



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

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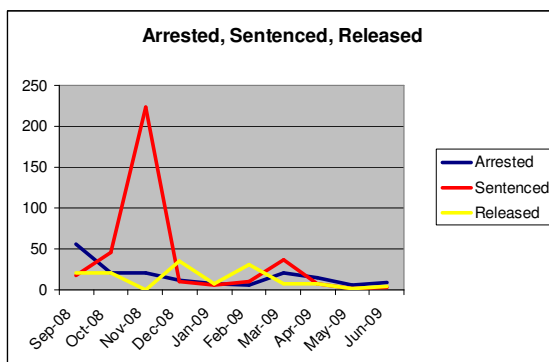
Summary of Current Situation

There are a total of **2,160** political prisoners in Burma. ¹ These include:

CATEGORY	NUMBER
Monks	219
Members of Parliament	15
Students	283
Women	191
NLD members	472
Members of the Human Rights Defenders and Promoters network	43
Ethnic nationalities	197
Cyclone Nargis volunteers	21
Teachers	26
Media activists	51
Lawyers	12
In poor health	136

Since the protests in August 2007 leading to last September's Saffron Revolution, a total of **1,086** activists have been arrested and are still in detention.

Monthly trend analysis



During the month of June 2009, at least 9 activists were arrested and 3 were sentenced. 1 political prisoner was transferred, and 5 were released after completing their sentences. An increasing number of political prisoners - now 136 - are in poor health due to the harsh prison conditions, transfers to remote prisons where there are no doctors, and the denial of proper medical care.

¹ Around 30 political prisoners were released in December. Some had come to the end of their prison term and others were released without charge.

On 12 May 2009, Salai Hla Moe became the 140th political prisoner to die in Burma's prisons, labour camps and detention centres since 1988. His family were only informed of his death during a routine prison visit at the end of the month, almost three weeks after his death. The prison authorities did not release his body to his family for a Christian burial in accordance with his faith; they had already cremated or buried him before the family visited. He was suffering from hepatitis and stomach swelling and had not received proper medical care in prison.

On 15 June, a delegation from the Free Burma's Political Prisoners Now! campaign, including Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) Secretary Tate Naing, handed over 677,254 petition signatures to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon via his Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari. The petition calls on Ban Ki-moon to make it his personal priority to secure the release of all Burma's political prisoners. On 16 June the delegation held a press conference at the UN hosted by the Czech Permanent Mission to the UN. "We urge Mr. Ban Ki-moon to accept nothing less than the immediate and unconditional release of all Burma's political prisoners in his current negotiations with the regime," said Khin Ohmar, Foreign Affairs Secretary at the Forum For Democracy in Burma. "Further delay should not be an option."

On 27 June the UN Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari arrived in Burma for a brief three-day visit with the aim of paving the way for a trip by Ban Ki-moon. On 30 June, Ban Ki-moon announced he would visit Burma on 3 July, the day Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's trial had been set to resume after numerous delays and rejection of the appeal to reinstate two defence witnesses. The trial is now set to continue on 10 July. Speaking in Tokyo on 30 June, Ban said, "I consider that three of the most important issues for [Burma] cannot be left unaddressed at this juncture. The first [is the] release of all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. This is the commitment and concerns and aspiration of the international community. I am going to convey this strongly to Snr-Gen Than Shwe and other leaders," he said.

Treatment of prisoners and their families

The number of political prisoners in poor health has been steadily increasing over the past few months, as the impact of prison transfers and denial of proper medical care takes its toll. More than 230 political prisoners have been transferred to remote jails away from their families since November last year. Due to inadequate healthcare provision in Burma's prisons, political prisoners rely on their family members to bring them medicines and other essential items. This is much more difficult for the families when their loved ones are transferred to remote prisons.

Five political prisoners in Rangoon's Insein prison have been held in punishment cells [military dog cells] and banned from receiving family visits since 11 May 2009, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) has learned. The reason for their punishment is unknown. They are U Naing Naing (National League for Democracy Member of Parliament), U Soe Han (NLD member and lawyer), Aung Naing (NLD member), Lwin Ko Latt (student and member of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions), and U Sandimar (senior abbot monk).

U Naing Naing is suffering from a hernia and also hypertension. U Soe Han has eye problems. Their families have been banned from visiting, and have been unable to provide them with essential medicines. The families are now very worried for the health of their loved ones. ([12 June 2009 AAPP](#))

Prisoners Released

Five people were released from prison in June. They were Thant Zin Oo (brother of political prisoner Thant Zin Myo, he was sentenced to six months in prison for reading a letter addressed to Senior General Than Shwe complaining about the lack of healthcare in prisons during a prison visit to Thant Zin Myo), Than Htay, Moe Kyaw aka Kyaw Moe Aung, Aung Naing Min, and Zaw Naing. All were released after completing their sentences. ([12 June 2009 Narinjara](#) and [AAPP sources](#)).

National League for Democracy

472 NLD members are currently detained. NLD members continue to be harassed by the authorities, particularly in connection with the trial of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Five NLD members were arrested in June; including three NLD youth who were arrested for printing and distributing photos of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. NLD Township Vice-Chairperson U Ba Myint was transferred to the remote Bamaw prison for holding a demonstration calling for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release.

27 June 2009

NLD Youth member arrested

Naing Yan Lin (NLD Youth member) and Kyaw Kyaw (friend of Naing Yan Lin) from North Okkalapa Township in Rangoon were arrested. Authorities searched Kyaw Kyaw's home and confiscated some material. At present there are no further details regarding their arrest. ([29 June 2009 AAPP Source](#))

22 June 2009

Sandar is in poor health

Sandar, one of the Twante Township NLD members, has been in solitary confinement in Myingyan prison without proper medical treatment. She is suffering from heart disease and hypertension, and also gout and stomach pain. Her health condition is deteriorating. ([22 June 2009 RFA](#))

NLD member charged

Aye Aye Than aka Han Mi Dar, member of NLD from Dala Township, was arrested on March 6, 2009, along with former political prisoners Sain Hlaing and Shwe Joe, and one unknown person. They have all been charged with Section 505 (b) of the Penal Code. ([22 June 2009 AAPP Source](#))

20 June 2009

Twante NLD chairman was transferred

Twante Township NLD Vice Chairman, U Ba Myint was transferred to Bamaw prison, in Kachin State, from Insein prison in Rangoon. He held a demonstration in prison calling for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. ([20 June 2009 AAPP Source](#))

18 June 2009

Lengthy sentences for opposition prayer arrestees

Two members of the opposition National League for Democracy party arrested after praying for the release of political prisoners in Burma have each been sentenced to one-and-a-half years in prison. The two, Chit Pe and Aung Soe Wai, were arrested on 21 April after holding a prayer ceremony at a pagoda near to Rangoon division's Twante Township, and charged under Section 295a which addresses "desecration of religious buildings and property". ([18 June 2009 DVB](#))

17 June 2009

South Dagon NLD member was arrested

South Dagon NLD member, Lay Lwin was arrested. The authority accused him of taking video recordings of the water shortage in South Dagon. ([18 June 2009 DVB](#))

Three NLD members are accused with the explosives act

For publishing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's photo, three NLD members were arrested in Rangoon and have been detained under the explosives act. They have been sent to Insein prison and their hearing is due to take place on June 25 in Sanchaung Township court. The three NLD youth members are Aung Aung aka Aung Aung Oo from Bahan Township, Bo Tun aka Kyaw Win Tun, and Kyaw Kyi aka Kyaw Myo Naing from Tamwe Township. ([17 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#)) ([18 June 2009 RFA](#))

15 June 2009

Burmese junta cracks down on Suu Kyi's party

Three members of the National League for Democracy were arrested last week on unspecified charges while another elderly member had his property vandalised by men armed with slingshots. The two cases, both of which occurred last Friday, coincided with a police raid on the house of Thi Han, an NLD youth member involved in a photo campaign to raise public awareness of the Suu Kyi trial. Meanwhile, a teashop owned by the financial director of the NLD in Mandalay division was damaged when unknown men fired slingshot pellets. ([15 June 2009 DVB](#))

