

Democratic Voice of Burma Political Prisoners News

2003 December

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9 including a sports journal editor sentenced to death

1 Dec 03

An editor of a sports journal, 'First Eleven' and eight others were sentenced to death on 28 November by a junta military tribunal over charges of attempted assassination of junta leaders.

Ko Zaw Thet Htway (a) Ko Thet Zaw (Editor), U Aye Myint (lawyer), Zaw Zaw (a) Zaw Myo Thet, Zar Naing Htun (a) Phyu Lay, Ko Ne Win (a) Nai Yetkha, Ko Shwe Mann (a) Zay Yar, Ko Than Htun, Ko Myo Htway and Nai Min Kyi were arrested on 17 July by the military intelligence (MI).

"We, journalists or people at media can be arrested and can be sentenced for death penalty at any time under the military regime. There is no concrete law for us, no law at all", said an editor in Rangoon.

The First Eleven journal editor, Ko Zaw Thet Htway was a leader of Minbu Township's Democratic Party for New Society (DPNS) and he was a political prisoner who was imprisoned in Taungoo Prison.

In June, 'First Eleven' was warned by the military intelligence (MI) after featuring an article by a 'Khin Maung Toe' on the disappearance of \$40,000 donation from a world organization for the improvements of Burmese sporting teams.

There are more than 20 imprisoned journalists in Burma including U Win Tin (71), a well known Hantharwaddy Newspaper editor. [\[TOP\]](#)

Eight NLD members released

3 Dec 03

Eight NLD members, who escaped in the same car with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 30 May, have been released by the SPDC on 3 December.

Eight members who were detained in Khamti Prison include Myo Nyunt (Ahlone), Myo Thaw (a) Ko Pauk (Kamaryut), Myint Kyaw (Tarmwe), Thet Htun (South Okkalapa), Kyaw Zin Win (Irrawaddy), Toe Lwin (Irrawaddy) and Min Lwin (Mandalay).

In total, 17 NLD members who escaped together with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi were arrested after the attack by the SPDC sponsored thugs. [\[TOP\]](#)

Amnesty International met the editor of "First Eleven" journal

8 Dec 03

Two delegates from Amnesty International have met the editor of "First Eleven" who is given death sentence by the SPDC in the notorious Insein Prison on 8 Dec, according to diplomats in Rangoon.

Ko Zaw Thet Htway (a.k.a.Ko Thet Zaw) was imprisoned on the charge of alleged assassination of SPDC leaders.

Later, the delegates will meet the NLD leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Two delegates will leave Rangoon on 17 Dec. [\[TOP\]](#)

NLD concerns over U Tin Oo's health

13 Dec 03

The leaders of National League for Democracy (NLD) is said to be extremely concerned about the health condition of its vice chairman, U Tin Oo who is currently being detained in Kale Prison, northern Burma.

U Tin Oo was arrested during the notorious 30 May Dipeyin incident after he was assaulted by the SPDC sponsored thugs.

The comment came after the meeting between the NLD leaders and the representatives of the Amnesty International (AI) in Rangoon.

U Nyunt Wei of the NLD told DVB that U Tin Oo, a veteran soldier is old and he has been enduring old battle wounds on his body and suffering from their side effects due to the extreme weather.

The AI met with the representatives of United Nationalities Alliance (UNA) and discussed the rights of ethnic nationals.

Pu Cin Shin Htang of UNA explained to AI representatives of the lack of political and human rights of ethnic nationals and asked the organisation to help them bring about the release of old and ill political prisoners.

After the meeting, the AI team departed from Rangoon for Moulmein in southern Burma to meet political prisoners there but it is not clear whether they would be able to see some famous political prisoners there.

The team is expected to travel to upper Burma to meet other political prisoners including U Tin Oo and a student leader Ko Thet Win Aung who was sentenced to 59 years for his role in the 1998 student uprising.

Ko Thet Win Aung was transferred from Khamti Prison to Mandalay Prison he staged a hunger strike. His physical and mental conditions are not very good, according to his brother Ko Htay Win Aung who went to see him recently.

