

Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

နိုင်ငံရေးအကျဉ်းသားများကူညီစောင့်ရှောက်ရေးအသင်း (မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ)

P.O Box 93, Mae Sot, Tak Province 63110, Thailand

e.mail: info@aappb.org website: www.aappb.org

Summary of current situation

There are a total of **2,119** political prisoners in Burma. This is an overall decrease of 92 in comparison to last month's figure of 2,211. The decrease is mostly due to the 128 political prisoners that were released during the general amnesty of 7,114 prisoners on September 18 2009. Three political prisoners were released due to the expiration of their sentence. Although 131 people were released during the month of September, 39 were also arrested.

These include:

CATEGORY	NUMBER
Monks	244
Members of Parliament	13
Students	270
Women	173
NLD members	436
Members of the Human Rights Defenders and Promoters network	34
Ethnic nationalities	204
Cyclone Nargis volunteers	19
Teachers	25
Media activists	46
Lawyers	13
In poor health	125

Since the protests in August 2007 leading to September's Saffron Revolution, a total of **1,105** activists have been arrested and are still in detention.

Accounting and Finance

global attention, particularly as her 18-month sentence would effectively bar her from the possibility of participating in the 2010 elections.

On the political front, pro-democracy parties, including the NLD have begun to mobilize, presumably in anticipation of the 2010 elections. The NLD, and most other parties, have yet to confirm whether they will participate in the elections, and are seemingly expecting the junta to publicize both the date of the election, and the law on political parties that would govern it.

The junta's continued campaign of arrests and detentions in September has further confirmed that the general amnesty of September 18 was intended as nothing more than window dressing. The military government particularly cracked down on students (mostly ethnic Arakanese) and monks. Monks and citizens have consistently reported that military surveillance of monks and their activities has increased over the past weeks, and this trend is expected to continue in October, amidst news and rumours of possible upcoming protests by monks.

The month of September also saw the publication of two reports by Human Rights Watch, the first one chronicling the terrible detention conditions of political prisoners, and the second, turning attention to the plight of Buddhist monks who, 2 years after the Saffron Revolution, remain in prison and are denied the right to respect their monastic rites.

The AAPP also notes the brave personal mission of a British photographer, who has set out to publicise the plight of Burmese political prisoners by photographing former prisoners of the regime who live in refugee camps or have emigrated. [James Mackay](#) hopes to interview and photograph as many ex-political prisoners as possible before compiling a collection of images for an exhibition and a book with a view to publicizing the issue as a campaign tool ahead of the 2010 general election in Burma.

Treatment of prisoners and their families

Prominent democracy activist and member of the 88 Generation Students group Noble Aye was placed in solitary confinement in early September. Noble Aye had already been transferred to Monywa prison in 2009 after her arrest in 2007, and it is feared that the additional strain of solitary confinement will further harm her already fragile health. Hygiene and medical care were also reported to be lacking in Moulmein prison, where Thet Oo, a member of the Democratic Party for a New Society (DPNS) who is serving a 26 year sentence, has not received appropriate treatment for a urinary infection. An interview unofficially translated by the AAPP with 88 Generation Student member Myo Yan Naung Thein explains in detail about the harsh treatment that political prisoners are subject to while in detention. It can be found in this month's chronology under the "88 Generation Students" heading. Elsewhere, the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) called for a resumption of visits to prisoners from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which were suspended in 2005. The AHRC insists that a resumption of the visits would help in addressing some of the problems faced by political prisoners while in detention. Relying on evidence at its disposal, the AAPP released a press release on 28 September condemning the use of torture as state policy by the military government.

Prisoners Released

131 prisoners were released in September. 128 of those prisoners were released in the general amnesty of 7,114 prisoners of September 18. As with past general amnesties, only a very small percentage of those released were political prisoners (just under 1.8%). A closer look at the statistics also reveals that at least 32 (25%) of the political prisoners released were due for release in less than a year due to the expiration of their sentence. Three prisoners were released in September after having completed their sentence.

National League for Democracy

There are at least 436 members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) that are currently detained. This presents a decrease compared to the 479 that were detained in August. The 42 members of the NLD released in the general amnesty of 18 September formed nearly the third of all released political prisoners. Most notably, three MPs, including U Naing Naing, were released. The NLD, and many of its newly released members, have maintained calls for the unconditional release of all political prisoners, including the leader of their party, Aung San Suu Kyi. The NLD has begun to actively organise its branches in the region, and its members are seeking to hold meetings with the imprisoned party leaders to presumably discuss election strategies, as well as to formulate a position with regards to the new American policy for Burma. Party leader Aung San Suu Kyi has publicly welcomed the new approach. The public comments by prominent political Win Tin, as well as his ensuing detention and quick release, also aroused public attention.

21 September 2009

NLD requests meeting with detained party leaders

Members of the central executive committee of Burma's major opposition – the National League for Democracy – have requested for permission from the junta to meet detained party leaders Aung San Suu Kyi and Tin Oo to discuss party matters. Party General Secretary Aung San Suu Kyi and Vice-Chairman Tin Oo, are both under detention. While the Nobel Peace Laureate is serving an 18-month suspended sentence, handed down recently, Tin Oo has been under house arrest since May 2003, following an attack by a junta-backed mob in upper Burma's Depayin town, during a political tour. Though the NLD has not officially announced its intention to contest the forthcoming 2010 general elections, in recent months, its youth members across the country are said to be reorganizing. In May, following a nation-wide party conference, the NLD released the "Shwegondine declaration", stating it is willing to contest the elections but on the condition that the junta revise the 2008 constitution, release political prisoners including Aung San Suu Kyi, kick-start a process of dialogue and recognize the 1990 election results. (September 21 2009, Mizzima)

Amnestied NLD member calls for release of all political prisoners

After serving nine years in Insein Prison, Sagaing Division NLD member Monywa Aung Shin says he intends to keep following the NLD's policies. A poet prosecuted under the Publishing

Acts, he was released on September 18 after serving nine years and five months of a 21-year prison sentence. Though he affirms he is happy to be released as part of the recent amnesty, he said he also wants to see political prisoners not part of the junta's amnesty freed. "On top of my happiness I would also like to see the release of the others [political prisoners remaining detained]. I am old, it is not much different for me," he related. Even though the director of the prison department rejects the notion that Burma's prisons contain any political prisoners, Monywa Aung Shin maintains the penal system is still awash with those detained for their political beliefs – in Insein and elsewhere. When asked his views on the 2010 general election, Aung Shin replied, "On the 2010 election, I don't want to make any personal comment. As a NLD member I have to follow the party's policy." ([21 September 2009, Mizzima](#))

18 September 2009

42 members of the NLD released in general amnesty

The AAPP has identified 42 members of the NLD among the 128 political prisoners released in the general amnesty of 18 September 2009. They include three MPs, Naing Naing, Hlaing Aye and Kyaw Maung, as well as 11 local and township organizers. They are Tin Maung Nyunt, Myint Oo (aka Ni Ni), Mi Mi Sein, Myint Oo, Aung Myo, Chan Aung, Htay Win, Nay Win, Thar Cho, Tin Mya and Khin Maung Chit. Poet and NLD member Aye Kyu (aka Monywa Aung Shin) was also released, after having served 7 years of her 21 year sentence, as was NLD lawyer Soe Han, who had served 9 years of his 21 year sentence. The other released members are Than Than Htay, Tun Tun Nyein, Ba Min, Nyo Mya, Maw Si, Ni Ni May Myint, Aung Myint, Khin Maung Thein, Aung Naing, Aung Naing (aka Ba Gyi Aung), Aung Swe, Cho Mar Htway, Han Sein, Kyi Lin (aka Pyi Lin), Nyi Nyi Min, Pe Tin, San Ya, Sandar, Than Min (aka Tin Tun Aung), Tin Myint, Win Maw (aka Tut Pe), Yan Kyaw Soe (aka Shwe Thway), Yar Zar (aka Tun Lin Oo), Khin Khin Lay (aka Khin Kay), San Pwint and Than Zaw Oo. It is noteworthy that at least 21 of the released NLD members were arrested in late 2007, and received 2 year prison sentences. Their release was therefore imminent, regardless of the amnesty. (18 September 2009 AAPP)

Three NLD MPs among those released in amnesty

Three politicians who were elected to Parliament under the NLD banner were released in the general amnesty of 18 September 2009. Naing Naing won a seat in the 1990 elections which were later annulled by the military. "I will continue to be a politician," said Naing Naing, who was serving a 21-year sentence and had been in jail since September 2000. "I will join the NLD again because I will always be an NLD member. Being released from prison is good, they have done what they should have done," he told reporters. Two other NLD MPs, Hlaing Aye and Kyaw Maung, who were both arrested in 2007 and due for release shortly, were also released. Another leading member of the NLD, Than Than Htay, who was sentenced to seven years' jail in 2004, was also freed. ([18 September 2009 AFP](#))

17 September 2009

4 NLD members arrested

The military government continued arresting youth activists, with four members of the NLD from the Mayan Gone Township in Rangoon being arrested by local authorities on 16 September.

They are identified as Thura Zaw, Min Aung, Kyaw Win Khaing, and Myint Myint Aye, who is NLD's librarian, and was released later that night. (17 September 2009 [DVB](#))

15 September 2009

NLD “Youth Working Groups” set up in 69 townships

National League for Democracy, Burma's main opposition party, is consolidating its youth and women party members across the country and has formed 'Youth Working Groups' in 69 townships in the past six months. The Youth Working Group members from the States and Divisions are called to the Rangoon party head office and given training in law, politics, labour, farmers and human rights, computer, and English language. However, the Central Youth Wing members are not left without harassment by local authorities, who are keeping close watch over their movements. Members of the pro-junta civilian organization - Union Solidarity and Development Association - had harassed the NLD youths from forming working committees in Madaya township of Mandalay Division. “The Madaya USDA threatened the youth wing members with arrest if they join this youth working group,” said Khin Maung Than, Chairman of the Madaya Township NLD. Similar harassments and difficulties were encountered in Kachin State while forming the local youth working groups. Despite the harassments, the NLD youth have so far successfully formed working groups across Burma with 24 units in Rangoon Division, 14 in Mandalay Division, 11 in Irrawaddy Division, three

member of the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Nobel peace prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi and was the longest-serving political prisoner in army-ruled Myanmar until his release in an amnesty in September last year. "They said that they wanted to ask me some questions in connection with information they got from some people during interrogation under detention," Win Tin told Reuters, giving no details on the information or the other people. "They treated me well but all their questions were groundless so I denied them all," he added. "They said they would send me back home this time for health reasons but might call me in again if necessary." Win Tin has had heart problems and recently had a pacemaker fitted. He is a close aide to party leader Suu Kyi. Win Tin said he was not asked anything about an opinion piece written by him and published in the Washington Post last week, in which he criticized plans being drawn up by the military regime for an election next year in the former Burma. ([12 September 2009 Reuters](#), and [Irrawaddy](#) and [Mizzima](#) and [VOA](#))

10 September 2009

Twante township NLD member imprisoned 3 years for illegal lottery

Ye Htut Khaung, who is in charge of the Twante Township Youth NLD, was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment at the Township Court. He is an active member of the NLD. ([10 September 2009 Mizzima](#))