14 June 2009

Mandalay NLD chairman's house attacked

Mandalay Division NLD Treasury Chairman U Ko Ko Kyi's house and teashop were attacked by two unknown cyclists in the midnight on June 12. U Ko Ko Kyi was in his

teashop during the attack and some electronic lamps and furniture in his teashop were destroyed. ([14 June 2009 DVB](#))

12 June 2009

NLD member charged

NLD member Htwe Thein was charged with section 505/b of the Penal Code (statements conducive to public mischief). He was arrested in front of Insein prison on 18 May 2009 after he distributed black-ribbons during the trial of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Individual activist Zaw Nyunt aka Arka Hein also faces the same charges. He is a former political prisoner and former chairperson of the Labor Solidarity Organization, who lives in South Dagon Township, Rangoon. He was arrested on 28 May 2009 during the trial of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. ([12 June 2009 AAPP](#))

NLD members punished in Insein prison

Five political prisoners in Rangoon's Insein prison have been held in punishment cells [military dog cells] and banned from receiving family visits since 11 May 2009, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) has learned. The reason for their punishment is unknown. They are U Naing Naing (National League for Democracy Member of Parliament), U Soe Han (NLD member and lawyer), Aung Naing (NLD member), Lwin Ko Latt (student and member of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions), and U Sandimar (senior abbot monk).

U Naing Naing is suffering from a hernia and also hypertension. U Soe Han has eye problems. Their families have been banned from visiting, and have been unable to provide them with essential medicines. The families are now very worried for the health of their loved ones. Due to inadequate healthcare provision in Burma's prisons, political prisoners rely on their family members to bring them medicines and other essential items. The ruling military regime has prevented the International Committee of the Red Cross from conducting prison visits since November 2005. ([12 June 2009 AAPP](#))

9 June 2009

Political Prisoner Salai Hla Moe Dies

AAPP learned that on 12 May 2009, Salai Hla Moe became the 140th political prisoner to die in detention since 1988. Prison authorities didn't bury him in according to his Christian faith, or officially inform his family of his death. They only found about his death when a relative made a routine family visit to the prison at the end of May, three weeks later. Due to lack of proper health care, Salai Hla Moe had been suffering from hepatitis and swelling of the stomach. He was a member of National League for Democracy and during the 1990 election he was an organizer of No.2 constituency of Matupi Township, Southern Chin state.

During Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's trip to Matupi Township in Southern Chin State he was given the responsibility of security. After this trip he was arrested together with the Township secretary, Salai Aung Htan and Youth in Charge, Salai Par Htan. On 4 June 2003 he was charged under Section 333 of the Penal Code and sentenced to 11

years in Myingyan Prison. 48-year-old Salai Hla Moe is survived by his wife and four children. ([9 June 2009 AAPP](#))

4 June 2009

NLD member in poor health

NLD member and former political prisoner Myo Khin has been in poor health since May. He is suffering from gastric problems, heart disease and hypertension. He also experienced fainting fits and vomiting and was hospitalised in Bamaw hospital from 23 to 26 May ([4 June Mizzima](#))

88 Generation Students

46 members of 88 Generation Students are currently detained. Many are currently in bad health and held in prisons far away from their families. Now the rainy season has begun, travel to some remote prisons is more difficult and it's therefore harder for families to deliver essential medicine to their loved ones in those jails.

18 June 2009

Thet Thet Aung is poor in health

Thet Thet Aung, one of the 88 Generation Students sentenced to 65 years in Myingyan prison in Mandalay division, has been suffering from heart disease, hypertension, and gout. Her mother visited Thet Thet Aung in prison and reported that she had seen a specialist, but that this should have happened earlier. Her health condition has deteriorated since last month. ([18 June 2009 RFA](#)).

17 June 2009

88 Generation students leader Hla Myo Naung

Hla Myo Naung, one of the 88 Generation Student leaders sentenced to 65 years in Myitkyina prison, has been suffering from an eye problem and his health is deteriorating. After he was arrested he had an operation on one eye, which was unsuccessful and now his other eye is getting worse. ([17 June 2009 AAPP source](#))

16 June 2009

Difficult to visit political prisoners in Shan State

During the rainy season the airlines from Rangoon to Monghsat stop working. As a result it is very difficult for political prisoners' families visit prisons in that part of Shan State. Ko Ko Kyi, who is in Monghsat prison, has not received a family visit in four months. Ko Ko Gyi's brother Aung Tun said that according to a letter he received from Ko Ko Kyi, he has been suffering from Hepatitis B. ([16 June 2009 New Era](#))

10 June 2009

88 Generation Students are in poor health

88 Generation Students who have been transferred to remote prisons away from their families are in poor health. Min Ko Naing is suffering from hypertension and spondylitis; Ko Ko Gyi has gastric problems and Hepatitis B; and Mya Aye has heart

problems brought on by stress, according to Mya Aye's daughter. Although they have had a basic medical check-up, they are not being provided with the proper medical treatment they need. Htay Kywe is being held in a dark cell with no electric light ([10 June 2009 DVB](#)).

4 June 2009

88 Generation Student Nobel Aye in poor health

Increasing numbers of Burma's political prisoners are suffering ill health, according to their families and the Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP). Many of them are serving long sentences in remote prisons, far from their families, who have difficulty maintaining contact. They include several women, including Nobel Aye, known as Hnin May Aung, who is reportedly ill with jaundice in Shwe Bo Prison, Sagaing Division, where she is serving an 11 year sentence. 88 Generation Students and NLD member Nobel Aye is in poor health. She is reportedly suffering from jaundice. She is currently held in Monywa prison in Sagaing Division. ([04 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

Ethnic Nationalities

There are currently at least 197 ethnic nationality activists in detention.

23 June 2009

Shan Leaders Health Update

Khun Htun Oo, MP for the Shan NLD (Putao Prison, Northern Kachin State)

He is suffering from a stiff neck and is unable to move around in his cell much because it is so small and narrow. He is taking medicine for his neck which is relieving the pain. He needs to take four bottles of medicine per month. Each bottle costs 30,000 Kyats (\$30). He appears mentally fit.

Sai Nyunt Lwin, member of the Shan NLD (Kale Prison, Sagaing Division)

He is suffering from hypertension and is taking traditional medicine, which is helping. Like previous times, his family weren't able to meet with him for long, but were able to give him some encouragement and boost his morale. Besides this his health is fine.

Sai Hla Aung, member of the Shan NLD (Kyaukpyu Prison, Arakan State)

Sometimes he suffers from stomach problems and is taking Shan traditional medicine. Even though he is thin and has lost weight, overall it appears that his health situation is improving.

U Htun Nyo, New Generation of Shan (Buthidaung Prison, Arakan State)

His health situation is fine, except sometimes he suffers from toothache. He gets enough medical support and seems mentally fit. He is practising meditation on a regular basis.

Myo Win Tun, New Generation of Shan (Myingyan Prison, Mandalay Division)

He had been suffering from a fever but now this is getting better. He is teaching physics and chemistry to the prison guards' sons and daughters. His health situation is fine.

Nyi Nyi Moe, New Generation of Shan (Pakokku Prison, Magwe Division)

His cough is getting better. He receives regular assistance and moral support, but his family visits are always closely watched. Because of the seasonal change from the hot to rainy season, he is taking medicine to prevent illness. His current health situation is improving.