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Burmese political prisoners' and their family conditions

15 Dec 03

A mother of two student political prisoners told DVB that the conditions of her sons who are currently in a Burmese prison are seriously bad due to severe weather and lack nutritious food.

The sons of Daw Aye Nyein, Ko Myo Thant and Ko Myo Aung from Pegu were arrested in May 2000 for allegedly organising the 9999 uprising and sentenced to 25 years and 28 years respectively.

They were first incarcerated in Insein Prison, Rangoon and transferred to Bassein Prison, Southwest Burma for staging a protest. They were then transferred to Taungoo Prison after staging hunger strikes and 'inciting a riot inside the prison'.

The widowed mother sold her two houses to follow the case of her two sons and she is now homeless, broke and living in a plastic hut by the roadside.

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Civil servants sacked for welcoming Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

16 Dec 03

Some Burmese civil servants who welcomed Daw Aung San Suu Kyi before she and her supporters were attacked in upper Burma on 30 May are fired from their jobs by the SPDC authorities, according to a report by the NCGUB.

Hundreds of people were sacked and among them, the stories of the three civil servants are described with personal details and copies of original documents.

U Than Aung, a driver from the Forestry Department in Gangaw Township, Magwe Division was sacked from his job by his manager U Nyan Linn on 1 October for welcoming Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and team in Magwe Division. A school teacher from Hteelin Township, Daw Mar Mar Htay and another teacher, U Pyuu Lwin were sacked with the same reason by their divisional educational officer.

The discriminating actions of the junta make it hard for the people of Burma to believe the claim of the SPDC for national reconciliation.

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A KNU political prisoner dies in Burma

17 Dec 03

A political prisoner of Karen National Union (KNU) died in a Burmese prison from untreated tuberculosis on 12 December.

53 year old Saw Sar Htoo Saw, a Karen fighter was captured in 1982 and sentenced to death and later commuted to 10 years in prison. He had served his sentence but he was never released by the military authority.

A KNU spokesman, Saw Mahn Nyein Maung said that KNU prisoners have been imprisoned and tortured in Burmese prisons for many years.

Currently, there are approximately 100 KNU prisoners in Burmese prisons. He added that the SPDC has been trying to kill the prisoners systematically by several means including depriving them of medical treatments.

Ko Bo Kyi of AAPP (Assistance Association for Political Prisoners) said that several KNU prisoners died in Burmese prisons in the past despite the prospect of a ceasefire agreement with the SPDC and the rebels.

Saw Mahn Nyein Maung said that the SPDC has never shown any goodwill towards the KNU and now is the best time for the regime to do it.

There are more than 1500 political prisoners in Burma and Saw Sa Htoo Saw is the 84th prisoner to die in prison. [\[TOP\]](#)

One death penalty prisoner was released for unclear reason

18 Dec 03

One of the nine people, who were sentenced to death recently was released by the Burmese military junta, the SPDC for no clear reason.

Than Tun was among the 12 people who were arrested for 'plotting to assassinate state leaders'. Nine of them including the editor of a sports journal 'First Eleven' were tried secretly and sentenced to death.

But the local people of Pegu in central Burma are mystified by why he was released and a lawyer friend of his U Mya Hla believes that he was arrested by mistake.

U Mya Hla said that Than Tun avoided everyone after his release and joined a Buddhist monastery to become a monk.

Among who were secretly tried and sentenced to death are Ko Zaw Thet Htway, U Aye Myint, Naing Minn and Naing Yekkha (a) Shwe Mahn from New Mon State Party, a student Zar naing Tun (a) Phyu lay and Zaw Htet (a) Ko Myo Htway.

International human rights organisations are demanding the SPDC to provide evidence of their 'crime', and not many people in Burma believe that they are guilty of the crime. [\[TOP\]](#)

Amnesty International and Burma

20 Dec 03

The military regime of Burma, the SPDC welcomed a visit by one of the strongest critics of its human rights record as "constructive involvement of the international community."

