2007*
- Guards demand money from Insein prisoners** *Aug 16, 2007*
- Man arrested for stealing noodles dies in custody** *Aug 17, 2007*
- 88 student leaders and activists arrested** *Aug 22, 2007*
- Protestors march in Rangoon despite arrests** *Aug 22, 2007*
- Seven more activists arrested during protest** *Aug 22, 2007*
- Naw Ohn Hla released** *Aug 24, 2007*
- 88 Generation Students vow to step up protests** *Aug 24, 2007*
- USDA members bash, arrest 30 activists** *Aug 24, 2007*
- Ko Htin Kyaw arrested** *Aug 25, 2007*
- Sick political prisoner forced into solitary confinement** *Aug 27, 2007*
- Fourteen NLD youth members arrested in Magwe** *Aug 27, 2007*
- Protestors arrested in Hledan** *Aug 28, 2007*
- Jailed tutor transferred to Lashio prison** *Aug 30, 2007*

[Kyaukpadaung protestors call for release of detainees](#) *Aug 30, 2007*

[Twelve elected Burmese MPs stage peaceful protest](#) *Aug 30, 2007*

[Detained activists stage hunger strike](#) *Aug 31, 2007*

[Bassein solo protestor released](#) *Aug 31, 2007*

## [Pagoda official dies in custody](#)

*Aug 09, 2007*

A 59-year-old pagoda official from Meiktila, who was arrested after the diamond umbrella topping a local pagoda was stolen, died in police custody late last month.

U Ohn Kyaing reportedly collapsed and died on July 29 while he was being transferred from the Pan-I police station to Meiktila prison. U Ohn Kyaing was among seven pagoda officials arrested on suspicion of stealing the valuable artifact.

The diamond-encrusted gold ornament was reported stolen by pagoda secretary U Aung Thein on January 28. The Meiktila police then arrested the pagoda officials and after three months of questioning, charged them with the crime.

Sourced close to U Ohn Kyaing and his family told DVB that the seven officials were interrogated, tortured and beaten while in detention and that police had refused to give U Ohn Kyaing medical help when he became ill.

“He died while he and the others were waiting at the registration desk in Meiktila prison. He died while sitting in a chair,” a source close to U Ohn Kyaing said.

The remaining six pagoda officials faced a Meiktila court yesterday after the local authorities changed the charges against them from thievery to ‘failing to protect national property’.

On August 2, DVB reported that a man charged with stealing a motorbike had also died in police custody in Meiktila on July 29.

[Top](#)

---

## **Man arrested for ILO claim released**

*Aug 13, 2007*

Thein Shwe Maung, who was arrested and detained in Rambree, Arakan State after filing a forced labour claim with the International Labour Organization last month, was given a conditional release last Friday.

Labour rights activist Su Su Nway, who is familiar with Thein Shwe Maung's case, told DVB that despite his release from detention it was possible the military would decide against dropping the charges against him.

"His case has not been completely dropped and he was released on the condition that his movements are restricted for 12 months. He has to report to the local police station every week and sign an attendance sheet," Su Su Nway said.

Thein Shwe Maung was arrested in mid July after sending a forced labour complaint to the ILO on behalf of himself and 25 Kanaung Chay villagers. The complaint alleged that the villagers had worked on the construction of a fish-breeding tank for a private company but were never paid.

After his arrest, the other villagers named in the complaint were reportedly forced by Rambree officials to sign statements rejecting the claims made in Thein Shwe Maung's letter. As the ILO does not comment on individual cases, it is unclear whether the claim has been accepted as a forced labour issue.

[Top](#)

---

## **Guards demand money from Insein prisoners**

*Aug 16, 2007*

The families of several political prisoners in Insein jail said yesterday that prison officials had stolen money from inmates after they were ordered to pay for the cost of their detention in cash.

The family member of one political prisoner, who asked to remain anonymous, said that officials recently ordered the inmates to pay for prison services with cash and said that 20 percent of all money coming in would have to be donated to the jail.

"Then, last month, the authorities ordered the prisoners to hand over all their money, claiming that they were going to spend it on better food for the inmates," the family member said.