General Hso Ten, Chairman of the Shan State Peace Council (Khamti Prison, Sagaing Division)

He is suffering from eye problems and hypertension. It seems his health is the worst out of the Shan leaders. He is not allowed to receive medical treatment for his eyes or see a doctor. Because of his hypertension and eye problems, he urgently needs an eye checkup; however, he is yet to receive permission. As a result of his eye problems, he is also suffering from headaches. ([23 June 2009 AAPP Source](#))

Monks

There are currently 219 monks in prison. Monk leader U Gambira's 68-year sentence has been reduced by 5 years - but he still faces a lifetime in jail.

26 June 2009

U Gambira's sentence reduced

Monk Ashin Gambira, arrested and sentenced to 68 years in prison for his lead role in anti-junta protests in September 2007 has had his prison term reduced by five years by a district court in Insein prison on Thursday. The western district court reduced the sentence of Gambira, leader of the All Burma Buddhist Monks Association by five years. He was charged under the Electronics Act. The reverend monk, who was charged on 16 counts, will now have to serve 63 years in prison. ([26 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

12 June 2009

Senior monk one of five political prisoners punished in Insein prison

Five political prisoners in Rangoon's Insein prison have been held in punishment cells [military dog cells] and banned from receiving family visits since 11 May 2009, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) has learned. The reason for their punishment is unknown. They are U Naing Naing (National League for Democracy Member of Parliament), U Soe Han (NLD member and lawyer), Aung Naing (NLD member), Lwin Ko Latt (student and member of the All Burma

Federation of Student Unions), and U Sandimar (senior abbot monk). ([12 June 2009 AAPP](#))

Cyclone Nargis Volunteers

There are currently 21 Cyclone Nargis volunteers in detention.

12 June 2009

Appeal cases of Zargana and Zaw Thet Htwe admitted

The appeal cases of famous comedian and film director Zargan a.k.a. Thura and Sports Journal Editor Zaw Thet Htwe has been admitted by the High Court. Their lawyers filed the appeal case for the second time and the High Court admitted it on June 3. The co-accused of Zargana and Zaw Thet Htwe are Thant Zin Aung and Gatone a.k.a. Tin Maung Aye. They were charged under eight cases including section 33(a) of the Electronic Law, section 505(b) of the Penal Code (disaffection towards State and Government) and section 295(a) of the Penal Code. Zaw Thet Htwe was sentenced to 19 years and Zargana was sentenced to 59 years in prison respectively. However, the Divisional Court commuted the sentences of Zaw Thet Htwe by eight years and Zargana by 24 years. So they have to serve the remaining prison terms of 11 and 35 years. ([12 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

Journalists, Bloggers and Writers

There are currently at least 51 media activists in detention.

19 June 2009

Two year sentence handed down to Rangoon journalist

Bahan Township Court has sentenced the former chief reporter of the The News Watch journal, Zaw Tun, to two years imprisonment. The court yesterday sentenced Zaw Tun (34), of No. 32 Ward, North Dagon Satellite Township, with obstructing a public servant in the discharging of his duty. A security officer found Zaw Tun near Aung San Suu Kyi's house last September and arrested him following questioning. ([19 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

Women

There are currently 191 women in detention.

Students

There are currently 283 students held in detention, including 46 88 Generation Students.

12 June 2009

Student amongst political prisoners punished in Insein prison

Five political prisoners in Rangoon's Insein prison have been held in punishment cells [military dog cells] and banned from receiving family visits since 11 May 2009,

the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) has learned. The reason for their punishment is unknown. They are U Naing Naing (National League for Democracy Member of Parliament), U Soe Han (NLD member and lawyer), Aung Naing (NLD member), Lwin Ko Latt (student and member of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions), and U Sandimar (senior abbot monk).

Due to inadequate healthcare provision in Burma's prisons, political prisoners rely on their family members to bring them medicines and other essential items. The ruling military regime has prevented the International Committee of the Red Cross from conducting prison visits since November 2005. ([12 June 2009 AAPP](#))

1 June 2009

De Nyein Lin in poor health

Leader of the All Burma Federation of Students Unions, De Nyein Lin, is being treated in Hkamti prison clinic and his health condition is not getting better. In Hkamti prison, he had a fever and was tested for malaria but has not received the result yet. His mother Daw Htay Htay Win visited her son in prison on 26 May. She reported to the media that from 8-12 May her son was dizzy and vomiting, but he was only checked by a medic, not a properly qualified doctor as there isn't one in Hkamti prison. ([01 June 2009 Yoma 3](#))

Lawyers

There are currently 12 lawyers in prison.

11 June 2009

Being a defense lawyer in Burma is a risky business

Defense lawyers who represent political dissidents routinely face government intimidation, in some cases leading to prison terms and the suspension or cancellation of their license to practice by the Burmese Bar Council. Eleven lawyers who defended pro-democracy activists are currently serving prison terms across the country. The Thailand-based human rights group, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma), said at least 207 Burmese lawyers, including central high court lawyers, have faced suspension, warnings, temporary suspension or dismissal of their license without a proper hearing process. "If you want to be a defense lawyer for political activists, you can have your lawyer license cancelled at any time," said Nyi Nyi Hlaing, who has represented political activists. ([11 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

Individual Activists

30 June 2009

Private tutor Kyi Than was transferred back to Insein prison from Pyapon prison in Irrawaddy Division, because he is suffering from cancer. The date of his transfer and the details of his illness are unknown. ([30 June 2009 AAPP](#))

23 June 2009

Daw San San Tin in poor health

Daw San San Tin is suffering from heart disease and has a swelling on her neck. She is currently held in Meiktila prison in Mandalay division. ([23 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

12 June 2009

Insein protestors charged

Zaw Nyunt aka Arka Hein was charged with section 505/b of the Penal Code (statements conducive to public mischief) on 12 June. He is a former political prisoner and former chairperson of the Labor Solidarity Organization, who lives in South Dagon Township, Rangoon. He was arrested on 28 May 2009 during the trial of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Zaw Nyunt, a supporter of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, held up a sign board which carried the words, "Let's Save Our Mother Daw Aung San Suu Kyi", written in red on white fabric. He marched down the street leading towards Insein Prison. During his arrest, he reportedly had two teeth broken by a regime thug. NLD member Htwe Thein is facing the same charges, but he was arrested in front of Insein prison on 18 May 2009 after he distributed black-ribbons while the trial of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. ([12 June 2009 AAPP](#) and [08 June 2009 DVB](#))

8 June 2009

Family protesters released

The two women and four children arrested on 4 June for protesting outside the U.S. embassy have been released. ([08 June 2009 DVB](#))

4 June 2009

Child protestors arrested outside US embassy

Burmese police have arrested four children and two adults outside the US Embassy in Rangoon, who were protesting for the release of a family member detained by Burmese authorities. The protest happened around 10am this morning after they had met with US embassy officials. They were reportedly holding a banner calling for the release of "our father, husband". "Two women and four children have been detained for questioning as they staged a small protest in front of the American Embassy," an embassy official told AFP. Another official said that the protest was for "personal reasons, and not politically motivated." ([4 June 2009 DVB](#))

3 June 2009

Trial audience member arrested

Hla Kyaw Sain from Taung Kuk Township, Arakanese, was arrested by authorities. He was part of the crowd outside Insein prison showing their support for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. No further details are known about his arrest. ([03 June 2009 DVB](#))

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

The trial of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been adjourned until 10 July when additional defence witness Khin Moh Moh will testify. This follows the court rejecting an appeal for two defence witnesses, senior NLD party members U Win Tin and U Tin Oo, to be reinstated. The trial continues amidst international outcry; Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva Thailand stated that the continued detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi discredits ASEAN while former prime minister of Singapore, Goh Chok Tong reportedly told Senior-General Than Shwe during a visit to Burma that the trial has an international dimension and could ruin the 2010 elections. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and Thailand-based Burma Media Association (BMA) released a statement saying the trial was being held “in a climate of repression and censorship”.