Imprisoned NLD township organizer transferred

Kyaw Kyaw Naing, an NLD township organizer was transferred from Insein prison to Pa-an Prison on 2 April 2009. A philosophy student in Mandalay University, he was arrested on September 25, 2007, and charged with rioting (section 147 of the Penal Code), inciting to commit an offence against the State or against public tranquility (section 505(b)), insulting the religious beliefs of a group with deliberate and malicious intention to outrage (section 295(A)). He was sentenced to 14 years in prison on 21 November 2009. (10 September 2009 AAPP)

9 September 2009

Win Tin speaks out

In an article published in the *Washington Post* on Wednesday, Win Tin hit out at the Burmese regime's planned election in 2010. Win Tin has spent 19 years in prison for his political beliefs and is considered to be one of the country's most prominent contemporary politicians. The senior leader of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) wrote: "Some international observers view next year's planned elections as an opportunity. But under the circumstances imposed by the military's constitution, the election will be a sham." He stated in his article that his party will not sacrifice the democratic principles for which many millions of Burmese have marched, been arrested, been tortured and died to participate in a process that holds no hope whatsoever for bringing freedom to Burma. And he reinforced the NLD's demands that all political prisoners are released, a full review of the constitution is granted and that the opposition be allowed to reopen its offices and have the right to associate and organize. "The regime's answer is the continued jailing of [Aung San] Suu Kyi and 2,000 other activists, massive military offensives against ethnic groups and the enforcement of rules to gag

democracy.” He also criticized US Sen; James Webb’s recent and controversial visit to Burma. ([9 September 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

Two political outfits allowed to put up signs; NLD offices remain closed

With the National Political League of the Union of Myanmar and the 88 Generation Student Organization (Union of Myanmar) being allowed to put up signboards in Pakkokku, the political outfits are the first to function legally although the ‘Electoral Law’ is yet to be announced by the Burmese junta. A signboard was put up in Pakkokku, Magwe division in the beginning of September by two political organizations, which will contest the 2010 general elections. “Initially the authorities had objected and we had to say that it’s just a campaign.” said Ye Htun, the Deputy Chairman of the Central Committee of the National Political League of the Union of Myanmar. Similar signboards of the political organizations called the ‘Third Force’ were put up in township and district branch offices of the National Political League of the Union of Myanmar and 88 Generation Student Organization (Union of Myanmar) in Rangoon, Naypyidaw, and other townships. But the offices of the National League for Democracy, the main opposition party in Burma, which won a landslide victory in the 1990 general elections but was denied power by the junta, are still closed. ([9 September 2009 Mizzima](#))

Myanmar pro-democracy party wants offices reopened

The pro-democracy party of detained Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi called on the ruling junta Tuesday to allow it to reopen its branch offices, which would be crucial for taking part in next year's planned national elections. The junta has not held elections since 1990, when Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy won in a landslide but was not allowed by the military to take power. The NLD sent a letter to junta chairman Senior Gen. Than Shwe on Friday noting that the party is a legally registered organization but that its local offices had been sealed and its activities restricted by the government. The NLD has not yet decided whether to take part in next year's polls, for which an exact date has not been set. In April, the party announced it would consider participating if the junta meets demands that include Suu Kyi's release from house arrest. The declaration also asked the military to release all political prisoners, amend undemocratic clauses in the constitution and hold free and fair elections with international supervision. The NLD did not rule out participating even if its demands were not met. The government plans the 2010 elections as part of its seven-step "roadmap to democracy," but has yet to introduce a political parties registration law or an election law. ([9 September 2009 AP](#))

NLD seeks to organize political activities across Burma

The National League for Democracy (NLD) has asked the military government for permission to play an active role in organizing political activities across Burma, an NLD statement said. The NLD central executive committee presented a letter to military government officials on Sept. 4 requesting the authorization. Observers said that the move could signal a NLD effort to take part in the 2010 national election, although the party has indicated it would not participate in the election unless the regime meets certain conditions. According to the statement, unregistered political parties are already active in Pakokku Township in Magwe Division, where the NLD office has not been allowed to organize activities. U Nyan Win, a NLD spokesman, told *The Irrawaddy* on Wednesday, “Political parties must have the right to freely move about and

organize activities.” In the 1990 election, the NLD won a landslide victory with more than 80 percent of the seats in parliament, but the military government refused to recognize the election results. Leaders of the NLD party including Aung San Suu ky, Tin Oo and 479 other party members have been arrested by the regime over the years, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma). ([9 September 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

7 September 2009

Two NLD members released

Two NLD members and one individual activist were released from prison after completing their sentences. All were sentenced to two years imprisonment following their arrests in September 2007. NLD lawyer Nay La, NLD member Sein Lin and individual activist Thar Aung were released from Thayet prison in Magwe division. The men, all from Pakokku town in central Burma’s Magwe division, were arrested on the brink of the monk-led uprising in 2007. Authorities accused the three of inciting riot after allegedly handing information to foreign media outlets about the looming protests. Pakokku became the flashpoint of the uprising which swept the country after police broke up a peaceful demonstration on 5 September, injuring three monks. Their co-accused, Thant Shin, was given the same two-year term, plus a seven-year sentence under the Emergency Provisions Act. ([AAPP 7 September 2009](#) and [DVB](#))

3 September 2009

One NLD member released

Aye Win, an NLD local organiser from Bassein township in Irrwaddy division was released from Myingyan prison in Mandalay division after completing his two year sentence. ([AAPP 7 September 2009](#))

88 Generation Students

There are at least 41 members of the 88 Generation Students group currently in detention. Five were released in the general amnesty of 18 September. (Note: the first element in this section of the chronology is an interview with Myo Yan Naing Thein)

Interview with 88 Generation Student member Myo Yan Naung Thein

[Unofficial AAPP translation of interview with Democratic Voice of Burma 23 September 2009](#)

88 Generation Student member Myo Yan Naung Thein was released by the military government along with other prisoners. He was released from Thandwe prison in Arakan State. 35 year-old Myo Yan Naung Thein has suffered severely from a neurological disease that has left him unable to walk. He was arrested on 15 December 2007 and given a 2 year sentence, charged under section 505b of the Penal Code. He was released three months before the completion of his sentence. He said he was released from Thandwe prison on 19 September, and arrived at home on 21 September. “We were told in the afternoon of 18 September that we would be released.

And they give us 1000 kyats (1\$) for the traveling costs to get back home. But we weren't released that day because they were waiting for a fax from the district local authority. So we were released on the morning of 19 September," said Myo Yan Naung Thein.

Please explain how you were arrested?

In the afternoon of 15 December 2007, while I was on the phone to my Mom at a shop on the

many times, and the exile media also reported on my case. So finally I got a chance to see a Neuro-Specialist, and he told me my hands were also affected.

How long did you stay in Thandwe prison?

I was transferred to Thandwe prison after sentencing. Actually, I had an appointment with a doctor at Rangoon hospital [at that time]. But they sent me to Thandwe prison anyway, without any consideration about my appointment. They transferred me to Thandwe prison, because it is really far away from home and very cold, and because they thought it would help my health!

How was it in Thandwe prison?

We - me, Zaw Min Zin, Maung Latt and Maung Than - were transferred to Thandwe prison. We were all handcuffed. They put everyone in iron shackles except me. They carried me because I couldn't walk. They didn't allow me to urinate during the journey to Thandwe prison, which took the whole night. It was so hard on me.

Did you sign a pledge?

Yes, we were released under section 401. It's not a pledge exactly, but we will have to go back to prison and serve the remainder of our sentences if we are arrested again for political activities.

How do you feel about your release?

I feel nothing, because I was close to completing my sentence. There are 10 political prisoners in Thandwe prison. Now two were released, and the others were not. If they are honest, they will have to release all political prisoners because they are talking about national reconciliation. Ko Win Maw, the guitarist from the band Alinkar, is in bad health and suffers from asthma. At night, sometimes he can't breathe properly and then he almost falls unconscious. There are no medics, no doctors, and no proper medical care.

How's your health condition after your release from prison?

I can't stand up or walk. I can only walk if I have a person on either side to help me.

Now that you have been released, what are you going to do next?

It's the second time for me to be released from prison. I was in prison first when I was 22 years old because I was involved in the 1996 student movement. I was released in 2003. After Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi were released, I worked with them, the 88 Generation Students. So I was imprisoned again. We sacrificed a lot. I will have to carry on until we get democracy in Burma. As a student, I didn't really know about politics. I only knew that the military government is wrong. So I rebelled and demonstrated against the military government. Their rule is totally wrong for Burma. Because of that, they arrested and cruelly imprisoned me. After we were imprisoned, we learned more and more about the injustices carried out by the military government, and that strengthened my beliefs even more. So who will keep fighting if we don't? We have to carry on. But for the moment, I still don't know about the current situation in Burma. I need to learn, and wait and see for a while. I am sure I will carry on, but I don't know how.

18 September 2009

Five 88 Generation activists released in general amnesty

The AAPP has identified five 88 Generation Students among the 128 political prisoners released in the general amnesty of 18 September 2009. They are Min Min Soe (aka Min Min), Khin Moe Aye (aka Moe Moe), Michael Win Kyaw, Myo Yan Naung Thein, and Aung Thwin (aka Aung Gyi). All five were arrested between September and December of 2007. While Khin Moe Aye was sentenced to three years in prison, and would have thus completed her term in December 2010, the other four activists were handed 2 year sentences, and were therefore due for release shortly after the amnesty was declared. (September 18 AAPP)

14 September 2009

Female dissident put in solitary confinement: AAPP

An imprisoned female activist of the 88 Generation Students group faces additional anguish after being put in solitary confinement in a remote prison, a human rights group said on Monday. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) said that prison authorities incarcerated Noble Aye (aka Hnin May Aung) in a solitary confinement cell in Monywa Prison in Sagaing Division recently. The reasons for the solitary confinement were unknown. However, Tate Naing, the secretary of the group, told The Irrawaddy by telephone that political prisoners in Burma have often faced additional punishments or solitary confinement if they complain about human rights violations or prison condition. Noble Aye has been arrested twice. The first time was in 1998 when she faced a 42-year jail sentence for non-violent political activities. She was released under an amnesty in July 2005 following Gen Khin Nyunt and his military intelligence apparatus' downfall. She was arrested again in August 23, 2007, after the 88 Generation Students group led a protest against a hike in fuel prices that sparked monk-led national demonstrations. In November 2008, she was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment and transferred to Monywa Prison in February 2009. "Since she is not well, we are very concerned about her life in prison," said Tate Naing. According to the AAPP, Noble Aye is one of 191 female political prisoners in Burma. ([14 September 2009 Irrawaddy](#) and [AAPP](#))

Ethnic Nationalities

There are at least 204 members of ethnic nationalities currently held in prison. An important crackdown was noticed in Arakan State, where many students and at least three monks were arrested (see also 'Students' and 'Monks' section).