"So the prisoners handed them the money. But the officials reportedly used the money for themselves and transferred the inmates to different cells."

A woman who also recently visited a family member detained in Insein on a political charge, said that the officials had clamped down on the amount of food and medicine political prisoners were allowed to receive from outside.

"They also punished the inmates who were found to have money by keeping them in solitary confinement," the woman said.

Officials from Insein prison were unavailable for comment today.

[Top](#)

---

## **Man arrested for stealing noodles dies in custody**

*Aug 17, 2007*

A man from Sagaing division's Inn Taw township died in police custody on August 8 after being arrested for stealing several packets of instant noodles and a soft drink one day earlier.

Ko Maung Htun, 30, was arrested by railway police while he worked at the Nabar train station at about 11pm on August 7 and was taken into custody. A source close to his family said they were informed of his death the following evening.

"His father, U Htun Ya, visited his son at the police station in the morning of the 8th and he said he looked well. But soon after he arrived home in the evening he was told by the police that his son had died," a friend of Ko Maung Htun's family said.

U Htun Ya reportedly viewed his son's body before it was cremated on August 10 and said he saw severe bruising across Ko Maung Htun's back. Doctors at the Inn Taw hospital said that Ko Maung Htun was brought in for treatment shortly before he died, but refused to comment on the nature of his injuries.

"He was still alive when he arrived at the hospital at about 3:15pm but he was started to lose consciousness. He died at about 4:45pm," one doctor told DVB.

Police from the Inn Taw station yesterday blamed Ko Maung Htun's death on alcohol abuse. "He died from his own disease. He drank too much," one officer who refused to give his name told DVB.

[Top](#)

---

## **88 student leaders and activists arrested**

*Aug 22, 2007*

The entire leadership of the 88 Generation Students group and several other activists were arrested at midnight last night in a series of Burmese military raids on the homes of gas price protestors.

The state-run New Light of Myanmar today said that Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, Pyone Cho, Min Zeya, Mya Aye, Ko Jimmy, Ko Zeya, Kyaw Kyaw Htwe, Arnt Bwe Kyaw, Panneik Tun, Zaw Zaw Min, Thet Zaw and Nyan Lin Tun had all been taken in for interrogation.

Reports received from Rangoon suggest that as many as 20 people were arrested overnight. Arnt Bwe's mother, Daw Tin Tin Win, spoke to DVB in the early hours of this morning as military officials searched her house following the arrest of her son.

"They said they are from the Ministry of Home Affairs . . . One of them identified himself as deputy police chief Aung Myint. They said they were going to take my son to their office as some senior officers wanted to talk with the students but they showed no warrant," Daw Tin Tin Win said.

"There are still ten of them searching my son's room and seizing things," she said.

The New Light of Myanmar said this morning that the activists had been arrested because their recent protests against increases in gas prices were a serious threat to the stability of the state.

“... their agitation to cause civil unrest was aimed at undermining peace and security of the State and disrupting the ongoing National Convention. And it also amounted to breaking the law guarding against acts undermining the efforts to successfully carry out peaceful transfer of State power and facilitate the proceedings of the National Convention,” the government newspaper said.

It is likely that government arrested the activists in an attempt to curb increasing protests in Rangoon over their decision to raise fuel prices by up to 500 percent last week. Widespread demonstrations are expected in the former capital city today following protest marches across the city yesterday.

The whereabouts of activists Su Su Nway and Ko Htin Kyaw remain unknown this morning and it is not clear whether or not they have also been taken into government custody.

Press reports yesterday that Htin Kyaw had been missing for several days were incorrect. Htin Kyaw was interviewed by DVB reporters yesterday.

[Top](#)

---

## **Protestors march in Rangoon despite arrests**

*Aug 22, 2007*

Almost 500 people have started a demonstration against the government's decision to increase gas prices and are currently marching along Insein road towards Thamine junction in Rangoon.

Bystanders told DVB this morning that the activists started walking from Myay Ni Gone, Hledan and Insein in separate groups at about 9:20am before joining to form a larger group somewhere in Hledan.