30 June 2009

Inside Burma Update

No Hope for Suu Kyi from Ban’s trip: NLD Leader

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is scheduled to visit Burma on Friday and Saturday, and there’s little hope for the release of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi from the trip, said a prominent Burmese opposition leader. Commenting on the trip, Win Tin, a prominent leader of the main opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) said that the international community has achieved little in the way of real progress toward national reconciliation. “Therefore, I do not expect Daw Aung San Suu Kyi would be released during or after Ban Ki-moon’s trip,” he said. “But it’s because the junta has failed to response to the international calls.” ([30 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

NLD Urges Ban to meet Suu Kyi

The United Nations General Secretary Ban Ki-moon was urged on Tuesday by the National League for Democracy to meet detained party leader Aung San Suu Kyi during his proposed two-day visit to Burma from July 3 to 4. Nyan Win, NLD spokesperson said his party welcomed Ban’s visit but would like to urge him to persuade the Burmese junta for a meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi in order to make his trip fruitful. The UN chief, currently on a tour of Japan, will be on a two-day visit to Burma in an attempt to address the political imbroglio in the country and to free Aung San Suu Kyi, said Michele Montas, Ban Ki-moon’s spokesperson on Monday. ([30 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

International Update

Ban Says He’ll Urge Junta to Free Suu Kyi

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon assured reporters on Tuesday during a Tokyo stopover on his way to Burma that he will urge the Burmese military junta to release all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi, when he visits the country this week. “It may be the case that the trial may happen during my visit in [Burma]. I am very much conscious of that. At the same time, to find the most appropriate timing has been a challenge for me, too,” Ban told reporters. “I consider that three of the

most important issues for [Burma] cannot be left unaddressed at this juncture," Ban told reporters. "The first [is the] release of all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. This is the commitment and concerns and aspiration of the international community. I am going to convey this strongly to Snr-Gen Than Shwe and other leaders," he said. ([1 July 2009 Irawaddy](#))

Myanmar should release all political prisoners: Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

Mr. Ban, who is scheduled to visit Myanmar for two days starting on Friday, told journalists in Japan – where he has begun a five-country international tour – that he realized there were concerns about the timing of the visit given that the trial of Ms. Suu Kyi is pending. "It may be the case that the trial may happen during my visit in Myanmar. I am very much conscious of that. At the same time, to find the most appropriate timing has been a challenge for me, too," he said. The Secretary-General said he would use the visit to try to "raise in the strongest possible terms" the concerns of the international community about the situation inside Myanmar. "This is the commitment and concerns and aspiration of the international community. I am going to convey this strongly to Senior General Than Shwe and other leaders," he said, adding that he also hopes to have dialogue with grassroots groups during his visit. ([30 June 2009 UN](#))

UN chief Ban Ki-moon to visit Burma

The UN Secretary General will visit Burma next week with the issue of political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi, high on the agenda when he meets with senior government officials in the capital. It will be the first trip to Burma by Ban Ki-moon since he made an emergency visit in the wake of cyclone Nargis last May. It follows a two-day visit by UN envoy to Burma Ibrahim Gambari, which ended on Sunday and was widely believed to have been a preparatory exercise prior to Ban's arrival. The UN chief was reportedly briefed by Gambari on Sunday following his trip, and decided then to go ahead with it. The two-day trip, set for Friday and Saturday, comes at a sensitive time, with the trial of Suu Kyi now in its seventh week and evidence of strengthening ties between Burma and North Korea, who were last month subject to toughened UN sanctions. ([30 June 2009 DVB](#))

Suu Kyi trial held in 'climate of censorship'

Media watchdogs have condemned the sentencing of a Burmese journalist reporting on the trial of Aung San Suu Kyi, and said that coverage of the trial itself is "very much biased" with reporters subject to intimidation. The Suu Kyi trial, now in its seventh week, is being held behind closed doors in a courtroom inside Rangoon's Insein prison. Yesterday, Paris-based media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and Thailand-based Burma Media Association (BMA) released a statement saying the trial was being held "in a climate of repression and censorship". ([30 June 2009 DVB](#))

29 June 2009

Inside Burma Update

Appeal to Reinstate Witnesses for Suu Kyi Rejected

Burma's highest court Monday rejected an appeal by lawyers of Aung San Suu Kyi to reinstate two key witnesses in a trial that has sparked global outrage. The High Court upheld a lower court ruling, meaning Suu Kyi will be granted only two defense witnesses in her ongoing trial. She faces up to five years in prison if found guilty. Her trial resumes July 3 when an additional defense witness will testify before the District court inside Insein prison where Suu Kyi has been facing trial since May 18. Suu Kyi's lawyers pursued a second and final appeal to reinstate the remaining two barred witnesses, Win Tin and Tin Oo, both senior members of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy. The defense team argued there was no law in the tightly ruled country that bars court testimony from government critics, Nyan Win said. ([29 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

International Update

U2 to launch tour with Suu Kyi in audience

Internationally acclaimed Irish band U2 is poised to commence their latest tour tomorrow, with attendees encouraged to don Aung San Suu Kyi masks during the playing of 'Walk On'. "U2 believe the world must not be allowed to forget Aung San Suu Kyi and on the 360 Tour fans are being invited to wear the mask when the band plays 'Walk On', which was written for her," explains the iconic pop/rock band on their website. ([29 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

27 June 2009

Inside Burma Update

No Signs Gambari Will Meet Suu Kyi or Than Shwe

The United Nations special envoy to Burma, Ibrahim Gambari, met with senior officials in Naypyidaw on Friday, but it remained unclear whether he would meet with junta supremo Snr-Gen Than Shwe or opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. The United Nations Information Center in Rangoon also said on Saturday that it could not provide any details about Gambari's trip, which comes as the Burmese regime faces intense criticism over its trial of Suu Kyi on charges that she violated the terms of her house arrest. There is no sign so far that Gambari will meet with Suu Kyi or any other member of her party. However, the NLD said it supports the trip, which it hopes will help to break the deadlock in efforts to begin a dialogue between the junta and the opposition. ([27 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

26 June 2009

Inside Burma Update

Court adjourns Suu Kyi's trial to July 3

The special court in Insein Prison on Friday adjourned the hearing of the testimony of a second defense witness in the trial against opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi to July 3rd, as the country's High Court has yet to rule on an appeal to allow the remaining two defense witnesses. Nyan Win, a member of Aung San Suu Kyi's legal team, said the court on Friday convened at about 10 a.m. (local time) and adjourned about thirty minutes later with the judge scheduling the testimony of Khin Moh Moh, the second defense witness, for July 3rd. "Since the decision from the High Court has not yet been announced, the lower court cannot go ahead with the case," Nyan Win reiterated. ([26 June 2009 DVB](#))

'Lawyers of the government' steering Suu Kyi trial

A witness disqualified from testifying in the defense of Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi said yesterday following his appeal that it was not "ordinary lawyers" making key decisions in the trial but government cronies. Suu Kyi's defense team yesterday appealed to Burma's supreme court to admit two witnesses who were disqualified last month by judges from testifying. One of Suu Kyi's lawyers said that the decision was not in accordance with Burmese law. One of the witnesses, U Tin Oo, is currently under house arrest, while U Win Tin has been criticized by the junta for giving interviews about the trial to foreign media. Both are senior members of the opposition National League for Democracy party, which Suu Kyi leads. ([26 June 2009 DVB](#))

Gambari arrives in Burma

UN Special Envoy to Burma Ibrahim Gambari has arrived in Burma and will return to UN headquarters promptly to brief Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon before he leaves New York for Japan on Monday, a UN spokesman said on Thursday. Officials said Gambari's visit is intended to pave the way for a follow-up visit by Ban, anticipated for sometime next week. A UN official confirmed the envoy arrived Friday morning in Rangoon, the commercial capital, and was scheduled to travel later in the day to the remote capital of Naypyidaw to meet with the government's military leaders. ([26 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