29 September 2009

Mon politician released after warning

A leading member of the Mon "election working committee," Min Nwe Soe, was arrested by special police in Mudon Township in Mon State on September 23. He was later released with a warning not to work with Mon exile organizations again, Mon sources said. Min Nwe Soe is one of 15 Mon community leaders, including former central members of the New Mon State Party (NMSP), who formed an election working committee in June to prepare for the elections to be

held by the Burmese junta in 2010. Several Mon community leaders, including Min Nwe Soe, have participated in joint Mon Affairs Union (MAU) meetings held in Thailand in recent months. The MAU represents all Mon people, whether they live in Mon State in Burma or in exile. The meetings are held to discuss current Mon affairs and Burmese politics, especially about how to take part in the planned 2010 election. MAU sources said Min Nwe Soe was not present at an MAU meeting early in September. MAU members believe he was targeted by the Burmese authorities because he is a leading committee member as well as a youth leader in Mudon Township. Some NMSP members said that they do not want to lose the benefits brought by the 14 year ceasefire and will take part in the election. But, other members view the process as a sham and say the election will not be free and fair. Meanwhile, election working committee members said that they are not clear yet whether they will participate in the election because they are waiting for the election law to be announced by the junta. ([29 September 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

21 September 2009

Arakanese student arrests continue

21-year-old Maung Naing Soe, from Buthidaung Township, was arrested by officers on Monday, 21 September. A relative of the youth stated that a special force police officer from Rangoon came to the village of Nyung Chaung and arrested him with the help of local police. Maung Naing Soe was then taken to Buthidaung and detained at the police lock-up. According to the source, the youth was due to arrive in Rangoon on Tuesday, where at least ten Arakanese youth have been detained since the beginning of the month. The Burmese police have suspicions that these youth have connections with exiled Arakanese student groups based on the Thai-Burma border. On 7 September, special police forces arrested seven Arakanese youth and students after raiding the hostel where they were living. They were identified as Tun Lin, Kyaw Zaw Oo, Kyaw Win, Khin Maung Htay, Kyaw San Hlaing, and Zaw Tun Oo. One youth remained unidentified. All are from Arakan State and some of them are college graduates. On 13 September, special police forces arrested another four youths in Sittwe, the capital of Arakan State. Those youth are Htoo Htoo Chay, Khing Moe Zaw, Kalur Chay, and Maung Thu. On 15 September, two youths from Mrauk U, the ancient city of Arakan, were arrested by Special Police Force No. 2 in their town and were brought to Rangoon for interrogation. On 19 September, Aung Moe Zaw and another unidentified student, both from Ponna Kyunt 20 miles north of Sittwe, were arrested by special police forces. Because authorities have been arresting Arakanese youth and activists in Arakan, many other youth and students have gone into hiding to avoid arrest themselves. It has also been learned that a youth who had been working at the Thai-Burma border revealed the inside networks of the All Arakan Student's and Youth Congress to the Burmese military junta after he surrendered and was taken into custody. The arrests began shortly thereafter. Three other students were later identified. They are Kalar Chay, Khaing Kyaw Moe and Naing Soe (aka Melone). ([23 September 2009, Narinjara News Agency](#))

18 September 2009

Two KNU activists released in general amnesty

Two KNU activists sentenced to harsh punishment were released in the general amnesty of September 18 2009. Saw Taw Kyi was released from Thayet Prison, where he was serving a 30 year sentence. He was arrested in October 1995. Shwe Thar (aka Tin Win) who was arrested in July 1987 and sentenced to death, was also released. He was being held at Tharawaddy prison. (18 September 2009 AAPP)

Arakanese activist released in amnesty after 9 years in prison

Khaing Kaung Zan, who was chairman of the Arakanese Patriotic Literature Club based in Bangkok, was released from Thayet prison after serving 9 years in prison, in the government amnesty of September 18. He was arrested in Bangkok by the Thai police in December 2000, and was handed over to Burmese authorities along with five other Arakanese activists. He was sentenced to ten years in prison for the activities he led in Thailand against the Burmese military junta. His two colleagues, Hla Thein Tun and That Naing, were sentenced to three years in prison. Khaing Kaung San was transferred from Myawaddy to Rangoon, and then to Thayet prison during his prison term. His friends say that he was severely tortured by Burmese intelligence officials in Myawaddy, and he subsequently suffered from internal injuries throughout his jail term. Khaing Kaung San was also a member of the Aarakhan League for Democracy (in exile), which won 11 parliamentary seats from Aarakan State in the 1990 elections in Burma. Sources close to him state that he was already due to be released this year as his prison term was nearing completion, and that the amnesty was rather superfluous in his case. ([21 September 2009 Narinjara](#))

Shan leader among released prisoners

Saw Oo Kya, one of the leaders of the Shan nationalities League for Democracy, was among the 7,114 prisoners freed by the military junta on September 18. He was reported to have returned home at 10:00 (Burmese standard time) on Saturday upon his release from Obo prison in Mandalay. Though suffering from gout and piles, he is reported to being generally healthy. Saw Oo Kya was arrested on 3 August 2005 for attending unauthorized meetings with foreigners, and for defamation of the State. He was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment. His eight colleagues, who were also arrested and charged, still remain in prison, serving sentences ranging from 79 to 106 years. ([21 September 2009 Shan Herald News Agency](#))

16 September 2009

Mon groups merge into new political party

A new political party is being formed in Burma comprising members of a prominent ceasefire group and a party that won seats in the 1990 elections. Members of the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the Mon National Democratic Front (MNDF), which won five seats in 1990, have merged, although are yet to announce whether they will contest the 2010 elections. Min Soe Linn, joint secretary of the NMDF and former political prisoner, said a 15-member committee was formed in early June this year. "Rather than having about four different Mon parties we think it's better to just have one," he said. "The new party, after being formed, will draw up its policies, work procedures and regulations. Then they will decide whether to enter the 2010

elections or not," he said. "We are calling a meeting on 24 September. This is pretty much the responsibility of [the committee.]" ([16 September 2009 DVB](#))

6 September 2009

Student arrested in Sittwe

A student in Sittwe was arrested last Sunday night and brought to an undisclosed location by police, said a relative of the youth. The student was identified as Htoo Htoo Chay from Lanmadaw (South) Ward in Sittwe, the capital of Arakan State. A police team raided his house during the night and dragged him to the police vehicle, then took him to an undisclosed location for interrogation. The arrest of Htoo Htoo Chay is reportedly related to the arrest of six Arakanese students in Rangoon on 1 September, said the relative, but the exact reason for his arrest remains unknown, the relative added. Family members are currently anxious to know his whereabouts and are concerned about his well-being in the custody of the police. ([10 September 2009 Narinjara](#))

4 September 2009

Arakanese youth activist arrested

Ye Htet Soe, a member of the All Arakan Students and Youth Congress (AASYC) was arrested on 4 September 2009 for possessing explosive weapons and a satellite radio. ([24 September 2009 Kyaymon Newspaper](#))

3 September 2009

Hot air balloon released bearing message for Burmese government

On September 3rd, during the Buddhist "full-moon" holiday, Mon youth released a traditional hot air balloon that was painted with a statement condemning Burmese government oppression of Mon culture and its pressure on the largest Mon political party to essentially give up its arms. According to group members, the statement on the lantern read, "We don't want the MNLA [Mon National Liberation Army] to become a border guard force [BGF]. The military has the power now and we don't want to be slaves. They can do anything. Because of that we are not free." According to a young monk from Mon State, this balloon was made on this holiday because the Military government has guaranteed itself 25 % of the parliamentary seats when they rewrote the constitution in 2008. According to youth in one of the community groups, they are also angry that when the Burmese government made the constitution, no provisions were made for the Mon nation or Mon ethnic rights. ([8 September 2009 Independent Mon News Agency](#))

1 September 2009

Six Arakanese students missing since their arrest

Six Arakanese university students, some recently graduated, have been missing since they were arrested by police in Rangoon, the former capital of Burma, said a close associate of the students. "They were arrested by SP 2 police intelligent force in Rangoon on 1 September, 2009. Since then, they have been missing," he said. The six students were identified as Tun Lin, Zaw Tun Oo,

Kyaw Zaw Oo, Kyaw Win, Khin Maung Htay, and Kyaw San Hlaing. All are around 25 years of age and come from Sittwe, the capital of Arakan State. "They were brought to an undisclosed location for interrogation by the police after their arrest," the source said. A relative of one youth from Sittwe confirmed the arrest but refused to provide further details out of fear of punishment by the authorities. It is suspected that they were arrested in connection with the 70th anniversary of Saradaw Ottama Day on 9 September. Ottama was a prominent Arakanese monk who sacrificed his life for Burma's independence from British rule, but the Burmese military currently in power has banned observance of the memorial day in Burma. ([9 September 2009 Narinjara](#))

Monks

There are at least 244 monks currently held in prison. This number has increased compared to the 237 monks imprisoned in August. It is noteworthy that only 4 monks were released in the general amnesty of 18 September. Increased surveillance of monks has been noticed around the country, and with loudening rumours of possible boycotts and protests by monks in October, the junta has not hesitated to imprison and detain monks. A report by Human Rights Watch released this month decried the humiliating and inhumane treatment reserved to monks in Burmese jails.

28 September 2009

Monk renews call for apology or boycott

Two years after writing a statement that called on the military junta to apologize for its treatment of monks in Pakokku, where dozens were beaten by government soldiers, Buddhist monk King Zero has written another statement calling again on the military to make a public apology by October, or risk another boycott of alms from members of the military. King Zero works with U Gambira, who is now serving a 63-year sentence for his leadership in the uprising of September 2007. He toured the country handing out pamphlets to monasteries and encouraging monks to participate in peaceful marches. Changing monasteries every day, he created an underground monk network to relay news around Burma. Since his statement was publicized, the government has launched a widespread crackdown on activists and monks in Burma. King Zero remains hopeful. "In 2007 they were arresting student leaders like Min Ko Naing, but we carried on. Now they are arresting our fellow monks, but again, we will never give up." Despite the carnage, King Zero said that good has come out of the 2007 demonstrations because the people of Burma are now more interested in politics, since they saw how the government treated the monks. The Burmese government has repeatedly criticized monks for straying away from Buddhist teachings and fostering unrest. For King Zero, there is no doubt that monks should be involved in the struggle to bring democracy to Burma. He said the All Burma Monks Alliance feels a real urgency to deliver change to the people before the 2010 elections, which they believe will only legitimize a criminal government. He said the next few months are crucial for the democracy movement. Like September 2007 took the world by surprise, maybe something will spark an uprising again, like inflation from the new 5,000 kyat note. "The Saffron Revolution is far from over," he said. ([29 September 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

26 September 2009

Three monks arrested in Arakan State

Authorities conducted searches in Arakan monasteries and arrested three monks from three monasteries in Mrauk-U township. The monks are U Thivali, from Belukan Monastery, U Thumana from Ratanamanaung Monastery, and U Waruna from Nantthakan Monastery. All three were suspected of possessing weapons. ([30 September 2009 DVB](#))