Almost half of the protestors are reported to be women with the wife of arrested 88 Generation Student Ko Jimmy, Nilar Thein, and well-known activist Naw Ohn Hla also marching. The protestors are all reportedly wearing traditional Burmese Pinni, white shirts and plain clothes.

“We are here peacefully demonstrating against the hiking of the petrol prices, which have impacted hard on everybody,” one protestor was heard saying by DVB reporters.

“At midnight last night our leaders were arrested but we will continue what we vow to carry out today and hopefully they would be released soon,” another protestor said.

Large numbers of police are believed to be following the protests and taking photos but there have been no reports so far of government interference.

Several demonstrators told DVB that they planned to stop briefly at the Thanlan bus stop in Hlaing district to listen to activist speeches before heading to an unknown location.

[Top](#)

---

## **Seven more activists arrested during protest**

*Aug 22, 2007*

Seven activists including Naw Ohn Hla and several National League for Democracy members were seen being dragged into an unmarked car manned by special police at about 11:30 this morning.

Eyewitness and NLD member Daw Tin Yee told DVB that Naw Ohn Hla, Htet Htet Oo Wai, San San Myint, Cho Cho Lwin, Thant Zaw Myint, Yee Yee Nyunt and a woman also named Daw Tin Yee were involved in a protest against high fuel prices when they were arrested and driven away.

Daw Tin Yee also said that at least two Buddhist monks have been arrested over the protests.

“They were seen being forced into a car near Thamine junction,” Daw Tin Yee said. Naw Ohn Hla and the other activists were among a crowd of more than 1000 people marching towards Thamine junction after a number of smaller protests merged earlier this morning in Hledan township.

Government supporters, special police, and intelligence officers followed the protestors for several hours this morning without interfering. But one hour ago, the protestors received reports claiming that five trucks full of Union Solidarity and Development Association were waiting for them at Thamine armed with sticks and machetes.

The demonstrators then reportedly stopped walking in the direction of the USDA members in an attempt to avoid conflict, only to be bashed and attacked by special police and intelligence workers.

“The government supporters were extremely rude and aggressive and they were armed with swords sticks and other weapons and they were very aggressive with the women. They snatched cameras and other belongings from the activists,” Daw Tin Yee said.

But Naw Ohn Hla and the six other activists refused to stop marching and instead continued to walk towards to USDA vehicles. It was at this point that they were arrested by officials.

Veteran politician Amyotharyar U Win Naing told DVB that the authorities were still trying to break up the crowds around Thamine junction early this afternoon despite activists abandoning their march and claiming they planned to regroup elsewhere.

“The government is breaking up the crowd by forcing people onto buses and making them leave the area,” U Win Naing said.

It is unclear where in Rangoon the protestors plan to regroup.

[Top](#)

---

## **Naw Ohn Hla released**

*Aug 24, 2007*

Well-known activist Naw Ohn Hla and several National League for Democracy members arrested on Wednesday have been released by the Burmese police.

Naw Ohn Hla told DVB in an interview yesterday that after being arrested by government-backed militia during a large protest against high fuel prices in Rangoon she was taken to a police station.

“Seven of us were forced into a car. I tried to restrain myself by sitting on the ground but [the government supporters] picked me up and carried me into the car,” Naw Ohn Hla said.

“They took us to the police brigade five office in Hmawbi, where they got out and talked to the police before coming back and driving us to police brigade three. But they got turned down there too,” she said.

According to Naw Ohn Hla, the group was then taken to the Hmawbi Township Peace and Development Council office, where they were told to wait until the evening.

“They asked us to sign a letter admitting we incited public unrest but we refused to sign it,” Naw Ohn Hla said.

The activists were then released later on Wednesday night.

[Top](#)

---

## 88 Generation Students vow to step up protests

Aug 24, 2007

The 88 Generation Students group today vowed to continue protests against the Burmese military’s decision to increase fuel prices, saying that demonstrations would intensify.

Ko Htay Kywe, one of the few members of the group to have avoided arrest this week, said that protests would continue in Rangoon, Mandalay, Moulmein, Bassein and Taunggyi.