25 June 2009

Inside Burma Update

Police Chief Suspects Yettaw Mastermind

The Burmese police chief, Brig-Gen Khin Yi, alleged that a mastermind was orchestrating John William Yettaw, whose intrusion on Aung San Suu Kyi led to her arrest and trial. "There must be a mastermind behind Mr. Yettaw. We are investigating who exactly is behind this," the police chief told journalists and diplomats at a press conference in Rangoon on Thursday. Khin Yi said John William Yettaw was not wealthy enough to travel and stay in Thailand and Burma for several months, and his long stays must have been financed by a group masterminding his

actions. Khin Yi also alleged that Yettaw might have wanted security guards to arrest him, because he did not take the same route entering and leaving Suu Kyi's house. "By swimming through Inya Lake he attracted the attention of police guarding Suu Kyi," Khin Yi said. Khin Yi frequently repeated that Yettaw had met with exiled and unlawful groups before his last visit to Burma. ([25 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

Police Chief Blames Tardyness

Khin Yi, during a rare press briefing at the Drug Elimination Museum in Rangoon's Kamayut Township, told journalists and diplomats that the detained Nobel Peace Laureate had not informed concerned authorities in a timely manner as to the details of the first visit by Yettaw in November 2008. As National League for Democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi only informed the authorities of the visit four days after the event on December 4, 2008, it was difficult for authorities to trace the incident and thus hampered attempts to uncover the truth, Khin Yi added. Rejecting rumors that the accused suffers from a mental illness, Khin Yi said Yettaw is instead a highly intellectual person. ([25 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

International Update

Mizos call for the release of Daw Suu Kyi

Scores of Mizo and Burmese activists on Thursday held a sit-in protest in Aizawl, capital of India's northeastern state of Mizoram, calling for the release of detained Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. With banners declaring 'Mizoram for Aung San Suu Kyi' the protestors held a one-hour demonstration at Aizawl's Temple Square. The protestors expressed concern for the Burmese Nobel Peace Laureate. ([25 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

UK Threatens Tighter Sanctions

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown reiterated on Wednesday that his government would tighten sanctions against Burma and condemned the Burmese military junta's actions as completely unacceptable. A *Dow Jones Newswire* report quoted Brown as saying: "At the last meeting of the European Council we sent a very powerful message that unless action is taken in Burma to free Aung San Suu Kyi, then we are prepared to take further sanctions against the regime." At a press conference after the EU summit, Brown said, "That means we are prepared to look at further sanctions." Brown called for an end to Suu Kyi's "absurd and contemptible sham trial," and for her immediate and unconditional release. Brown also expressed the hope that UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon would visit Burma soon. ([25 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

24 June 2009

Inside Burma Update

Suu Kyi passes on a message of thanks

Burma's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has expressed her regret that she cannot personally thank those who marked her birthday on Friday, according to lawyers who met with Suu Kyi yesterday. The National League for Democracy leader was allowed to meet with her four legal representative's yesterday afternoon at her

unit inside Insein prison. "One thing I can say now is, she said thank you to all those who wish her happy birthday, home and abroad," he said, adding that she stressed to her well-wishers to "please understand that I can't thank you individually now".

To mark her birthday she had ordered 50 packets of Biryani rice, chocolate cake and flowers to be distributed to fellow staff and inmates, and was able to carry this out, said Nyan Win. Tomorrow lawyers of Suu Kyi will argue for the inclusion of two witnesses, Tin Oo and Win Tin. Both were disqualified by judges in May, but the court has accepted an appeal to reconsider their admittance. A third witness, Khin Mo Mo, a supreme court lawyer from Shan state's Taunggyi, who was initially disqualified but later readmitted will find out on 26 June the date she will be appearing as a witness. Suu Kyi reportedly reiterated yesterday her frustration at the lack of legal transparency in Burma. "It is very important that there is the rule of law here; it has been very weak," Nyan Win quoted her as saying. "The rule of law is the most important thing." ([24 June 2009 DVB](#))

High Court hears Aung San Suu Kyi's lawyers' arguments

Burma's High Court on Wednesday heard defense arguments for allowing two more witnesses in the controversial trial against pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, but did not make any ruling on the matter. Nyan Win, a member of Aung San Suu Kyi's legal team, said the defense team argued it is in accordance with the law to allow the remaining two witnesses – Tin Oo, Vice-Chairman of the National League for Democracy (NLD), and Win Tin, a veteran journalist and Central Executive Committee member of the NLD. "The High Court doesn't make immediate decisions and will take some time before announcing their decision. And we don't know when that announcement will be," Nyan Win said. However, **Nyan Win** added that the High Court judges told them it might be impossible to accept **Tin Oo** as a witness as he is currently under house arrest. The judges further explained, according to **Nyan Win**, that as **Win Tin** has given several interviews to the exile-based Democratic Voice of Burma, BBC and Radio Free Asia, in which he demonstrated a distinct difference of opinion to that of the authorities, he may not qualify either. But Kyi Win, Aung San Suu Kyi's primary lawyer, said the law prescribes that in finding the truth even criminals serving a death sentence can be brought as witnesses. "What we are fighting is for equal representation in front of the court and since the lower court [at Insein prison] has not mentioned any reasons for rejecting the defense witnesses, it is against the law [to exclude the candidates]," he added. The Insein prison court where Aung San Suu Kyi is facing trial originally scheduled the hearing of the second defense witness– Khin Moh Moh – for Friday. But Kyi Win said there would be no hearing until the High Court makes the decision on whether to allow more witnesses. ([24 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

International Update

Suu Kyi's trial internal affair of Burma: Russia

While urging the regime to conduct a fair trial of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, the Russian Foreign Ministry on Sunday said the issue is an internal affair and does not warrant the attention of the UN Security Council. The Russian Foreign Ministry's information and press department on Sunday said it rejects any attempts to bring the

Burma issue to the United Nations Security Council saying it is an internal affair and does not pose a threat to peace and security of the region and the world community, according a report by Moscow-based the ITAR-TASS News Agency. ([23 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

22 June 2009

International Update

U.N. envoy en route to Rangoon ahead of boss's visit United Nations Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari is scheduled to arrive in Burma later this week to pave the way for the proposed visit of U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon in early July. The U.N. diplomat's trip is expected to start on Friday, according to a Burmese government official. "It will be a short visit to discuss the national reconciliation process and make arrangements for Mr. Ban's visit," the official said on condition of anonymity. ([22 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

19 June 2009 – Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's 64th Birthday

Inside Burma Update

Suu Kyi's 64th birthday celebrated amid repression

National League for Democracy (NLD) sources said supporters held a religious ceremony to mark her birthday early Friday morning at party headquarters. However, authorities harassed one monastery not to send monks to perform the ceremony. About five hundred people including journalists attended the birthday ceremony at NLD headquarters in Rangoon. In the Buddhist tradition, at least five monks should be present to conduct a religious ceremony. According to NLD sources, four monks who participated in the birthday ceremony were later contacted by authorities. It is not known if they were arrested or just questioned. In keeping with a tradition on Su Kyi's birthday, the NLD granted scholarship to 130 children of political prisoners. Apart from the Buddhist ceremony, the NLD also held other observances for the birthday event. Suu Kyi's supporters freed 65 birds and prayed for her release. Rangoon residents said that authorities banned bird selling around some pagodas to prevent people from celebrating her birthday. In Burmese tradition, people free birds when they want a loved one to be free of a hindrance or obstacle. Also, NLD members read Rudyard Kipling's poem entitled "If," which was translated by Suu Kyi from English to Burmese." ([19 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

NLD celebrates Suu Kyi's 64th birthday

Burma's main Opposition party – the National League for Democracy – has promised to give Kyat 20,000 (USD 20) to anyone who brings back the party flag, which they released along with a hot-air balloon, to commemorate party leader Aung San Suu Kyi's 64th birthday. ([19 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