Monks' struggle continues behind bars

Although the Burmese junta released 7,114 prisoners in an amnesty last week, it included only 128 political prisoners—and just four out of more than 200 monks now behind bars. Meanwhile, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners-Burma (AAPP), the junta continues to round up monks suspected of subversive activities. “About 20 monks were arrested in September. We are still in the process of identifying them,” said AAPP Joint Secretary Bo Kyi, adding that the Burmese authorities are still keeping a close eye on monks. Thousands of monks were arrested following the crackdown on the mass protests of September 2007, and at least 237 monks remain in prison, some serving sentences of more than 60 years. Although Burma’s ruling generals are avowed Buddhists, this has not prevented them from coming down hard on the monks. “The junta doesn’t treat the detained monks with respect. They tortured and abused them when they raided the monasteries, and have continued to mistreat them in the prisons,” said Bo Kyi. “Their only thought is that anyone who challenges them is their enemy.” Former political prisoners interviewed by *The Irrawaddy* said that prison life is especially hard on monks. Although the monks are stripped of their status when they are put in prison, most try to continue to observe monastic rules. This includes eating only twice a day, both times before noon. However, the monks’ first meal of the day, normally eaten shortly after dawn, is not available in prison. This means that monks can eat only once a day, at midday, resulting in malnutrition and other health problems. Some monks also complained that their jailers refused to address them by their monastic names—an act of disrespect that they saw as more than just a personal affront. Another monastic practice—shaving the head as a symbol of severing worldly ties—is also forbidden in prison. Ironically, monks detained for political reasons were treated much better during the British colonial era. At that time, monks were separated from other prisoners so they could maintain their vows. ([26 September 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

21 September 2009

Rights group decries continued repression of monks

Myanmar's Buddhist monks face continuing intimidation, repression and severe jail sentences two years after the junta's crackdown on anti-government protests, a rights group declared. A report from Human Rights Watch (HRW) said around 240 monks were serving tough prison terms, while thousands have been disrobed or live under "constant surveillance" following their leading role in the 2007 demonstrations. The new report said the potential for a repeat of the protests is "very real" if the international community does not put pressure on the regime to enact credible political reform ahead of elections planned for 2010. It details the arrest, beating and detention of individual monks after the 2007 uprising. The junta has since closed down health and social service programs run by local monastic groups across the country and

intensified surveillance of monasteries, according to the report. It said many monks -- who also face repression for their important social service role after the devastation of Cyclone Nargis in 2008 -- have left their monasteries and returned to their villages or sought refuge abroad. "The stories told by monks are sad and disturbing, but they exemplify the behavior of Burma's military government as it clings to power through violence, fear, and repression," said Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "The monks retain a great deal of moral authority, making principled stands by monks very dangerous for a government that doesn't." ([21 September 2009 AFP](#) and [Human Rights Watch](#))

September 18

Four monks and one nun released in general amnesty

AAPP identified 4 monks and 1 nun among the 128 political prisoners released in the general amnesty of 18 September 2009. U Nanda Malar (aka Tun Tun Oo) and U Zawana (aka Soe Myint) were both arrested on 30 November 1993, and sentenced to 19 years in prison. U Sandawbatha (aka Kyaw Kyaw) was arrested on 15 June 2005, and sentenced to 28 years in prison, and U Pannita (aka U Myint Aye) was sentenced to 12 years and 6 months of imprisonment after his arrest on 7 November 2007. Finally, Daw Htay Yi (aka San) was also released. The nun was arrested on 7 October 2007, and was sentenced to 4 years and 3 months in prison. (18 September 2009 AAPP)

Monks from Myingyan township arrested

Local authorities arrested four monks in Myingyan, Mandalay Division. Local sources were able to identify two of the four monks. They are U Nanda Vantha from Sonlongu monastery and U Zargara from Thaepin monastery. The reason for their arrest is unknown. (18 September 2009 AAPP)

15 September 2009

Open letter calls for peaceful Pali recitation

The All Burma Monk Alliance (ABMA) is calling the members of monastery schools throughout Burma to unite on October 3rd, a full-moon day. At 7:30 am, Burma's monks will join in a Pali recitation of "The Manual of the Buddhist Priest". This peaceful protest is being organized in response to the increased governmental surveillance of Burma's monastic community since 2007's "Saffron Revolution". In an open Pali letter being distributed throughout Burma's monastery schools, ABMA points to arbitrary arrests, beatings and incarcerations of monks as the protest's motivation; the letter also argues that Burma's military government, while mostly Buddhist, shows very little respect to the nation's monastic community. "This letter has spread through every monastery school in Burma. This Pali letter is also being spread online and through personal email," stated a monk. As the September 26 anniversary of the "Saffron Revolution" draws near, the SPDC has increased its surveillance of monastic activities. "Burmese government authorities have been tightening security during the oil alms and rice donation to the monks. It is very difficult for monks to go anywhere because if more than three monks go somewhere, the government follows them. Now, monks are checked more than normal people," a monk youth added. ([15 September 2009 Mon News Agency](#))

Monks under the eye of the junta

On the two-year anniversary of the monk-led September mass demonstrations, the military junta keeps a close eye on the estimated 400,000 Buddhist monks in Burma with continued surveillance and propaganda in the media. Security forces are present at the annual examinations for monks from Sept. 14 to 30 at Sangha [Monk] University in Rangoon. About 60 soldiers are stationed in the university compound, according to monks taking examinations. ([15 September 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

11 September 2009

Monks' movement 'still growing'

Burma's Buddhist monks, who led the "Saffron Revolution" of September 2007, are better organized since the military crackdown that killed unknown numbers, with more prominent religious figures joining their movement, according to a key overseas activist. U Awbasa, leader of the Thailand-based Exiled Burmese Buddhist Monks Association, fled Burma amid thousands of arrests in the crackdown on the 2007 monk-led protests. He said Burma's revered Buddhist monks are still highly politically active despite the military crackdown. "The monks' movement within the country has become tighter, and the strength of the monks has also become greater," U Awbasa said. "A lot of people who were not interested in the issue have now started taking interest." He said the All Burma Monks' Organization is still active inside the country. "We know that its leadership comprises highly respected and experienced veteran monks," U Awbasa said. "In the past some of the highly respected abbots were not involved, but now about 20 of those abbots have joined." He said the monks still have the potential to force political change. "We can say that the movement is stronger. If another movement develops, the [military government] will not be able to stop it in any way," he said. ([11 September 2009 RFA](#))

10 September 2009

A monk from Meiktila prison in bad health

U Sandar Vantha, sentenced to 8 years and 6 months imprisonment and currently held in Meiktila prison in Mandalay Division, required proper medical care due to a urinary infection. As the prison has no resident doctor, he received treatment from a visiting doctor. ([15 September 2009 RFA](#))

5 September 2009

Security tight on anniversary of monk-led uprising

Burma's military junta has tightened security in several cities around the country this week as it seeks to prevent a revival of the monk-led protests that led to a massive pro-democracy uprising two years ago. Sources in Rangoon said that the city was quiet but tense, as security forces were deployed along main roads and near major monasteries and pagodas. They also reported an increase in security checks at homes, as local authorities searched for unregistered out-of-town guests. A monk in Pakokku, the city in central Burma where the first protests by monks took place on September 5, 2007, also noted a heavy security presence in recent days. In the Arakan

State capital of Sittwe, another flash point of the 2007 uprising, monks reported an increase in the number of government informers posing as visitors to the city's main monasteries. "They appear whenever there is talk of protests," said the monk. "They have been watching us like we are rebels ever since the Saffron Revolution." ([5 September 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

3 September 2009

Monk accused of suicide produced in court

U Sandar Dika, who was charged with attempted suicide by setting himself on fire, appeared in court on September 3. The monk (36) was disrobed and had to face trial in court inside Insein prison. He was tried under section 295(a) of the Penal Code (insulting religion). "The four witnesses were called and three of them were examined. The prosecutor also testified," a High Court source told Mizzima. According to another source, all the witnesses were police personnel. U Sandar Dika defended himself. The Bahan police station personnel arrested him on August 11, after he visited places near the National League for Democracy (NLD) headquarters and Insein prison to enquire about the court's judgment on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's trial. He was taken to a police station in Rangoon and at least two policemen beat him up with bamboo poles, the Asia Human Right Commission (AHRC) said. According to the examination by both prosecution and defence lawyers in court, there was no material evidence such as kerosene found at the scene of the crime. There were also no independent witnesses, the AHRC said. Meanwhile other monk-related incidents have taken place in Chauk, Yenanchaung and Pakokku townships in Magwe Division on August 27 and August 31. These places were searched and some arrests were made. "In fact, the SPDC (junta) is insulting the religion. Our monks are living under the order of Dhama. Arresting monks and charging them with various sections of various laws make us suffer from inferiority complex in comparison to other religions. We are losing face in the world," U Dhama Wuntha from the monk organization said. ([3 September 2009 Mizzima](#))

AHRC: U Sandar Dika case

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has obtained detailed information about the case of a monk in Burma who is being tried without evidence for insulting religion. The monk, U Sandar Dika, went like other onlookers to the outside of the court where Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her co-defendants were being tried on 11 August 2009. Afterwards a group of unidentified men picked him up and took him into custody where they accused him of planning to immolate himself in protest. They have no evidence to back the charge and the only witnesses in the case are police. The men took Sandar Dika to the Rangoon North District police premises where at least two police assaulted him with a bamboo rod, causing him to have a hernia and suffer other injuries. Thereafter he was forcibly disrobed. The police opened a criminal case against Sandar Dika for allegedly insulting religion because, they claim, he intended to burn himself in protest at the conviction of Aung San Suu Kyi. But under cross-examination, they admitted that they have no evidence at all to support the claim: they did not find any kerosene or other materials on the defendant or elsewhere, nor do they have any independent witnesses: all of those deposing against the accused are police. ([3 September 2009 AHRC](#))

Monks intimidated close to 2007 anniversary

Several Burmese monks have been arrested and others intimidated by authorities as the two-year anniversary of the September 2007 uprising approaches, according to sources inside Burma. A monk in central Burma's Mandalay division said recently that a local government-led Monk Administration committee had warned monks in the area to avoid political activities. This follows the arrest last week of several monks in various parts of Burma in what appears to be a campaign by the government to intimidate the normally apolitical community in the run-up to the anniversary of the monk-led uprising. A monk in Magwe division's Chauk township, U Thumana, was taken by authorities on 29 August. The reason for his arrest and his current whereabouts are unknown. U Thumana is originally from the town of Pakokku, which became the flashpoint of the 2007 uprising after police broke up a peaceful demonstration on 5 September, injuring three monks. ([3 September 2009 DVB](#))

2 September 2009

2 monks who marched peacefully in 2007 detained

Two monks, who marched peacefully in Magwe Division in September 2007, were detained and questioned by local authorities on Sunday 30 August. 22 year old U Thumana from Sinphyukunt Monastery in Chauk was arrested. ([2 September 2009 DVB](#))

Security tightened during oil alms donations in Mon State

Burmese authorities have been tightening security during the oil alms donation to the monks at Ro Go pagoda in Ro Go village, Moulmein Township, Mon State. On September 2nd, members of Burmese government organizations attended the ceremony wearing full uniforms. Nearly 100 people from these groups were waiting around the pagoda and village. While some made donations, most carried out surveillance on civilians and monks. Some monks refused to accept donations from officers in uniform, and walked away from them. "We monks come to accept the lay people's donations," said a monk from Moulmein Township. "The soldiers with uniforms and full military kits frighten the lay-people and reduce their donations." "Not only at the pagoda but also in village the security has been tightened," a villager commented. "Last year was not like that – this year they are waiting with guns. That is very bad thing while we donate to the monks." About 2,000 mon and 100 nuns were part of the procession. Authorities are worried that monks will be distributing leaflets by hand, and will carry out demonstrations. They have thus been setting up security throughout the area, according to the monk. ([5 September 2009 Mon News Agency](#))