“We, the 88 Generation Students, will be jointly staging protests together with democracy activists, members of the National League for Democracy, monks, students . . . and people who love our country and want to see change,” Ko Htay Kywe said.

“These protests represent our demands that the Burmese military regime should release the 88 Generation Students members who are being detained and resolve the economic and political problems the Burmese people are facing,” he said.

Ko Htay Kywe also called on people from all walks of life in Burma to back the protests and show their support for the pro-democracy movement. He said that while the government’s violent response to the protests was making many people hesitant, it was unlikely that the current movement would lose momentum.

“The 88 Generation Students did not start these protests and we are unable to stop them. The movement has its own momentum because the people are expressing their will,” Ko Htay Kywe said.

“I would like to urge people to join us and be bold and confront oppression and obstruction,” he said.

[Top](#)

---

## USDA members bash, arrest 30 activists

Aug 24, 2007

Members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association violently bashed and arrested more than 30 activists today in separate incidents around Rangoon.

Eyewitnesses told DVB that more than 20 activists gathered to protest high fuel prices in front of Rangoon's City Hall at about 1:30pm where they were confronted by the USDA members, special police and government-backed militia.

"They protested by politely speaking out about the fact that they could not handle anymore of the high transportation and commodity prices," one eyewitness said.

"The USDA arrived and violently dragged them inside city hall. The protestors begged the government supporters not to arrest them . . . It was a terrible scene watching the government supporters beating up old women who were protesting."

USDA members also arrested National League for Democracy members Ko Min Min Oo, Ko Thein Htay, Ko Tin Maung Kyi as they walked down a busy street in New South Dagon township today, detaining Ko Tin Maung Kyi's wife and one year old daughter along with the men.

U Saw Lwin, U Thein Myint Htun, Ko Nyunt Win and Ko Aung Zaw, also from New South Dagon township were arrested in a separate incident early this afternoon.

High-profile activist and one of the organisers of the recent spate of protests, Ko Htin Kyaw, told DVB yesterday that the demonstrators appeared to be gaining ground in Rangoon despite the high numbers of arrests.

"I think we are on our way to success . . . Our movement has drawn significant attention from the public who have started to express their feelings by joining our protests," said Ko Htin Kyaw, who refused to reveal his whereabouts for fear of arrest.

"We strongly denounce the State Peace and Development Council's tactics of aggressively cracking down on people who are protesting peacefully," Ko Htin Kyaw said.

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## **Ko Htin Kyaw arrested**

*Aug 25, 2007*

High-profile activist Ko Htin Kyaw was arrested by Burmese government officials this afternoon as he attempted to join a protest outside Theingyzay market.

Ko Htin Kyaw, who has led several demonstrations against high commodity prices in Burma, had warned the government to expect increasing protests over recent fuel price hikes.

"Htin Kyaw is gone. He was arrested by officials from the Military Affairs Security Forces immediately after showing up in front of Theinqyizay market at about 1:30pm this afternoon," an eyewitness told DVB.

"Another activist U Zaw Nyunt punched the officials who were arresting Ko Htin Kyaw so he was arrested too," the eyewitness said.

Despite Ko Htin Kyaw's arrest, a number of activists vowed today to continue demonstrating against high fuel prices around Burma.

[Top](#)

---

## **Sick political prisoner forced into solitary confinement**

*Aug 27, 2007*

Seriously ill political prisoner Ko Nyi Nyi Oo, who is serving a life sentence in Taungngu prison, has reportedly been forced from a prison hospital back into solitary confinement.

Ko Nyi Nyi Oo's sister Ma Zar Zar Myint told DVB her brother said in a recent letter that he was sure he was going to die.

My blood pressure has been up and down and I am taking medication every day. It is very uncomfortable here and the food has been very poor . . . Please, I'm begging you to visit me and bring me some food, Ko Nyi Nyi's letter to Ma Zar Zar Myint reportedly said.

Ko Nyi Nyi Oo was sentenced to death by the Burmese military in 1998 for allegedly bombing an oil-refining factory in Thanlyin township. His sentence was later changed to life and he was transferred from Insein prison to Taungngu.