Political prisoners hold hunger strike

Five political prisoners held a hunger strike for five days for the anniversary of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday in Insein prison. They are Kyaw Soe Win (from Hlaing Tharyar Township), Kyi Linn (from South Tagon Township), Phoe Tauk aka Aung Cho Oo, an unknown person, and U Zaw Nyunt who protested in front of Insein prison to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. ([22 June 2009 DVB](#))

Pro-junta group rejects UN statement

A human rights group, believed to be pro Burmese junta, has rejected the statement of five United Nations Independent Rights experts regarding the trial of Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi saying the trial is being conducted in keeping with international and domestic laws. The Myanmar Human Rights Group, a largely unknown entity, on Thursday issued a statement, which was published by the junta's mouthpiece the New Light of Myanmar newspaper, condemning the UN experts for issuing a statement that said the trial so far is not open and fair. ([19 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

International Update

Paul McCartney and U2 call for Suu Kyi's release

Paul McCartney, U2 and Yoko Ono have joined the ranks of international celebrities marking the birthday of Aung San Suu Kyi with personal messages of support and renewed calls for her immediate release. Message of support from celebrities and international figures have been published on the 64forsuu.com website. "Aung San Suu Kyi is an inspiration to her country and to the rest of the world," said Paul McCartney, while Yoko Ono published a poem that included the lyrics "Your heart beats with my heart. My eyes see what you see. My belief is your belief." ([19 June 2009 DVB](#))

Activists marking Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday arrested

Thirty-one Burmese activists were detained on Friday by Delhi police for holding a demonstration in front of the Burmese Embassy marking the 64th birthday of detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Prior to their detention, activists submitted a memorandum signed by 27,400 Indian and Burmese supporters calling for the release of Burmese Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners in Burma. ([19 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

Suu Kyi Birthday Celebrated in Thailand

More than a hundred people including international ambassadors participated in a forum on Burma in Bangkok called "What can be done?" The forum was held at Chulalongkorn University on the anniversary of Suu Kyi's 64th birthday on Friday, June 19. ([19 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

Celebrity Birthday Wishes for Suu Kyi

Hollywood celebrities, singers, writers and dignitaries tweeted, uploaded and signed petitions for the release of Burma's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who turned 64 in prison Friday. Here are excerpts from birthday messages that appear on a Web site created in her honor: (<http://64forsuu.org>) ([19 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

18 June 2009

International Update

US tells Suu Kyi she inspires all who love freedom, democracy

In a message marking Friday's birthday of Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, the US State Department says the 64-year-old Nobel Peace Prize laureate inspires all who support freedom and democracy. US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi said the continued detention of Suu Kyi deserved the full condemnation of the international community. ([18 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

UN Secretary General invited to visit Burma

Burma's ruling junta has invited UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to visit the country in early July, although Ban is thought to be wary of the visit being used as propaganda by the junta. Western diplomats speaking under condition of anonymity said yesterday that Ban, who is yet to accept the invitation, is concerned the visit could be used to deflect mounting criticism over the trial of Burma's opposition leader. "He doesn't want his trip to be seen as giving any kind of legitimacy to the trial of Aung San Suu Kyi," one of the diplomats told Reuters. But, said the diplomat, pressure from Ban could be the last chance to ensure the release of Suu Kyi. "Ban can put pressure on them to let her go," he said. "We don't have many options apart from the secretary general."([18 June 2009 DVB](#))

Burmese women's groups pressured to cancel protest

Two Burmese women's organizations in the Indo-Burmese border town of Moreh were forced to cancel a planned protest rally to be held on Friday after authorities pressured the officer who had issued permission for the rally to cancel the authorization. The Kuki Women's Human Rights Organisation (KWHRO) and the Women's League of Burma (WLB) sought permission from the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) of Tengenoupal Subdivision of Moreh in India's northeastern state of Manipur, bordering Burma, to hold a protest rally demanding the release of Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi on her 64th birthday on June 19. Though the ADC gave permission, the women's leaders said they were later persuaded by the ADC to cancel the plan. "We already received permission on June 16. But this morning we were requested to cancel the plan," Ngangai Haokip, a presidium board member of WLB told Mizzima. She said the reasons for the request to cancel the plan were not officially declared, though the ADC had been pressured by his superiors to rescind the permission. ([18 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

17 June 2009

International Update

Climber protests against Lloyd's of London

Mike Robertson, a United Kingdom climber, on Thursday morning solo-climbed the outside of Lloyd's fourteen-storey, 88 meter-high, building in the British capital in protest of Lloyd's of London's financial dealings with Burma's military junta. ([17 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

UN legal specialists condemn Aung San Suu Kyi trial

As lawyers for detained democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi try to reinstate two key witnesses in her trial, United Nations legal specialists said the proceedings so far had been “marred by flagrant violations of substantive and procedural rights.” The group of five UN human rights experts urged the Burmese regime to ensure that the trial of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and two of her aides is “fair and open.” Members of the group are Manuela Carmena Castrilo, chairperson-rapporteur of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Leandro Despouy, special rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Tomas Ojea Quintana, special rapporteur on human rights in Burma, Margaret Sekaggya, special rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, and Frank La Rue, special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. In a statement by the group, released on Tuesday, Despouy said the trial had so far mostly been conducted behind closed doors and that the media had been prevented from speaking to the defense lawyers. “Transparency in the administration of justice is a pre-requisite of any State governed by the rule of law,” he said. ([17 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

16 June 2009

International Update

Suu Kyi’s detention affects Asean’s credibility: Thai PM

If the junta fails to release pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, the Association of Southeast Asian Nation’s (Asean) credibility will be “affected inevitably,” Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva told The Far Eastern Economic Review recently. During the Far Eastern Economic Review’s interview published on Tuesday, 16 June, Abhisit, who is now chairman of Asean, said Burma’s political process will have to be inclusive to gain the acceptability and respectability of the international community. However, the Thai PM said the Burma issue is the responsibility of the international community and not just Asean. ([16 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

15 June 2009

International Update

Over 100 former political prisoners call for Suu Kyi’s release

More than 100 former political prisoners world wide, have put their signatures on a statement calling for the release of Burmese democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi and urged the UN Security Council to impose a global arms embargo on Burma. The former political prisoners from over 20 countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe have signed a special “64 words to Aung San Suu Kyi”, a campaign that urges Aung San Suu Kyi’s supporters to tweet, write text messages, send videos and photographs to a Website – 64forsuu.org, launched by campaigners on May 27 to mark the Nobel Peace Laureate’s 64th birthday on June 19. ([15 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

13 June 2009

Inside Burma Update

Suu Kyi appeal set for June 17

Burma's High Court will convene next week to consider an appeal by lawyers of jailed pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi to reinstate two key defense witnesses in a case she calls "politically motivated," her lawyer said Saturday. "It is good to know that a date has been fixed to hear our argument," lawyer Nyan Win said of the June 17 hearing. The trial itself is scheduled to resume June 26. The District Court postponed it until that date so Suu Kyi's lawyers could press their appeal for the witnesses, Nyan Win said Friday. ([13 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

12 June 2009

Inside Burma Update

Suu Kyi Trial adds to ceasefire groups' distrust of junta

The trial of Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi may be complicating the ruling junta's efforts to persuade armed ceasefire groups to transform themselves into border security forces, according to sources close to the groups. "We can't trust this government because it has dared to charge even the world-respected democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi," said Nai ong Ma-nge, a spokesperson for the New Mon State Party (NMSP), one of several ceasefire groups now under pressure from the Burmese regime to form a border security force. ([12 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

International Update

Free Suu Kyi Campaign Gains Momentum in the US

As the Burmese regime's "illegitimate" trial of Aung San Suu Kyi continues, supporters in the US have launched a multi-pronged campaign to build international pressure to free the pro-democracy icon. On Thursday, Freedom House, a Washington-based nongovernmental organization that conducts research and advocacy on democracy, political freedom and human rights, said India needs to "break its silence over the sham trial in Burma" and urged New Delhi to use its influence over the Burmese military junta to seek Suu Kyi's release. ([12 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