1 September 2009

Abbot arrested at airport upon returning from Taiwan

U Gawthita, abbot of Late Pyar Kan monastery at the compound of Ngar Hter Kyi Pagoda, was arrested by military intelligence and police officers upon his arrival at the airport on August 29 following a trip to Taiwan. U Gawthita, who is from Kwan Gyan Kone township, is a 30 year old graduate of a Buddhist university, as well as a teacher. ([8 September 2009 Mizzima](#))

Monks under close surveillance

As the second anniversary of the Saffron Revolution draws near, arrests, searches and monitoring of monks have been stepped up by the authorities in monasteries in Buddhist majority Burma. Three policemen and an officer from the Religious Department of Magwe division on August 30 raided the room of the head monk U Yaywada of Ngwe Taung monastery in Chauk Township, Magwe Division in Central Burma. "They came and searched the monastery at about 4.30 p.m. on Sunday. The chief monk was not present when they came and started searching. He has been on a trip for a long time. They searched the chief monk's room and directed us to inform them when he comes back," a young monk close to the monastery told Mizzima. "U Yarwada was said to be active during the Saffron Revolution. I wonder whether that was the reason why they came and searched," he said. Similarly, monks from monasteries in Chauk Township said that some monasteries were being watched by policemen in plain clothes. "We knew the police were from Chauk Township as soon as we saw them. They are found in houses and street corners near the monasteries. Their hand phones are tucked at the waist. Almost all the monasteries are being monitored," sa

18 September 2009

Two journalists released

Myanmar's junta Friday freed two journalists who helped victims of Cyclone Nargis and released several opposition activists as part of an amnesty for more than 7,000 prisoners, witnesses said. One of the freed journalists was Eint Khaing Oo, 28, who was arrested in 2008. This year she became the first recipient of an award set up in memory of a Japanese video reporter who was killed in monk-led protests in 2007. "I am happy that I am free. I will continue working as a journalist," Eint Khaing Oo, who worked for the Myanmar-based journal Ecovision, told reporters after she was released from Yangon's notorious Insein Prison. The other journalist was Kyaw Kyaw Thant, who was arrested at the same time as her after they took a group of survivors of the May 2008 cyclone to the United Nations head offices in Yangon. Both were mentioned in a Human Rights Watch report published on Wednesday which said that the number of political prisoners in Myanmar had doubled to more than 2,200 in the two years since the protest crackdown. Eint Khaing Oo was serving a two-year jail sentence for allegedly inciting hatred of the government while Kyaw Kyaw Thant was sentenced to seven years for the same crime. ([18 September 2009 AFP](#))

Journalists, Bloggers and Writers

There are currently at least 46 journalists held in prison. Four journalists were released in the general amnesty of 18 September 2009. (see also 'Cyclone Nargis Volunteers' section)

18 September 2009

Journalists released in general amnesty

The AAPP has confirmed the release of 4 journalists in the general amnesty of September 18 2009. Kyaw Kyaw Thant, an assistant editor who was arrested in June 2009 and was serving a 7 year sentence was released from Insein prison. Thet Zin (aka Maung Zin), a former political prisoner who is also affiliated with the All Burma Federation of Students Union (ABFSU) and the Democratic Party for a New Society (DPNS), was released from Kale prison, where he was also serving a 7 year sentence after being arrested in February 2008. Aung Thwin (aka Aung Gyi) a former political prisoner and member of the 88 Generation group, was also released, as was Eimt Khaing Oo, a journalist for the Eco-Vision journal, who had been arrested for her role in aiding victims of Cyclone Nargis. (18 September 2009 AAPP)

11 September 2009

Journalist and two others arrested

Reporter Hla Hla Win was arrested in Pakkuku township on 11 September 2009. Saw Lin Naing, a traditional medicine practitioner, and Myint Naing were also arrested. All three are being held at Pakkoku Prison. The cause of their arrest remains unknown. They were reported to have staged a hunger strike in prison. ([19 September 2009 Irrawaddy](#) and [RFA](#))

Women

There are at least 173 women currently held in prison. 23 women were released in the general amnesty of 18 September 2009. At least one woman, reporter Hla Hla Win, was arrested in September (see 'Journalists' section). Elsewhere, prison conditions were revealed to be particularly harsh with women, as famous activist Kay Thi Aung revealed that she had suffered a miscarriage in prison due to the horrible conditions and, moreover, did not receive proper care following the miscarriage (read *Human rights body calls for renewed visits of ICRC to Burmese prisons* in 'Key International Developments' section)

Human Rights Defenders & Promoters Network

There are at least 34 members of the Human Rights Defenders & Promoters Network currently held in prison. Nine were released in the general amnesty of 18 September 2009.

18 September 2009

Nine members of the HRDP released in general amnesty

AAPP has confirmed that nine members of the Human Rights Defenders and Promoters Group (HRDP) were released in the general amnesty of 18 September 2009. They are Hla Shein, Htay Naing Lin, Kyaw Lwin, Mya Sein, Myint (U), Thet Oo, Win (U), Min Min (aka Lamin Tun), as well as Aung Myint, who is also a member of the NLD. They were all arrested between May and November of 2007, and received sentences ranging from 2 years in prison to 4 years and 3 months. (18 September 2009 AAPP)

Other Organisations

18 September 2009

UNDP worker released in general amnesty

A local distributor of aid from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was released in the general amnesty of September 18 2009. Tin Tun (aka Kyaw Swa) was serving a 10 year sentence. His date of arrest is unknown.

from Pa-an prison, where he was purging a 10 year sentence. The date of his arrest is unknown. Zaw Htet Aung, a DPNS-affiliated student, was also released. (18 September 2009 AAPP)

14 September 2009

Medical care lacking in Moulmein prison

Fourteen political prisoners in Moulmein prison, who are held with imprisoned criminals, need proper medical care. Among them, Thet Oo, a member of the Democratic Party for a New Society (DPNS) who was given a 26 year sentence, has not received proper treatment for a urinary infection. ([14 September 2009 RFA](#))

Three daughters form democratic party

The formation of a new political party—the Democratic Party—to contend the 2010 Burmese elections was announced at a press conference in Rangoon on Monday. The party will be headed by the daughter of late Prime Minister U Nu, along with two other daughters of former political leaders. The Democratic Party Chairman Thu Wai announced that the new party will be headed by: Mya Than Than Nu, the daughter of U Nu; Nay Yee Ba Swe, the daughter of late Prime Minister Ba Swe; and Cho Cho Kyaw Nyein, the daughter of late Deputy Prime Minister Kyaw Nyein. He said the three would act as secretaries of the party and that it is prepared to participate in the upcoming election. He said the Democratic Party has been formed in order to pursue democracy and to participate in the 2010 elections, which will transform Burma from decades-long authoritarian rule into a new system and toward a new era. He said the party will abandon all personal grudges, and defuse conflicts relating to politics, party, religion, race and the factionalism of Burma past. If the Democratic Party were in power, it would seek to release all political prisoners and to fulfill the peoples' desires, he added. The seminar was chaired by Thu Wai and well-known politician [Amyotheryei] Win Naing. Another 30 participants attended, including officers from the Police Special Branch and journalists. Win Naing said that the 2010 elections offer few prospects for the pro-democracy forces in Burma, since the pro-democracy groups are divided on whether to run in the elections or not. ([15 September 2009 Irrawaddy](#) and [DVB](#))

Labour Activists

There are currently at least 28 labour activists held in prison. Labour activist Thin Min Soe was released in the general amnesty of 18 September.

18 September 2009

Labour activist released in general amnesty

Thin Min Soe (aka Thein Thein Aye) was released from Insein prison in the general amnesty of 18 September 2009. The labour activist was purging an 11 year sentence. She was arrested in March 2006. (18 September 2009 AAPP)

Students

There are currently at least 270 students held in prison. While many students were released in the general amnesty of 18 September 2009, the military government also cracked down on students in September, particularly students from Arakan. (see also 'Ethnic Nationalities')

19 September 2009

Two political prisoners in bad health

The families of Bo Min Yu Ko and Kay Thi Aung, who were both sentenced to long prison terms, stated that both political prisoners were in bad health. Bo Min Yu Ko and Kay Thi Aung are part of 11 members of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU), along with Wai Myo Htoo, Aung Ko Lwin, Myo Myint Aung, Nyi Nyi, U Thu Mangala, and U Sateta Thara, who were arrested in 2008 for commemorating the anniversary of the Saffron Revolution. (19 September 2009 AAPP)

18 September 2009

Fourteen students released in general amnesty

Fourteen students were released in the general amnesty of 18 September 2009. They are: Myo Min Tun, who was arrested in May 2008 and was serving a 9 month sentence; Thura Win (aka Thura Lin) who was arrested in August 2007 and was serving a 4 year sentence; Ni Ni May Myint, a member of the NLD who was arrested in August 2008 and was serving a 2.5 year sentence; Tin Tin Myint, who was arrested in June 2003 and was serving a 10 year sentence; Aung Ko Oo, who was arrested in October 2003 and was serving a 13 year sentence; Yan Naing Min (aka Nan Wai) who was arrested in June 2005 and was serving a 20 year sentence; Chit Thein Tun, who was arrested in January 2006 and sentenced to death; Aung Gyi, who was arrested in October 2003 and serving a 15 year sentence; Aung Tun, a writer and member of the ABSFU who was arrested in February 1998 and serving a 17 year sentence; Zaw Htet Aung, a member of the DPNS who was serving a 7 year sentence and whose date of arrest is unknown; Zin Mar Aung, who was arrested in September 1998 and serving a 28 year sentence; Aung Naing Tun, who was arrested in 2008 and whose sentence is unknown; Zin Hnin Aye (aka Zin Mar) who was also arrested in 2008 and whose sentence is unknown; and Angealay, who was serving a 14 year sentence and whose date of arrest is unknown. (18 September 2009 AAPP)

Five ABSDF activists released in general amnesty

Five All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) members were released during the general amnesty of 18 September 2009. Aye Myint Mar and Hnin Hnin, were both arrested in 2006 and serving 5 year sentences. Yan Aung Shwe was arrested in 1999, and had 5 years remaining to the completion of his 15 year sentence. Kyaw Win (aka Par Gyi) was arrested in 1992, and serving a 24 year sentence. The fifth ABSDF member, Ye Thiha (aka Soe Thein), was serving a 7 year sentence though his date of arrest remains unknown. (18 September 2009 AAPP)

6 September 2009

Student arrested in Sittwe

A student in Sittwe was arrested last Sunday night and brought to an undisclosed location by police, said a relative of the youth. The student was identified as Htoo Htoo Chay from Lanmadaw (South) Ward in Sittwe, the capital of Arakan State. A police team raided his house during the night and dragged him to the police vehicle, then took him to an undisclosed location for interrogation. The arrest of Htoo Htoo Chay is reportedly related to the arrest of six Arakanese students in Rangoon on 1 September, said the relative, but the exact reason for his arrest remains unknown, the relative added. Family members are currently anxious to know his whereabouts and are concerned about his well-being in the custody of the police. ([10 September 2009 Narinjara](#))

5 September 2009

Student leader Kyaw Ko Ko interrogated again

Student leader Kyaw Ko Ko from the All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU) was interrogated again in prison on 5 September. Moe Aung Than, a Papaedan township police officer, asked him about the case of Japanese journalist Kimji Nagai.

