



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)
P.O Box 93, Mae Sot, Tak Province 63110, Thailand
info@aappb.org, www.aappb.org

United States Campaign for Burma
1444 N Street, NW, Suite A2, Washington, DC 20005
Tel: (202) 234 8022, Fax: (202) 234 8044
info@uscampaignforburma.org, www.uscampaignforburma.org



6 October 2008

Permanent Representatives to the United Nations
Members of the United Nations Security Council

H.E Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann
President of the 63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly

H.E Ambassador Martin Uhomoibhi
Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations in Geneva
President of the United Nations Human Rights Council

H.E Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General, United Nations

H.E Ms. Navi Pillay
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Subject: Release of all Political Prisoners in Burma/Myanmar

Excellencies,

The United Nations has been working to help facilitate national reconciliation and democratization in Burma/Myanmar for many years. The UN General Assembly and UN Human Rights Council (formerly known as the Commission on Human Rights) have adopted successive resolutions since 1991, asking the ruling military junta in Burma/Myanmar to (among others);

- (1) Release all political prisoners, including Nobel Peace Prize recipient Daw Aung San Suu Kyi,
- (2) Stop systematic human rights violations and use of force against peaceful demonstrators,
- (3) Solve the problems in our country peacefully by means of a meaningful and time-bound dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her party the National League for Democracy and ethnic representatives,

The UN Security Council also issued a Presidential Statement on 11 October 2007, calling for the military junta to release all political prisoners and “create the necessary conditions for a genuine dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all concerned parties and ethnic groups in

order to achieve an inclusive national reconciliation with the direct support of the United Nations.”¹

Despite requests from the main bodies of the United Nations, which you lead, the junta has not responded to repeated United Nations demands. The military junta, known as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), still refuses to implement the recommendations made by the UNGA, UNHRC and the UNSC and is embarking on its unilateral path to legalize permanent military dictatorship in Burma/Myanmar with an illegitimate constitution and a sham election. The entire population is still under a climate of fear. The junta’s brutal oppression against its own people continues and intensifies everyday. Children under 18 are still forcibly recruited into the junta’s army. Forced labor practices and forced relocation continue nationwide, unabated. The junta’s soldiers rape ethnic women and girls while hundreds of thousands of ethnic peoples are forced to flee from their villages to jungles and mountains where they live as internally displaced persons and others flee to refugee camps in neighboring countries.

People who express their desire for freedom and democracy are attacked and arrested by the junta’s security forces and civilian thugs and sent to prisons for lengthy imprisonment. The number of political prisoners in Burma/Myanmar is now rapidly growing. Last year, 13 August 2007, then-UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar Professor Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, reported to the General Assembly that “As of 27 June 2007, the number of political prisoners was estimated at 1,192.”² One year later, the number of political prisoners in Burma/Myanmar today is at least 2,123, about 900 more than last year -- a 78% increase. You can find a report, detailing the arrests, imprisonments and trials of Burmese democracy activists and Buddhist Monks, attached to this letter.

The military junta even cynically released 9,002 criminal prisoners on 23 September – but only ten political prisoners were included. U Win Htein, senior assistant to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, was released on 23 September and re-arrested and put back in prison the next day. The immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners in Burma/Myanmar is an important benchmark for positive development and is necessary for a genuine national reconciliation process. Dramatic increases in the number of political prisoners show the junta’s defiance of the United Nations and the international community, as well as its own people. This is a clear indication that the military junta continues forcing entire population and country to live under permanent military dictatorship.

Days after the first anniversary of the Burmese junta’s brutal crackdown on the Buddhist Monks-led “Saffron Revolution”, we would like to ask your Excellencies to transform the words contained in many resolutions and statements from the UNGA, UNHRC, and UNSC into effective action before it is too late to pull our country back from the hands of the junta.

We especially request Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to secure the release of all political prisoners in our country before, or during your visit to Burma in December.

¹ Statement of the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2007/37
<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/538/30/PDF/N0753830.pdf?OpenElement>

² The Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, A/62/223, 13 August 2007
<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/457/14/PDF/N0745714.pdf?OpenElement>

We would like to stress that strong and decisive action by the United Nations for the release of all political prisoners and realization of a meaningful and time-bound dialogue between the military junta, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her party, the NLD, and ethnic representatives is needed more than ever.

Sincerely Yours,



Bo Kyi
Joint-Secretary
Assistance Association for Political Prisoners



Aung Din
Executive Director
U.S. Campaign for Burma

Enclosed:

Joint Report, "The Future in the Dark: The Massive Increase in Burma's Political Prisoners, September 2008"

Copies sent to:

- (1) Mr. B. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General, UN Department of Political Affairs
- (2) Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Myanmar
- (3) Mr. Tomas Ojea Quintana, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar/Burma
- (4) Ms. Margaret Sekaggya, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders
- (5) Ms. Manuela Carmena Castrillo, Chairperson-Rapporteur, UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention
- (6) Ms. Yakin Erturk, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Its Causes and Consequences
- (7) Mr. Manfred Nowak, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- (8) Mr. Rudi Muhammad Rizki, UN Independent Expert on Human Rights and International Solidarity
- (9) Mr. Santiago Corcuera Cabezut, Chairperson-Rapporteur, UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances
- (10) Mr. Frank La Rue Lewy, UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression
- (11) Mr. Scot Marciel, U.S. Ambassador to the ASEAN
- (12) Mr. Piero Fassino, EU Special Envoy for Burma
- (13) Amnesty International
- (14) Human Rights Watch
- (15) International Federation for Human Rights
- (16) World Organization against Torture
- (17) Media

The Future in the Dark: The Massive Increase in Burma's Political Prisoners, September 2008

Jointly Produced by
Assistance Association for Political Prisoners
(Burma)
and
United States Campaign for Burma

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) (AAPP) is dedicated to provide aid to political prisoners in Burma and their family members. The AAPP also monitors and records the situation of all political prisoners and condition of prisons and reports to the international community. For further information about the AAPP, please visit to our website at www.aappb.org.

The United States Campaign for Burma (USCB) is a U.S.-based membership organization dedicated to empowering grassroots activists around the world to bring about an end to the military dictatorship in Burma. Through public education, leadership development initiatives, conferences, and advocacy campaigns at local, national and international levels, USCB works to empower Americans and Burmese dissidents-in-exile to promote freedom, democracy, and human rights in Burma and raise awareness about the egregious human rights violations committed by Burma's military regime. For further information about the USCB, please visit to our website at www.uscampaignforburma.org