Ma Zar Zar Myint said that she was worried he would die if he did not receive the medical treatment he needed. It is unclear exactly what medical conditions Ko Nyi Nyi Oo suffers from.

Now he is back in solitary confinement he will die. He will only be allowed out when his family goes to visit and that's why he asked us to. We want him back in hospital, Ma Zar Zar Myint said. Officials from Taungngu prison were unavailable for comment today.

[Top](#)

---

## **Fourteen NLD youth members arrested in Magwe**

*Aug 27, 2007*

Fourteen youth members of the National League for Democracy were arrested in Magwe division's Saku township early this morning for allegedly failing to register as overnight guests.

The 14 NLD members were reportedly staying overnight at the home of another party member when the house was raided by township officials led by Than Naing Linn and Kyaw Kyaw Linn at about 2am.

The authorities reportedly accused the group of failing to properly register as overnight guests under Burmese military law but sources close to the NLD members said they had tried to register.

"They actually went to the ward peace and development council office in the early evening to register their guest list but the officials refused to approve it," a source close to the group told DVB on condition of anonymity.

The NLD youth members were reportedly taken from the house in four trucks driven by government officials. Five of the members were then dropped off at Saku township's border with Salin township and left to find their way back.

The whereabouts of the remaining nine members is still unknown.

[Top](#)

---

## **Protestors arrested in Hledan**

*Aug 28, 2007*

About 10 National League for Democracy members were arrested by the special police this afternoon after attempting to stage a protest near a bus stop in Rangoon's Hledan township.

Eyewitnesses told DVB that the NLD members tried to start a protest after disembarking from separate buses between 1pm and 1:30pm but that they walked for less than 100 metres before being arrested.

"The protestors arrived at the bus stop and they started walking together," one eyewitness said on condition of anonymity.

"They managed to walk one electricity pole away before the police and special police took them away in a Dyna truck," the eyewitness said.

The special police and several uniformed police officers were reportedly ready for the protest before it happened, stationing up to four trucks near the bus stop and waiting until the activists had gathered and started walking before arresting them.

[Top](#)

---

## **Jailed tutor transferred to Lashio prison**

*Aug 30, 2007*

Ko Min Min, a former private tutor who was sentenced to three years in prison after leading a human rights workshop last month, has been transferred from Insein prison to Lashio.

Ko Min Min's mother, Daw Tin Tin, told DVB today that the authorities had tried to trick her into thinking her son was sent to Mandalay prison before finally telling her he had been moved to Lashio.

"I went down to Insein prison only to be told that he had been transferred to Mandalay. So I went to Mandalay and the officials there told me that I could see him in a few days," Daw Tin Tin said.

"But the next time I went there, the officials kept talking rubbish and not letting me see my son. After having an argument, they told me that he had already been transferred to Lashio," she said.

Daw Tin Tin said that she was finally able to see Ko Min Min after travelling to Lashio. She said he appeared to be in good health.

The Human Rights Defenders and Promoters group said today that the prison authorities' handling of the case was inappropriate and that the motive behind moving Ko Min Min underhanded.

"This is unfair. First they sent him to prison unlawfully and then they transferred him to a remote prison to make it difficult for his family to go and visit him," Ko Aung Zaw Oo of the HRDP said.

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## **Kyaukpadaung protestors call for release of detainees**

*Aug 30, 2007*

A group of about 25 people marched through the Mandalay town of Kyaukpadaung this morning, protesting fuel price hikes and calling for the release of political prisoners in Burma.

One protestor told DVB that the group was demanding that the military government release detained National League for Democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and prominent activists such as Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi.

“Ward Peace and Development Council officials on motorbikes showed up immediately at the scene shortly after we started the protest and followed us,” the protestor said on condition of anonymity.

Eyewitnesses said about 70 government supporters, Union Solidarity and Development Association members and officials from the Kyaukpadaung Peace and Development Council tried to stop the demonstration only to be jeered at by bystanders.

“The authorities order bystanders to arrest us but no one listened to them and instead started laughing at the officials,” the protestor said.

A crowd of about 50 people reportedly followed the demonstrators to cheer them on.