1 September 2009

Six Arakanese students missing since their arrest

Six Arakanese university students, some recently graduated, have been missing since they were arrested by police in Rangoon, the former capital of Burma, said a close associate of the students. "They were arrested by SP 2 police intelligent force in Rangoon on 1 September, 2009. Since then, they have been missing," he said. The six students were identified as Ko Tun Lin, Zaw Tun Oo, Kyaw Zaw Oo, Kyaw Win, Khin Maung Htay, and Kyaw San Hlaing. All are around 25 years of age and come from Sittwe, the capital of Arakan State. "They were brought to an undisclosed location for interrogation by the police after their arrest," the source said. A relative of one youth from Sittwe confirmed the arrest but refused to provide further details out of fear of punishment by the authorities. It is suspected that they were arrested in connection with the 70th anniversary of Saradaw Ottama Day on 9 September. Ottama was a prominent Arakanese monk who sacrificed his life for Burma's independence from British rule, but the Burmese military currently in power has banned observance of the memorial day in Burma. ([9 September 2009 Narinjara](#))

Lawyers

There are currently at least 13 lawyers detained in prison.

24 September 2009

Lawyer arrested and sentenced

Aye Myint (aka Myint Aye Myaung), a lawyer from Pegu, was arrested on September 24 and sentenced to two years in prison on the same day. He was charged under article 189 of the Penal Code, and is currently serving his sentence at the Thayet Prison. ([25 September 2009 DVB](#))

18 September 2009

NLD lawyer released in general amnesty

Soe Han, an NLD-affiliated lawyer, was released from Lashio prison in the general amnesty of 18 September 2009. He was arrested in September 2000, and was serving a 21 year prison term. (18 September 2009 AAPP)

7 September 2009

NLD lawyer released

NLD lawyer Nay La was released from prison after completing his sentence, along with NLD member Sein Lin and individual activist Thar Aung. All were sentenced to two years imprisonment following their arrests in September 2007 and were released from Thayet prison in Magwe division. The men, all from Pakokku town in central Burma's Magwe division, were arrested on the brink of the monk-led uprising in 2007. Authorities accused the three of inciting riot after allegedly handing information to foreign media outlets about the looming protests. Pakokku became the flashpoint of the uprising which swept the country after police broke up a peaceful demonstration on 5 September, injuring three monks. Their co-accused, Thant Shin, was given the same two-year term, plus a seven-year sentence under the Emergency Provisions Act. ([AAPP 7 September 2009](#) and [DVB](#))

Individual Activists

24 September 2009

English teacher arrested

Zaw Zaw, a private English teacher, was arrested on 24 September 2009 in Nyaung-U township in Mandalay. The reason for his arrest remains unknown. ([25 September 2009 RFA](#))

US citizen mistreated in Rangoon Prison

The US embassy in Rangoon officially protested against the alleged maltreatment of detained American citizen, Kyaw Zaw Lwin (aka) Nyi Nyi Aung, as the Burmese junta on Thursday publicly announced his arrest. Drake Weisert, Assistant Public Affairs Officer at the US embassy in Rangoon, stated that Kyaw Zaw Lwin has made claims that he had been mistreated when the US consular officer visited him in Insein prison in Rangoon on September 20. Sources said

Kyaw Zaw Lwin was moved to several different interrogation centres since his arrest on September 3, until finally being taken to the notorious Insein prison. He was interrogated throughout the night and tortured, being punched in the face, kicked, having his arms twisted, and also being deprived of food for several days. The junta's mouthpiece, the New Light of Myanmar, stated that Nyi Nyi Aung was arrested on September 3, following a tip-off by a "dutiful citizen" at Rangoon International Airport, where he had just arrived from Thailand. According to the newspaper, Nyi Nyi Aung was arrested as he was known to be visiting Burma with the intention of creating unrest, in collaboration with activists inside the country. The article also accuses Nyi Nyi Aung of having collaborated with exiled Burmese activists and provided financial assistance to underground activists inside Burma to carry out sabotage and to trigger explosions at strategic locations. While the newspaper did not indicate when charges were expected to be pressed against Nyi Nyi Aung, sources affirm that authorities are set to charge him on October 1. ([24 September 2009, Mizzima](#))

21 September 2009

Four activists arrested in Myingyan

Four activists were detained in Myingyan Township on 21 September 2009. Two of them were identified as Ko Aung and Ko Naing, who are both about 25 years old. The identity of the other two activists, as well as the cause of their arrest, remain unknown. ([22 September 2009 DVB](#))

American Embassy meets detained US citizen

The US embassy in Rangoon received consular access to detained citizen, Kyaw Zaw Lwin, on Sunday, September 20, weeks after he was arrested. "The U.S. embassy received consular access to detained American citizen Kyaw Zaw Lwin on Sunday, September 20, 2009," Drake Weisert, Assistant Public Affairs Officer, at the US embassy in Rangoon told Mizzima. Weisert on Monday confirmed that Burmese authorities arrested and detained Kyaw Zaw Lwin, when he arrived in Rangoon's Mingaladon airport on September 3. "At Mr. Lwin's request, we have notified his family about his arrest," said Weisert. Kyaw Zaw Lwin, who has a valid Burmese visa and US passport, flew into Rangoon on a TG flight from Bangkok. He was a student activist during Burma's 1988 popular uprising and fled to Thailand to escape the military crackdown on protesters. Later he resettled in the US and has been living in Washington DC, where he was naturalized as a US citizen. His sister and mother are serving a jail term for their role in the 'Saffron Revolution', where monks led thousands of protesters on the streets of Rangoon in September 2007. ([21 September 2009, Mizzima](#))

18 September 2009

34 unaffiliated political prisoners released in general amnesty

AAPP has confirmed the release of 34 political prisoners who are not affiliated with any organization in the general amnesty of 18 September 2009. A few among those released were serving particularly harsh sentences: Ba Chit, a former military captain, was sentenced in 1999 to a 25 year prison term with hard labour; Bo Bo (aka Moe Kyaw Thu) was arrested in 1998 to 27 years in prison; Win Myint was sentenced to death in 2005; Tun Hla was sentenced to 14 years

in prison in 1998; Kyi Kyi Min (aka Htay Htay) was sentenced to 15 years in prison in 2000; Pyae Phyo Aung (aka Hnan Mue) and Kay Thi Aung (aka Ma Ei) were both sentenced to 10 years in prison, in 2007 and 2008, respectively. The other individuals released are Moe Lwin, Tun Min Aung, Ma Ei, Nu Nu Swe (aka Pauk Pauk), Kyaw Thu Htike, Tint San, Aye Min (aka Aye Min Min) Saw Myo Min Hlaing (aka James), Aung Lwin, Bo Bo, Go Gyi, Maung Maung Htwe, Maung Maung Twin, Mi Mi Swe, Moe Hlaing, Moe Min Lwin, San San Myint (aka Ma Htay), Soe Wai (aka Than Zaw), Than Than Sint, Than Tun, Than Tun Lay, Thein Zaw, Tin Mar Swe, Tin Myint, Tin San, Tun Tun Oo, Tun Tun Oo (aka Ngar Kalar), Zan Lin Tun (aka Phu Zaw) and Zaw Tun. (18 September 2009 AAPP)

Activist and benefactor from Myingyan arrested

Than Htike Aung was arrested in Myingyan on 18 September 2009 in Myingyan Township. The cause of his arrest remains unknown. He is well known in Myingyan for his active role in providing social support to residents of his township. ([20 September 2009, BBC](#))

16 September 2009

Eight arrested in Myingyan Township

Eight activists including one Buddhist monk from the Sagaing Division of Myingyan Township were arrested at 2am on September 16, and are under investigation by Mandalay information authorities for possible involvement in the monks' popular movement. The individuals are all supporters of the Thitagu religious institution. The seven individuals are identified as Dr. Wint Thu (35, dentist), Myo Han (33, merchant), Hla Myo Kyaw (25, volunteer tutor), Soe Yar Zar Phyu (21, volunteer tutor), Aung Myo Latt (33, store owner), Kyi Soe and Aung Soe Thein. The monk remains unidentified (17 September 2009 AAPP and [Irrawaddy](#))

12 September 2009

Whereabouts of US citizen still unknown

Relatives of a Burmese-born US citizen who was taken into custody shortly after arriving in Rangoon last week said they have received no news about him, and are concerned about his safety. "We are extremely worried about him," said Ko Aung, brother of Nyi Nyi Aung, who was arrested by Burmese military intelligence agents soon after landing at Rangoon's international airport on a flight from Bangkok on September 3. According to Ko Aung, the Burmese authorities have provided no information about where Nyi Nyi Aung is being held or what he has been charged with. "Actually, we don't even know why he went back to Burma," said Ko Aung. ([12 September 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

11 September 2009

Former political prisoner arrested

Toe Aung, an activist and former political prisoner, was arrested on 11 September 2009 in Rangoon for reasons that remain unknown. He was an active participant in the prayer campaigns that called for the release of political prisoners. ([17 September 2009 VOA](#)) It was reported that he was subsequently released on 26 September 2009. (NLD-LA)

10 September 2009

Individual arrested and beaten

Htay Aung was arrested by police officers on 3 July, 2009, following a leak by a police informant who had crossed the border into Thailand with him. He was severely beaten by the police officers upon his arrest, and suffered injuries on his body and ears. He is accused of possessing explosive weapons. He is currently being held at Insein Prison, and will appear at Pabedan Township Court for his trial on 14 September 2009. (10 September 2009 AAPP)

9 September 2009

US embassy investigates arrest of American citizen in Burma

The United States Embassy in Rangoon said it is talking to the Burmese government regarding an American, arrested at the Yangon International Airport on September 3. Burma born American citizen, Kyaw Zaw Lwin a.k.a Nyi Nyi Aung, was arrested at the Mingalardon International Airport on September 3, on arrival from Bangkok on a TG flight. An embassy official told Mizzima on Wednesday that they are talking to Burmese authorities on Kyaw Zaw Lwin's arrest but refused to provide further detail

court. Zaw Nyunt (56) held a poster saying "Saving Suu is Saving Burma" in front of Insein prison on May 28. He was sentenced under Act No. 505 (B) of for agitating to destabilise the country. "The reading of the final verdict took about 20 minutes", said defence lawyer Maung Maung Latt. In the trial, four police lieutenants from Insein Township and two ordinary civilians were produced as witnesses by the prosecutor. "They said he frightened the public. They arrested him in two minutes flat. After arresting him at the back of the bazaar he shouted "Free Aung San Suu Kyi" only once. Many even didn't realise what was happening. So, how did he destabilise the country?" asked Maung Maung Latt. A close associate who met Zaw Nyunt during the trial told Mizzima that two of his teeth were broken because of the beating he received from the police. Zaw Nyunt, an English language teacher following retirement participated in the 1988 people's movement and founded the Worker's Solidarity Organization, which was later banned by the junta. ([4 September 2009 Mizzima](#))