London-based Amnesty International (AI) concluded a 17-day fact-finding tour of Burma on 19 December, but failed to meet with detained Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo who is currently held at Kale Prison in Upper Burma.

The AI team also failed to meet the family members of political prisoners and the NLD's legal support team during the trip.

Catherine Baber, AI's deputy programme director for Asia, and researcher Donna Guest declined to comment on their trip before departing for Bangkok, Thailand, where they were scheduled to hold a press conference Monday.

The AI team visited several prisons and met with government officials and leaders of National League for Democracy (NLD), who were recently released from detention.

"The visit reflects the spirit of openness and international cooperation which are helping to make Myanmar's (Burma's) transition to democracy a success," said a statement from the government spokesman's office.

"Much of what has been written about Myanmar has been based on rumour, ideology and conjecture, rather than fact," the statement said.

AI has been critical of the appalling human rights records in Burma and observers believe that the SPDC is utilising psychological and propaganda warfare by pouring praises on one of its greatest critics before it says anything critical on the regime. [\[TOP\]](#)

NLD supporter sent to prison during AI visit to Burma

20 Dec 03

A NLD youth was sentenced to 4 years in prison by the Burmese military junta, the SPDC while a team of Amnesty International (AI) was investigating human rights abuses in Burma.

Ko Mya Soe (a) Ko Shwegyo a NLD member of Hlaing Township, Rangoon was charged and tried summarily within a couple of days at a court with government 'witnesses' and military intelligence agents and was given the sentence on 17 December.

He was one of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's bodyguards and he was taking crucial NLD responsibilities when he was arrested.

His 'crime' was buying a plot of land and building a house without the permission of the local authority. He was tried after paying fines and stopping the construction.

NLD supporters believe that Ko Mya Soe was framed by the local authority because of his political activities and his closeness to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. [\[TOP\]](#)

Pensioners discriminated for being NLD members

21 Dec 03

A retired civil servant at Taungdwingyi, Magwe Division in central Burma was deprived of his right to draw pension by the local authority because he became a member of the NLD (National League for Democracy) party led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

U Pa Lay had served in the Forestry Department for nearly 20 years and he was forced to retire from his job in 1999 because of an accident in which he lost the sight of one of his eyes.

He was dismissed from his job and given a medical pension by the director of the department to treat his eye. But when he joined the NLD as a member after his dismissal in 2000, the pension office refused to pay his pension.

Both the Forestry Department and the authority have been refusing to grant him the pension for almost five years now. He reported his plight to the ILO office in Rangoon but he was told by a Burmese official there that the organisation only deals with matters concerning forced labour.

Similarly, a retired civil servant and the chairman of Chin State NLD, U Paliang Thang has been denied pension because of his NLD membership. [\[TOP\]](#)

Amnesty is not constructive says Burma's SPDC

23 Dec 03

The military junta of Burma, SPDC (State Peace and Development Council) said that the comments of Amnesty International (AI) on the junta on human rights abuses in the country are not constructive.

The regime insisted that it allowed the two AI delegates to visit wherever they wanted in Burma so that there could be improvements on human rights conditions and provided them with 'data' they needed.

But, the delegates were not allowed to meet Burma's democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who is under house arrests and her deputy U Tin Oo who is being incarcerated at Kale Prison, in the far north of Burma after they were attacked by SPDC sponsored thugs on 30 May.

The SPDC regards the statements and criticisms of the AI as ungrateful and offensive to their 'hospitality'; describing them as regrettable and it claims that they weaken the regime's 'efforts' for democratic transition in Burma.

The two delegates of AI, Catherine Baber and Donna Guest were allowed to visit Burma for 17 days to find out human rights situation there and they told reporters at a news conference in Bangkok on 22 December that human rights abuses worsened after 30 May Dipeyin attack.

U Thein Nyunt of NLD's Legal Support welcomed the AI's statements for addressing the conditions of political problems and the affair of Dipeyin incident in which NLD leaders and supporters were ambushed and attacked by SPDC sponsored thugs in upper Burma. [\[TOP\]](#)