[Top](#)

---

## **Twelve elected Burmese MPs stage peaceful protest**

*Aug 30, 2007*

Twelve elected members of parliament staged a peaceful protest in Mandalay this afternoon in a show of solidarity with the detained leaders of the 88 Generation Students group.

The NLD members, who were elected in 1990, marched from the Mandalay NLD headquarters through the streets between 1:30pm and 2:30pm until heavy rain forced them to turn back.

Protester and member of parliament U Tin Aung told DVB this afternoon that the group also called on the military to work to reduce commodity and fuel prices and for Burmese citizens to express their dissatisfaction with the government.

“We are peacefully walking to reflect people’s suffering over consumer goods and petrol price hikes, high taxation and to show our solidarity with people suffering,” U Tin Aung said.

“We are requesting the government to lower petrol prices and would like to appeal to the people to show their suffering bravely,” he said.

Elected members of parliament U Bo Zan, U Tin Aung Aung, U Htin Kyaw, U Maung Maung Than, U Tin Cho Oo, Dr Thein Lwin, U Maung Maung Lay, Daw Ohn Kyi, U Paw Khin, U Maung Maung Win, U Than Lwin and U Bo Zan took part in the protest.

[Top](#)

---

## **Detained activists stage hunger strike**

*Aug 31, 2007*

An unknown number of protestors detained in the Kyaikkasan interrogation centre in Rangoon are staging a hunger strike, according to activist Su Su Nway.

The protestors, arrested three days ago following a demonstration against high fuel price in Hledan township, are reportedly demanding that officials allow activist Ko Ye Thein Naing medical attention. His leg was allegedly broken by officials following his arrest.

Su Su Nway, who was also involved in the Hledan protest but escaped arrest, told DVB that news of the hunger strike had been confirmed by an official from the Kyaikkasan centre.

“They are staging a hunger strike to show their disappointment with interrogation officials who only provided Ko Ye Thein Naing with a medic but no doctor,” Su Su Nway said she was told by an unnamed official.

“The [Union Solidarity and Development Association] and Swan Arr Shin members . . . have absolutely no right to bash or physically assault other civilians who are protesting peacefully,” she said.

[Top](#)

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## **Two men arrested after Taunggok protest**

*Aug 31, 2007*

Two men from the Arakan town of Taunggok were arrested this morning after staging a protest over high fuel prices, eyewitnesses told DVB.

Ko Sithu and Ko Than Lwin reportedly protested on Taunggok’s market junction for an hour, holding up placards saying ‘Fix the petrol and commodity price hikes’, ‘Fix unemployment’ and ‘People are starving’.

“The protest started at about 6am this morning at the market junction . . . the township police including their chief, Union Solidarity and Development Association members and special police were seen taking photos and footage,” National League for Democracy member Ko Min Aung, who watched the protest, said.

The men then started walking through town and waving posters. They were quickly intercepted by special police led by officer Aung Naing and one soldier and beaten, Ko Min Aung said.

“They stopped the protestors and a soldier started to punch Ko Sithu in the face . . . They made a big scene. We have caught it all on video camera,” Ko Min Aung said.

“The protestors resisted arrest . . . and the soldier responded by saying ‘do whatever you want’ and walked off . . . The two men were later arrested by the township peace and development council members, police and USDA,” he said.

Taunggok police refused to comment on the arrests this afternoon when contacted by DVB.

[Top](#)

---

## **Bassein solo protestor released**

*Aug 31, 2007*

Solo protestor U Aye Win, who was arrested after staging a demonstration on August 24 in the Irrawaddy town of Bassein, was released by township officials late last night.

U Aye Win told DVB in an interview today that he had been held and questioned at the township peace and development council office by local authorities and the special police.

News of U Aye Win's detention spread through the city immediately after his protest as the police who arrested him took him to the council office on a motorbike, giving him the opportunity to wave a poster saying 'High petrol price make life difficult for the people', at everyone he passed.

"If it is beneficial and right for the people, I will not hesitate to protest. The people and justice are on our side," U Aye Win said.

"Those who were arrested in similar ways to me should be released."

[Top](#)

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