3 September 2009

88 Generation Students member Thet Thet Aung's cousin disappears

A Burmese-born U.S. citizen who has family members serving jail terms in Burma has gone missing after landing Thursday in the former capital, Rangoon, his brother said. "Kyaw Zaw Lwin left for Rangoon on Thai Airways TG 305 today [Thursday] at 5:15 p.m. ... But he has [since] disappeared, and we are very worried," Aung Myo Myat, the man's brother, said. Aung Myo Myat said sources told him Kyaw Zaw Lwin was seen at the Rangoon airport following his arrival, but that he was "taken away." Since then, Kyaw Zaw Lwin, who lives in Maryland, has neither been deported nor released, Aung Myo Myat said in an interview. No comment was immediately available from the U.S. State Department. Aung Myo Myat said Kyaw Zaw Lwin had received a visa to visit Burma from the Burmese embassy in Bangkok, Thailand, before departing. The reason for his travel was not immediately clear. ([3 September 2009 RFA](#)) AAPP editorial note: Thet Thet Aung is Kyaw Zaw Lwin aka Nyi Nyi Aung's cousin, not sister as some media outlets have reported. Nyi Nyi Aung's mother Daw San San Tin and another cousin Nwe Hnin Yi aka Noe Noe are also political prisoners in Burma.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

A lot of attention was devoted to Aung San Suu Kyi's appeal of her three year sentence (which was commuted to 18 months of house arrest). While she was denied access to the courtroom during the hearing, her lawyers presented her case, and a verdict is expected in early October. Aung San Suu Kyi has expressed concern over the increased security measures that have been implemented in and around the compound where she is kept. She publicly applauded the U.S. decision to engage with the military government, and in a letter to the junta, offered to help them in finding ways to remove the sanctions.

29 September 2009

ASEAN scraps plan to call for Aung San Suu Kyi's release

Asean has scrapped a plan to appeal to Burma for the release of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, Thai Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya says. Thailand, as chairman of the Association of

Southeast Asian Nations, planned to send a letter to the Burmese government last month asking for a pardon for Mrs Suu Kyi who is under house arrest. But Mr Kasit said that the appeal was now unnecessary as the United Nations, the US and the European Union had reviewed their policies and would engage more with Burma. Thailand's idea to send the letter failed to win the support of Laos, Cambodia, Brunei, Burma and Vietnam because they did not want to interfere in Burma's internal affairs, a Foreign Ministry source said. Mr Kasit's original plan was to lobby the five Asean members to reverse their position at the meeting of Asean foreign ministers in New York. He denied that UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon wanted Asean to take a tougher line on Burma, saying all parties would like Asean to continue to engage with the Burmese military junta. Bangkok-based Burmese activists welcomed the UN secretary-general's call for Asean to take a tougher stance on Burma. Nai Tun Lin, secretary-general of the Burmese Refugee Helping Body, was hopeful a change in Burma would take place in the future with closer cooperation between the UN and Asean. Than Pe, chairman of the Overseas National Students' Organisation of Burma, said he was still uncertain whether Asean would respond well to Mr Ban's request. "Asean is not giving as much importance to problems in Burma as it is to economic cooperation in the region," he said. ([29 September 2009 Bangkok Post](#))

28 September 2009

Aung San Suu Kyi calls for cooperation with junta

Burma opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has urged the ruling junta to increase cooperation with her party in order to find a way to end sanctions on the country, a party spokesperson said. The detained National League for Democracy (NLD) party leader sent a rare letter to junta chief Than Shwe on Friday, speaking of her potential role in lifting sanctions. A spokesperson for the NLD, Nyan Win, said that Suu Kyi reiterated her stance that she would cooperate with the government on the sanctions issue, but "that there are some requirements for her to be able to cooperate". The letter, he said, requests that Suu Kyi is given permission to meet the requirements, which include an understanding of the type of sanctions, their impact, and the policies of countries that hold sanctions on Burma. "This aims for the goodness of the country and the people so we expect that there will be a response," he added. Suu Kyi has been under house arrest for 14 of the last 20 years, and access to visitors and non-state media is heavily restricted.

Her last meeting with a foreigner was in August, when the junta permitted her a meeting with US senator Jim Webb, who is outspoken in his anti-sanctions stance. The letter follows an announcement by the United States that it will step up engagement with the Burmese regime, following a review of US policy to Burma. US policy has so far focused on sanctions as a means to isolate the regime, but secretary of state Hillary Clinton said in February that they had been ineffective and that a review would be necessary. Clinton said last week on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York that it was wrong to assume that sanctions and dialogue could not be pursued side by side. ([28 September 2009 DVB](#))

25 September 2009

Aung San Suu Kyi welcomes US policy change

Burma opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has welcomed a revision of US policy to Burma that will see Washington step up engagement with the ruling junta, her lawyer said yesterday. Nyan Win quoted Suu Kyi as saying that she had no objections to the announcement that the US will push for greater dialogue with Naypyidaw, despite maintaining sanctions. "Daw Suu said that the idea for engagement is good and that she would not argue on that. She said that engagement may bring a good outcome," Nyan Win said. A statement is due to be released by her National League for Democracy (NLD) party, following discussions on the new policy. The US had previously followed a tough line of sanctions and isolation on the Burmese regime, which received support from the NLD and other opposition groups. Clinton acknowledged in February however that sanctions had failed to pressure the junta into change and that a policy review would be undertaken. ([25 September 2009 DVB](#))

21 September 2009

Aung San Suu Kyi suffering from low blood pressure

The doctor of detained Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi says she is suffering from low blood pressure, after examining her for the first time since she was returned to house arrest last month. Suu Kyi's lawyer and party spokesman Nyan Win said Dr. Tin Myo Win and his assistant were allowed to visit her house Sunday. Nyan Win said the doctor assumed that her low blood pressure was due to an inadequate diet. Sunday's visit was the first time that Suu Kyi's personal physician has been allowed to see her since she was sent back to her lakeside home after her conviction. Tin Myo Win is one of the very few people allowed access to Suu Kyi under the rigid terms of her confinement. He was detained for questioning by authorities in May after the American man was arrested for sneaking into her closely guarded home. Asked if Tin Myo Win will now be allowed to give Suu Kyi medical checkups on a regular basis, Nyan Win said he hoped so, "but it's not clear yet when and how often the doctor can visit her." ([21 September 2009 The Star](#))

18 September 2009

Court hears Aung San Suu Kyi appeal

A court in Myanmar heard final arguments Friday in Aung San Suu Kyi's appeal against her conviction and house arrest, but the ruling junta has barred her from attending. The pro-democracy icon was found guilty on August 11 of breaching security laws after an American man swam to her house. She was sentenced to three years' hard labour but junta chief Than Shwe cut the term to 18 months' detention. Yangon divisional court agreed earlier this month to consider an appeal by her lawyers and was hearing closing submissions from government lawyers and from Suu Kyi's legal team on Friday, her lawyer Nyan Win said. "We are ready and confident for the appeal hearing," Nyan Win told AFP on his way to the court. Official sources said it was likely that the court would deliver its judgment on the appeal at a later date. The military regime earlier this week refused to give the 64-year-old Nobel Peace laureate permission to attend Friday's hearing, prompting complaints from her lawyers. ([18 September 2009 AFP](#))

17 September 2009

Myanmar defends Aung San Suu Kyi's exclusion from appeal

Myanmar's state media defended a decision to bar detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi from attending her appeal Friday, saying judicial rules do not require a defendant's presence on appeal. The commentary in the Myanmar Ahlin newspaper Thursday was published a day after Suu Kyi's lawyer called her exclusion from the appeal a violation of her rights. Commentaries in Myanmar's tightly controlled newspapers are viewed as a reflection of the military junta's views. "If the defendant is serving a sentence, there is no need to summon him or her to court for statements," the commentary said, adding that Suu Kyi's presence was also not necessary for the judgment. "Unless the appellate court otherwise directs, the accused shall not be brought up to hear the judgment delivered. Courts hear criminal cases in accordance with the existing laws, and the accused are given rights to argue (and) submit appeals," the commentary said. "Therefore, it is fair to say that Myanmar's judicial practice meets the judicial principles." ([17 September 2009, Taiwan News](#))

15 September 2009

Aung San Suu Kyi barred from courtroom

Burma opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been denied entrance to the Rangoon courtroom where she is due to lodge an appeal against her conviction, according to her lawyer. Lawyer Nyan Win on Friday submitted a letter requesting that she be allowed to attend the hearing, set for 18 September, but the following day the request was rejected by the Special Police Information Branch. "We said [in the letter] that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was willing to attend the hearing in person," he said. "There was no solid reason given for the denial. They told us to make the request to the court but actually the court doesn't have authority to decide." "[Under normal circumstances] court hearings are open for public listeners and there is no law prohibiting people from attending the hearing of the case they are involved in," he said. Nyan Win said last week that the defence team was lodging an appeal comprising 11 points. Lawyers had met with Suu Kyi on 10 September to finalise the appeal. The National League for Democracy (NLD) party leader was sentenced in August to 18 months under house arrest, commuted from three years with hard labour. (15 September 2009 [DVB](#) and [Irrawaddy](#) and [Mizzima](#))

11 September 2009

Body searches ordered at Aung San Suu Kyi compound

Security guards at the compound of Aung San Suu Kyi in Rangoon now conduct body searches, according to Nyan Win, one of her lawyers. "Suu Kyi said the tighter security is not appropriate," Nyan Win said. He met with Suu Kyi to discuss her appeal, which is scheduled to be heard on Sept. 18. "There are many security guards outside the compound. In the compound there are only three women. If one lady leaves the compound, they make a record. Suu Kyi said the security is too much. Only one person at a time is allowed inside Suu Kyi's compound. I can not tell the number of guards exactly. When you go in and come out they do a body search," he said. Security around Suu Kyi's compound was increased after she returned home from Insein Prison last month, following her conviction and 18-month sentence under house arrest. Meanwhile,

diplomats in Rangoon and Bangkok have asked Burma's ruling junta to allow Suu Kyi to receive diplomatic visitors. ([11 September 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

10 September 2009

US urges fair hearing for Aung San Suu Kyi

The United States on Wednesday urged the Burmese military government to give Aung San Suu Kyi's appeal a fair hearing. "We are aware that Aung San Suu Kyi will have an appeal heard in a couple weeks. I don't have the exact date right now. But we would urge a fair hearing of Aung San Suu Kyi's appeal," the State Department spokesman, Ian Kelly, told reporters at his daily news conference. "We have made it clear ... and also we have sought to highlight in multilateral fora like Asean that Burma needs to open up its political process, and most of all needs to free the more than 2,000 political prisoners that are incarcerated in Burma," Kelly said. Noting that the US is not alone in expressing those concerns, he said, "Our allies in Europe have also called for the release of the political prisoners." ([10 September 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