Thai-Burma relations under 'unprecedented strain'

Thailand's condemnation of the Suu Kyi trial and the arrival of thousands of Burmese refugees has put relations between the two countries under "unprecedented strain", according to a Burmese state-run newspaper. Burma has come under mounting international criticism over the trial of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, whose next hearing has been adjourned until 26 June. The Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said in March, prior to the Suu Kyi trial, that the Burmese regime "remains a hideous blight" on the Asian map, and last month questioned the credibility of Burma's self-styled 'roadmap to democracy'. ([12 June 2009 DVB](#)) ([12 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

11 June 2009

Inside Burma Update

Big demand for Suu Kyi birthday portrait

Thousands of portraits of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi are being snapped up in a “Free Suu Kyi” campaign launched in Burma ahead of her 64th birthday on June 19. Fifty thousand portraits have been distributed so far in Rangoon, Mandalay, Pegu and Magway Divisions. Twenty thousand went in one day in more than 20 Mandalay townships. ([11 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

Suu Kyi witness appeal goes to higher court

Lawyers for Aung San Suu Kyi have submitted an appeal to Burma's central court to allow the remaining two witnesses disqualified last week to testify in her defense. Suu Kyi and her two caretakers met with the four defense lawyers yesterday to discuss taking the appeal to central court, following the readmittance on Tuesday of only one of the disqualified lawyers. ([11 June 2009 DVB](#))

International Update

Suu Kyi trial complicates US Burma policy review

The Obama Administration is finding it difficult to move forward in engaging Burma because of the trial of Aung San Suu Kyi, Obama's choice for top diplomat in East Asia said on Wednesday. “The recent events with Aung San Suu Kyi are just deeply, deeply concerning, and it makes it very difficult going forward,” said Kurt Campbell, the Obama nominee for assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, told US lawmakers during his confirmation hearing. “We're in the midst of a very sensitive review,” he said. “We are looking at the situation of the trial and what the junta is considering going forward. It will play into our review.” Campbell appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. ([11 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

Observers appreciate Goh's blunt suggestions to Than Shwe

The Burmese military junta is likely to respond positively to suggestions by Singapore's former Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong over Aung San Suu Kyi's trial, Burmese analysts in exile said. Goh Chok Tong, according to reports, told Senior General Than Shwe, during his meeting in Naypyitaw, that the trial of Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's is a domestic issue but has an international dimension. Besides, Goh Chok Tong, during the meeting, also warned Than Shwe that the regime's ensuing election in 2010 could be disrupted if Aung San Suu Kyi continues to be detained. ([11 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

British MPs vow to support democracy-human rights in Burma

British Members of Parliament on Tuesday discussed Aung San Suu Kyi's trial, calling it an ‘injustice’ and vowed to continue to strongly support the restoration of democracy and human rights in Burma. Initiated by Alistair Carmichael MP and Secretary of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Democracy in Burma (APPB), the

debate was held in the main Chamber of the House of Commons. The meeting acknowledged the need to provide more support to Burma. ([11 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

France, Germany in joint appeal for Aung San Suu Kyi

The leaders of France and Germany expressed grave concern Thursday for Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been put on trial by Myanmar's junta, and appealed to China and India to intervene on her behalf. During a joint news conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, President Nicolas Sarkozy said he had sought to speak by phone to the pro-democracy leader but the military government denied his request. "We are asking our Chinese and Indian friends for help and to take into account the concern that we have for the Nobel Peace Prize winner ahead of a conviction that appears, unfortunately, unavoidable," said Sarkozy. ([12 June 2009 AFP](#))

10 June 2009

Inside Update

Myanmar's Suu Kyi meets lawyers in prison

Myanmar pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi has met with her defence lawyers in jail, an official said, as her legal team vowed to push ahead with an appeal to allow more witnesses at her trial. An appeal court in the military-ruled nation on Tuesday allowed her to call a second witness at her closed prison trial -- a legal expert has already given evidence -- but upheld a ban on testimony by two key members of her party. Her lawyers went to visit her at the Insein Prison in Yangon on Wednesday, a Myanmar official said on condition of anonymity, without giving further details about the meeting. ([10 June 2009 AFP](#))

International Update

Former Singapore PM urges free elections in Burma

The former prime minister of Singapore has urged the Burmese government not to ignore international pressure on the trial of Aung San Suu Kyi and to ensure elections next year are free and fair. Goh Chok Tong, now a senior minister in Singapore, is currently in Burma on a diplomatic visit. During separate meetings with Burma junta leader Senior General Than Shwe and Prime Minister Thein Sein, Goh urged the government to ensure that next year's elections, tentatively scheduled for March, follow democratic protocol, a report said today. ([10 June 2009 DVB](#))

Japanese Parliamentarians critical of Burma policy

The ongoing trial against opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has attracted the attention of Japanese Parliamentarians, raising questions regarding Japan's stance on Burma. At least 70 Japanese Parliamentarians on Wednesday urged the government to push for a six-party type of talks – a-la-North Korea – concerning Burma, inclusive of regional countries and China. The Parliamentarians say Japan must kick-start the process in order to ensure genuine change comes to the militarily-ruled Southeast Asian nation. ([10 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

Suu Kyi trial clouds Myanmar cyclone aid effort

Myanmar's trial of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi will hurt international efforts to help the army-ruled country's recovery from the devastation of Cyclone Nargis, donors said on Wednesday. The donors who include the U.S., Britain, European Commission and Japan, have told the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) they are concerned about the trial, and to expect delays in the delivery of aid. "(The trial) has not helped the enthusiasm of their constituencies to engage more actively and more fully," ASEAN secretary-general Surin Pitsuwan told reporters after a meeting with donors in Bangkok. ([10 June 2009 Reuters](#))

MPs urge PM to take up Suu Kyi issue with Myanmar

A group of 118 Indian MPs on Wednesday appealed to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to ask the Myanmar government to release pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and impress upon the military regime to respect democratic principles. Cutting across party lines, the MPs in a memorandum to Singh said India should intervene in the current situation to urge upon the Burmese generals through all "possible diplomatic and other demarches to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi". ([10 June 2009 Hindu](#))

9 June 2009

Inside Burma Update

Character assassination of Aung San Suu Kyi

Bent on humiliating and insulting detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, a number of anonymous groups, believed to be pro-junta, have distributed her morphed vulgar pictures in homes in central Burma. ([9 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

8 June 2009

Inside Burma Update

Burma Court Allows Witness Testimony on Suu Kyi's Behalf

A court in Burma has partially granted an appeal by lawyers for Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi, allowing testimony at her trial by one of several defense witnesses who previously had been barred from the proceedings. Diplomats called the decision a rare legal victory for opponents of the Burmese government, but they predicted that it would have little effect on the outcome of the trial, which is scheduled to resume later this week. Suu Kyi, 63, could face up to five years in prison if she is convicted of having allowed an American to stay overnight at her house last month. ([9 June 2009 Washington Post](#))

3 June 2009

Inside Burma Update

Court accepts appeal for remaining Suu Kyi witnesses

Rangoon divisional court agreed to listen to an appeal from Aung San Suu Kyi's lawyers to readmit three defence witnesses disqualified last week, thereby delaying the final verdict until next week. Three of the four witnesses representing the defence team were disqualified in a move that Suu Kyi's party believed to be an attempt by judges to finish off the trial "as soon as they can". But the court will now use tomorrow to mull over whether to readmit the three National League for Democracy members, deputy chairperson Tin Oo, secretary Win Tin and Khin Moh Moh, who will testify in defence of Suu Kyi. "We presented our [appeal] statement at the court around 3pm [yesterday]. Immediately after we finished, they passed a decision to accept it," said lawyer Nyan Win. ([4 June 2009 DVB](#))

