

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

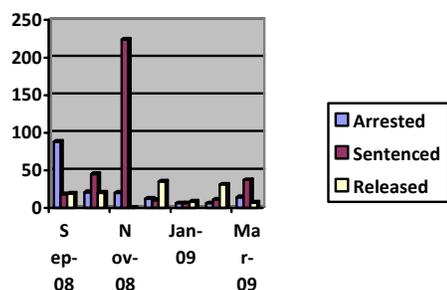
Summary of current situation

There are a total of **2,146** political prisoners in Burma. ¹ These include:

CATEGORY	NUMBER
Monks	220
Members of Parliament	15
Students	272 ²
Women	187
NLD members	458
Members of the Human Rights Defenders and Promoters network	43
Ethnic nationalities	203
Cyclone Nargis volunteers	21
Teachers	26
Media activists	46
Lawyers	12
In poor health	113

Since the protests in August 2007 leading to last September's Saffron Revolution, a total of **1,070** activists have been arrested and are still in detention.

Monthly trend analysis



During the month of March 2009, at least 22 arrested and still detained, 42 sentenced and 11 transferred, 7 released, and 8 in bad health show the Burmese regime continues to inflict human rights abuses. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued an opinion report which declared the detention of Daw Aung San Su Kyi to be illegal and in violation of the regime's own laws. This is the first time the UNWG AD has declared that it violates the regime's own laws.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention also ruled that the imprisonment of Min Ko Naing, Pyone Cho, Ko Jimmy and Min Zayar violates minimum standards of international law. The Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Burma released his report following his visit in February. The report recommendations call for the progressive release of all political prisoners. Forum for Democracy in Burma (FDB) and AAPP launched their worldwide campaign for the release of political prisoners. The Free Burma's Political Prisoners Now! campaign aims to collect 888,888 signatures to give to Ban Ki-Moon, asking him to make it his personal priority to secure the release of all political prisoners in Burma. Numerous campaign launch events occurred across Thailand, Australia, and other countries in Asia.

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.

² This figure includes 46 '88 Generation Students Group' members.

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

Two leaders of 88 Generation Students are suffering serious health concerns. **Hla Myo Naing** is at risk of blindness, after being refused treatment for a problem in his one good eye. **Min Ko Naing** is reported to be suffering from high blood pressure and eye problems and not receiving proper treatment. Labour rights activist **Su Su Nwe** is very ill in hospital. Two members of **Generation Wave** were sentenced to eight years and five years. The brother of **U Gambira** was sentenced to five years hard labour. At least 6 members of NLD were sentenced in March.

Treatment of prisoners and their families

March 17

Burma Dissidents' Visits Restricted

Burma's political prisoners—many of them serving lengthy jail terms for their part in the 1988 pro-democracy movement—face harsh conditions in remote prisons where family visits are limited and food supply strictly controlled by the authorities, relatives and opposition party members say. A representative of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) in the central city of Meiktila accused authorities in the local prison of violating the human rights of political inmates." They always refuse to permit at least one or more food parcels whenever we take in food for the prisoners," Meiktila NLD secretary Myint Myint Aye said. [17 march 2009 RFA](#) , [18 march 2009 DVB](#)

Prisoners Released

Two prominent human rights lawyers, **Aung Thein** and **Khin Maung Shein** were released after serving 4 months for contempt of court. Also 4 members of NLD were released Aye Ko, Zaw Myo Latt, Kyaw Thu Lin, Than Myint, and one businessman Khin Zaw on March 26th.

88 Generation Students Group

47 members of Generation Students group are currently imprisoned. Six activists, including **Aung Kyaw Kyaw** were sentenced for participating in 88 Generation activities. 3 members of 88 Generation Students were sentenced. They are **Win Maw, Zaw Zaw Min, and Aung Zaw Oo.**

March 30

'88 generation student leader **Min Ko Naing** is suffering from immobility in his hands and high blood pressure due to lack of exercise, his sister Kyi Kyi Nyunt said. "He is not allowed to take a walk," she said. "He is not sweating, so they ask him to jump. "He only develops pains, but no sweats, he said in a letter." There is no regular doctor at Kengtung jail in eastern Burma where he is being held, Kyi Kyi Nyunt said. ([dvv.30032009](#))

March 24

The Burmese military regime have handed down sentences to six activists in relation to their activities on behalf of the 88 Generation Students Group. They were arrested on August 7, 2008. One of the six was a schoolteacher, **Aung Aung Zaw**, who had been arrested allegedly in possession of anti-government leaflets. The six were convicted at a separate hearing in Insein Prison on Monday, although their sentences are as yet not known. ([Irrawaddy.24032009](#))

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

March 18

Burma Dissident's Eyesight 'At Risk'

A Burmese dissident's wife calls on prison authorities to treat her husband's eyesight before he goes blind. A former student leader who was jailed for his part in the 1988 pro-democracy movement in Burma is in danger of losing his eyesight, his wife said, after getting a letter from **Ko Hla Myo Naung** last month. Ma Aye Aye Mar wrote to prison authorities in the northern city of Myitkyina requesting medical treatment for her husband after receiving the letter, she said. "I received a letter from him saying that one of his eyes was bad. He said a doctor had seen his eye but the problem is not something that could be diagnosed just by looking into the eye with a flashlight. With one eye already gone blind, he cannot afford to let the other eye go blind as well". She said the problem was similar to one he had already experienced in the other eye, resembling strobe flashes of light from time to time. "The people there don't know much," Ma Aye Aye Mar said. "Even in Rangoon there are only two eye specialists who can treat this kind of ailment. There are no proper medical instruments there either. They just looked at his eye and prescribed eye drops," she said.