Lawyers meet Aung San Suu Kyi to discuss appeal

Detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's lawyers met her for about two hours on Thursday and discussed the appeal to be filed against her sentence. "We were allowed to meet her for about two hours and we basically discussed the appeal to be filed," Nyan Win, one of her lawyers said. Aung San Suu Kyi's lawyers had filed a petition requesting the High Court to allow them to appeal against the decision by the Insein prison court, which sentenced her to a three-year prison term with hard labour. The High Court accepted the submission and fixed September 18 for the hearing of arguments by Aung San Suu Kyi's lawyers. Though the district court had sentenced her to three years in jail, an executive order by Burma's military supremo Snr. Gen Than Shwe halved Aung San Suu Kyi's sentence to 18 months and allowed her to serve time at her lakeside home on Rangoon's University Avenue. ([10 September 2009 Mizzima](#))

4 September 2009

Court accepts Aung San Suu Kyi's appeal

The Rangoon Division court has agreed to hear an appeal against an August 11 judgment that found Burmese democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi guilty of violating the terms of her house arrest, according to her lawyer. "The court accepted our appeal and told us to meet for a hearing on September 18," Nyan Win, a lawyer for Suu Kyi, told *The Irrawaddy* on Friday. According to Nyan Win, the decision was a good sign. "We have more hope than we did before. She must be released unconditionally because she didn't break any law," he said. ([4 September 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

3 September 2009

Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi files appeal in criminal case

Lawyers for detained Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi filed an appeal against the criminal conviction that put her under house arrest for 18 more months. Suu Kyi's legal team submitted the appeal to the Divisional Court in Yangon, which said it would decide Friday

whether to accept the appeal."We submit the appeal because the judgment against Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was wrongful," Nyan Win said. The appeal argues that the law cited by authorities is invalid because it applies to a constitution abolished two decades ago, head lawyer Kyi Win said. Before the submission, he voiced optimism that the court would decide to hear the appeal. "I believe the court will accept our appeal and allow the right of appeal to our client," he said, adding that the defense team will separately appeal the convictions of two female companions who live with Suu Kyi. Nyan Win said if the Divisional Court does not accept the appeal, lawyers would appeal to the High Court. ([3 September 2009 AP](#), [AFP](#), [BBC](#))

Key International Developments

This month saw the elaboration of a new U.S. policy for Burma, by which the U.S. will maintain sanctions in Burma while simultaneously engaging with the military government in order to find solutions to the current domestic situation. The release of 128 political prisoners was received with lukewarm enthusiasm by the international community at best, which called for the unconditional release of all political prisoners, including pro-democracy leaders Aung San Suu Kyi and Su Su Nwe, and comedian Zarganar.

28 September 2009

UN Human Rights Council calls for release of all political prisoners

During its 12th session, the United Nations Human Rights Council called for the immediate and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners, enabling them to participate fully in the 2010 elections. It also called upon the government of Myanmar to 'engage in a genuine process of open dialogue and national reconciliation with the full participation of representative of all political parties and ethnic groups' and to create the conditions for 'inclusive, transparent and democratic elections'. ([28 September 2009 UNHRC](#))

UN chief seeks regional pressure on Burma, dissatisfied with limited release of political prisoners

Regional Southeast Asian countries should play a stronger role in pushing Burma along the path to democratic reform, UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon stated. The 10 countries that make up the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) bloc must "do more in the best interests of Myanmar [Burma] and its people," Ban told the Group of Friends on Myanmar group. He followed the calls with a statement to ASEAN foreign ministers that the chance for political transition at the Burmese elections next year is "an opportunity Myanmar should not miss," adding that ASEAN countries have a key role to play in this. World leaders gathered in New York last week for the UN General Assembly. Burma's prime minister, Thein Sein, led a 15-member delegation to the talks, the first time in 14 years that a senior Burmese official has visited the United States. Burma's presence at the General Assembly came shortly after the US announced that it would step up engagement with the military junta, following a review of US policy to Burma. US secretary of state Hillary Clinton said that Washington will now employ a mixture of sanctions and engagement with the regime, following years of an isolationist policy that has reaped seemingly few results. The Burmese government recently announced an amnesty of around 130 political prisoners, following demands by Ban Ki-moon when he visited

Burma in July that all be released as a prerequisite to democratic reform. “The recent release of a number of political prisoners as part of the larger amnesty announced last week, while a step in the right direction, falls short of expectations,” he said. “Our collective interest is to find ways to encourage Myanmar to free Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners, start a genuine political dialogue and create conditions conducive to credible elections.” ([28 September 2009 DVB](#))

25 September 2009

Human rights body calls for renewed visits of ICRC to Burmese prisons

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) urged the international community to mount pressure on Burma’s ruling junta to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to resume visits to detention centres, where widespread torture and abuses have been reported “The physical and mental injuries caused in this period were either not adequately treated or not treated at all during the detainees' incarceration, causing some of them lifelong damage,” AHRC said. Myo Yan Naung Thein, a student activist who was arrested in September 2007 and released as part of the amnesty, told Mizzima he was severely beaten and insulted. He was released from Sittwe Prison, and is currently unable to walk properly as a result of lack of adequate treatment in prison. He said he was often tied up and given electric shocks. Similarly, Kay Thi Aung, a pregnant woman arrested for her husband Tun Tun’s involvement in the 2007 protests and sentenced to 25 years in prison, said she suffered a miscarriage after being detained and suffered heart attacks, but did not receive adequate treatment. AHRC said the situation has deteriorated after a halt to ICRC’s prison visits in 2005. It said that the renewal of ICRC’s visits would be “a practical and quickly-implementable step to reduce the incidence of abuse and ameliorate some of its worst consequences.” The ICRC carried out regular visits to detainees in prisons and labour camps from 1999 to 2005 but suspended it when the junta-backed civil organisation –the Union Solidarity and Development Association - insisted on accompanying them in their visits, which is against the ICRC’s internationally-recognized conditions. ([25 September 2009, Mizzima](#))

24 September 2009

U.S. seeks to engage with Burmese government, maintain sanctions

The United States plans to engage diplomatically with military-ruled Myanmar in addition to pursuing sanctions, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said. Realizing that sanctions alone have failed to change the military junta's behavior, President Barack Obama's fledgling administration declared its intention to move "in the direction of both engagement and continued sanctions." The chief US diplomat said she could "preview" the new approach toward Myanmar because a policy review begun by the administration days after it took office in January was almost complete. "The basic objectives have not changed," Clinton said after meeting with foreign ministers and others concerned about the situation in Myanmar. The talks on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly were chaired by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. "We want credible democratic reform, a government that responds to the needs of the Burmese people, immediate, unconditional release of political prisoners... serious dialogue with the opposition and minority ethnic groups," she said. "We believe that sanctions remain

important as part of our policy, but by themselves they have not produced the results that had been hoped for on behalf of the people of Burma. "Engagement versus sanctions is a false choice in our opinion," she added. ([24 September 2009, AFP](#))

16 September 2009

Political prisoner count doubled since 2007

A new report by Human Rights Watch reveals that Burma's military government has more than doubled the number of political prisoners in the past two years, including more than a hundred imprisoned in recent months. Sentenced to long prison terms for their involvement in peaceful demonstrations in 2007, and for assisting civilians in the wake of the devastating Cyclone Nargis in 2008, the political prisoner population has reached more than 2,200. The report, "Burma's Forgotten Prisoners," showcases dozens of prominent political activists, Buddhist monks, labor activists, journalists, and artists arrested since peaceful political protests in 2007 and sentenced to draconian prison terms after unfair trials. "Despite recent conciliatory visits by UN and foreign officials, the military government is actually increasing the number of critics it is throwing into its squalid prisons" said Tom Malinowski, Washington advocacy director at Human Rights Watch. "Gaining the release of Suu Kyi is important not just for her own well-being, but because it could facilitate a process that allowed the opposition to fully participate in elections and Burmese society. But Suu Kyi is not the only person facing persecution for her political beliefs. People like the comedian Zarganar, imprisoned for criticizing the government's pathetic response to Cyclone Nargis, or Su Su Nway, a brave woman activist who led street protests, also deserve the world's attention." Human Rights Watch expressed concern for the health of many prisoners held in remote facilities with poor. The Burmese government should immediately permit the resumption of International Committee of the Red Cross visits to prisons to assist those in custody. The government should also end its disgraceful and punitive practice of transferring prisoners to remote areas, placing a huge burden on family members to visit and provide urgently needed medicine and food. ([16 September 2009 Human Rights Watch](#))

New US policy on Burma almost ready, says Obama aide

US President Barack Obama's acting point man on Myanmar said Wednesday that a review of US policy was almost complete as he urged the country's military regime to free some 2,100 political prisoners. "It is so important that we not forget about these people," Scot Marciel, Deputy Assistant Secretary, East Asia and Pacific Bureau and Ambassador for ASEAN Affairs said at a major human rights group's forum on the detainees. Marciel said the US review of its approach to Myanmar would not "question or reassess" the importance of the military junta freeing the prisoners and edging towards democratic rule but might call for different tactics. U Pyinya Zawta, leader of the All-Burma Monks' Alliance at the center of the 2007 protests against the junta, urged Washington to pursue "high-level engagement" with Myanmar's military leaders while tightening key sanctions. He also urged the United States to call for a global arms embargo on Myanmar and to work with key regional powers like India and China to convince the junta to take steps towards democratic rule and free the prisoners, including democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi. "(The) United States even should further tighten the sanctions by asking (the) Security

Council to start investigation into regime crimes against humanity," said the monk. ([16 September 2009 AFP](#))

9 September 2009

Burma: US should complete policy review: extracts

The Obama administration should promptly conclude its Burma policy review and adopt initiatives to make its diplomacy, sanctions and humanitarian aid more effective, Human Rights Watch said in a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. "Delays in announcing a new Burma policy could encourage Burmese military leaders to believe the US is weakening its commitment to human rights and pluralism," said Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "An energetic and revitalized approach to Burma from the Obama administration could help bring positive change." Human Rights Watch recommended that the United States appoint its own special envoy on Burma, who would have a direct line to the secretary of state and specific instructions to engage in a principled way with the Burmese government and key bilateral and multilateral actors. Vigorous diplomacy is specifically needed with China, India, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Japan. Human Rights Watch also recommended the establishment of a Burma Contact Group to meet and regularly discuss diplomatic engagement with the Burmese government. ([9 September 2009 Human Rights Watch](#))

Opinion Section

Opinion editorials in September have mostly dealt with the new U.S. policy for Burma, as well as the significance of the 2010 elections. Editorials were also written about the relationship between China and Burma, which many argue is weaker than initially thought. Some suggested articles are posted below.

A Test of Burma's Sincerity – Leading Article in The Independent newspaper (30 September 2009)

Online at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/leading-articles/leading-article-a-test-of-burmas-sincerity-1795177.html>

An election Burma's people don't need - By U Win Tin, member of the Central Executive Committee and a founder of Burma's National League for Democracy party and former political prisoner who spent 19 years in prison. (9 September 2009)

Online at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/08/AR2009090802959.html>

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