International Update

Suu Kyi trial 'a chance' for UN inquiry on Burma

The international community should use global outrage about the trial of Aung San Suu Kyi to push for a UN inquiry over possible crimes against humanity in Burma, legal and rights experts said. The case against the democracy icon, who faces up to five years' jail on charges of breaching her house arrest, has provided a "window of opportunity" to investigate Burma's junta, said Tyler Giannini of Harvard Law School. "The trial of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is putting additional scrutiny on Burma right now and really highlighting the lack of judicial independence," Giannini said at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand late Tuesday. He said that with political unity there was a "very good chance... that (UN) member states will consider it seriously and it has a chance to get on the agenda in the fairly near future because of this current scrutiny." ([3 June 2009 DVB](#))

2 June 2009

Inside Update

Yettaw acted alone, says lawyer

A US man who swam to the home of Aung San Suu Kyi was not paid by or taking orders from any outside organisation, his lawyer said today ahead of final arguments in the trial of Burma's opposition leader. Lawyer Khin Maung Oo said the devout Mormon was a "sincere and pious" person who believed God had told him to warn Aung San Suu Kyi and the government after he had a vision that she would be assassinated. ([2 June 2009 DVB](#))

Key International Developments

20 June 2009

Parliamentarians seek expulsion of Burma from ASEAN

Representatives from regional Parliaments have urged ASEAN to reconsider Burma's membership in the bloc, while activists, academics and civic groups in Thailand organized several activities calling for the release of Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. Kraisak Chunhavan, President of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC) said in a conference on Friday at Thailand's Chiang Mai University that it is time for ASEAN to revise the status of Burma in the group because Burma's military government has failed to respond to repeated calls by the international community to improve the human right situation in the country. "ASEAN is in a difficult time because it is pursuing a progressive and developed image by trying to set up a charter to protect human rights in the region. However, Burma's problems have limited dialogue with other regional blocs because the counterparts are unlikely to talk at the same table as the Burmese regime." ([20 June 2009 Mizzima](#))

17 June 2009

Free Burma's Political Prisoners Now! petition delivered to the UN

A global petition signed by nearly 680,000 people urges U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to make the release of more than 2,100 political prisoners in Myanmar, including pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, a "personal priority." Former political prisoners and human rights activists who launched the petition drive told a news conference Tuesday they are also urging the U.N. Security Council to establish a commission of inquiry into alleged crimes against humanity by the ruling generals in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma.

A delegation of ex-prisoners and activists delivered the petition with names from 220 countries and territories to the secretary-general's top envoy to Myanmar, Ibrahim Gambari, on Monday. "Mr. Gambari is going to transmit the petition to the secretary-general who has been calling for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners in Myanmar," U.N. spokeswoman Michele Montas said.

Khin Ohmar, who is now foreign affairs secretary of the Forum for Democracy in Burma, said getting into the U.N. to deliver the petition "is a huge step" in the call to release political prisoners. She said the delegation would have liked to meet the secretary-general in person. "We urge Mr. Ban Ki-moon to accept nothing less than the immediate and unconditional release of all Burma's political prisoners in his current negotiations with the regime," Ohmar said. "Further delay should not be an option." ([17 June 2009 eTaiwan News](#))

China hopes the military junta will promote democracy in Burma.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao met with the Burma's No 2 leader, Vice Snr-Gen Maung Aye, on Tuesday in Beijing. According to a Chinese language news website, www.news.qq.com, Wen said in order to achieve Burma's national reconciliation,

safeguard national stability and economic development; Beijing hoped the military government would promote democracy. Apart from the political situation in Burma, Wen also spoke of the nearly six decade long diplomatic ties between the neighboring countries as well as sustained bilateral relations. The Chinese media reported that Maung Aye said during his meeting with Wen on Tuesday that “Paukphaw,” or deep friendship between Burma and China, has been deepened even more. He thanked the Chinese government for its aid for economic and social development in Burma. Maung Aye also said Burma supported the one-China policy when he met with Premier Wen, the Chinese media reported. ([17 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

15 June 2009

Maung Aye Starts China Visit

The Burmese junta’s No 2 ranking general made his third trip to China on Monday while Naypyidaw faces sustained international pressure over the trial of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Vice Snr-Gen Maung Aye left for Beijing from the airport in the remote capital of Naypyidaw for a six-day official visit to neighboring China, according to the Chinese media. “Aimed at promoting neighborly, friendly and cooperative ties with China, Maung Aye who is vice-chairman of the Myanmar State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), is paying his third visit to China in six years,” China’s state-run Xinhua reported on Monday. ([15 June 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

10 June 2009

Release of political prisoners ‘a UN priority’

Campaigners in Britain have called on United Nations chief Ban Ki-moon to make the release of political prisoners in Burma, many of whom are being denied healthcare, an urgent priority “before they die”. A statement released yesterday by Burma Campaign UK (BCUK) detailed conditions for four high-profile political prisoners, including Min Ko Naing, who was last year sentenced to 65 years for his role in the September 2007 protests, and is said to be suffering from heart disease. ([10 June 2009 DVB](#))

4 June 2009

US ‘will not impose solutions’ on Burma

The United States has said it will not impose its own measures to solve Burma’s problems but that the military government should “promote the exchange of information” and empower its own people. Speaking at a press conference yesterday, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, Phillip Crowley, said that Burma’s problems, with reference to the trial of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, “are fundamental issues of importance”. “They’re really about how nations will govern themselves in the 21st century. It’s not for the United States to impose these solutions on countries such as Burma,” he said. ([4 June 2009 DVB](#))

3 June 2009

Ban Ki-moon pays tribute to Burma's U Thant

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon yesterday paid tribute to former Burmese UN chief U Thant on the 100-year anniversary of his birth and lamented his unrealised vision for democracy in his home country. Speaking to guests at the United Nations headquarters in New York, Ban spoke of his sadness at the situation in Burma, and reaffirmed his desire to visit the country. "It is a sad irony that U Thant's vision of democracy has not been realized in his own country," he said. "That is why I would like to visit [Burma] again this year." ([3 June 2009 DVB](#))

Monk calls for unity among religious leaders

A prominent Burmese monk who organised relief efforts following cyclone Nargis last year has called for religious leaders in Burma to join hands in solving the country's problems. Speaking from Norway, midway through a European trip which included the Buddhist Union's Buddha's Day celebration in France last month, Abbot U Nyanissara called for unity amongst monks. "We, all religious leaders, should walk together on a path that we see from the same point of view," he said. "If you look at all the rivers with different names in Burma and also look at the rivers in Europe, you can see they all come from the same origin." ([3 June 2009 DVB](#))

2 June 2009

NLD claims junta only interested in own security

Burma's warning to its neighbours to respect its sovereignty should only be interpreted as an attempt to guard the security of the Burmese junta and not its citizens, the National League for Democracy said yesterday. Responding to a statement given by Burma's deputy defence minister at the weekend that called for regional countries to steer clear of interfering in domestic matters for fear of affecting "the peace and security of the region", NLD member Win Tin said it was a reaction to mounting international pressure. "He [Aye Myint] is absolutely right, but the 'security' he was talking about is not the security for the people and the politicians in our country," said Win Tin. "He was talking about the security of the military regime itself, which is now facing a growing threat in the country as the international pressure increases." ([2 June 2009 DVB](#))

1 June 2009

Former Burmese intelligence official 'would testify' at ICC

A former Burmese senior intelligence official and ambassador to Washington have said he would testify against Burma's ruling generals if they are eventually brought in front of the International Criminal Court. On Saturday Burma marked the six-year anniversary of the Depayin massacre, in which 70 supporters of opposition National League for Democracy party were killed by a government-backed militia. Speaking to DVB on the anniversary, Aung Lin Htut, who served as the junta's deputy ambassador in Washington before he sought asylum in the US in 2005, supported the idea of bringing the junta to the ICC. ([1 June 2009 DVB](#))