[18 march 2009 RFA](#)

March 18

Prisoners living in dire conditions hundreds of miles from families

Win Maung, father of 88 generation student leader **Pyone Cho**, who is detained in Kawthaung prison in the southernmost part of Burma, said it took him three days by bus to reach his son at a cost of 60000 kyat (\$US60). The average monthly wage in Burma is around 30000 kyat (\$US30). "No matter how the government is making our lives more difficult by sending our loved ones to remote prisons that are hard to reach, we still go and visit them, to learn about their situation in those places because they are our loved ones," he said.

"After hearing that we had arrived in Kawthaung in February but were not allowed to visit him, he became worried and his blood pressure went up," U Win Maung said of his son's health. "He had to take medication and a doctor took care of him. He had high blood pressure when he first arrived and this is the second time. His general health is good. The township medical doctor would visit the prison regularly and treat the prisoners," he said. Conditions inside the jail were basic, with some access allowed to grow vegetables for food, but political prisoners were kept from speaking to one another, his father said. "As for sleeping conditions, they were given a wooden bench and a bamboo mat on top. But since the weather is similar to that of Rangoon, it was not too cold. And as it would rain in the night, they did not suffer from the heat too much." [dwb.18032009](#)

March 6

Pop star imprisoned for further 10 years

The frontman of a well-known pop band has been sentenced along with two others to ten years imprisonment under the Electronics Act. **Win Maw**, an 88 generation student member who fronts Shwe Thanzin ('Golden Melody'), was sentenced on 5 March. Another 88 generation student member **Zaw Zaw Min** (also known as Baung Baung) was also sentenced, along with **Aung Zaw Oo**. The latest sentencing means Win Maw will now serve a total of 17 years, Zaw Zaw Min a total of 12 years, and Aung Zaw Oo a total of 22 years. All three court hearings were held in Insein Prison's special court. [6 march 2009 DVB](#)

March 5

Political prisoners locked in isolation cells

Political prisoners, including 88 generation student member **Htay Kywe**, have been locked in isolation cells and barred from seeing family members at Buthidaung jail in Arakan state, west Burma. "Htay Kywe is in good health but not allowed to see people from outside," said a former prisoner at Buthidaung who was recently released. Along with Htay Kywe there are

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

more than 10 political prisoners at Buthidaung jail, including monk leader U Eithritya, Taungup township NLD secretary Zaw Naing, and Than Htay. [5 march 2009 DVB](#)

March 4

Imprisoned students' leader in declining health

The sister of 88 generation students' leader, **Min Ko Naing**, who is currently imprisoned in Kengtung jail in eastern Burma, has said he has been suffering from poor health due to lack of exercise. "I am mainly concerned that he might have a stroke due to the high blood pressure," Kyi Kyi Nyunt said. She said he has been suffering from immobility in his hands and high blood pressure. "I left with him some medicines. It would better if there is a regular doctor at the prison." Kyi Kyin Nyunt was allowed only 20 minutes to talk with her brother, having travelled hundreds of miles from Rangoon to reach Kengtung in eastern Burma.

She also said the prison authorities also revoked a permission previously granted to him to receive books and magazines from the outside. "We previously made a deal with a local bookshop to send him books and magazines regularly but lately the prison authorities have laid probation on that too. If possible I want the authorities to allow family members coming from afar, at least for two days – forty minutes for each time," she said.

"The time was up before we could tell each other about ourselves." ([dwb.04032009](#))

National League for Democracy members

458 National League for Democracy (NLD) members are currently in prison. 13 members of the NLD were sentenced this month along with the arrests of 12 members of the NLD. It is believed that the arrest of these NLD members is an attempt by the regime to disrupt opposition activity before the 2010 elections. Also, imprisoned NLD members, Htun Htun Naing, Win Mya Mya, and Shwe Maung are suffering health problems.

March 30

Political prisoners transferred despite worsening health

Imprisoned National League for Democracy member **Win Mya Mya** has undergone a prison transfer for the second time in a week amid reports that she is in declining health. She was imprisoned in September 2007 along with five others under charges of sedition after joining the monk-led protests. She was sentenced to 12 years in prison after a court case held inside Mandalay jail. She was transferred from Mandalay jail on 22 March and then transferred again last Saturday to Pu-tao jail in the far-north of Burma. "She is suffering from nerve diseases caused by the [2003] Depayin massacre and her blood level is low and she has diabetes."

The Depayin massacre occurred in May 2003 when around 70 NLD members were killed by a government-backed militia.

Win Mya Mya maintains her defiance despite her appeal being rejected, he added, claiming she said: "I am being sent to where I deserve for my works. You live one day, you die one day. I don't care if they sent me to the moon."([dwb.30032009](#))

March 30

7 NLD members from Thingangyun Township, Rangoon were sentenced. **U Tin Mya** (5 years), **Ko Zaw Win** (5 years), **Ko Aung Kyaw** (5 years), **Aung Tun** (5 years), **Ye Zaw Htike** (10 years), **Khin Soe** (5 years), and **Aung Than Tun** (5 years) were sentenced by eastern Rangoon district court on 30 March 2009. Khin Soe and Ye Zaw Htike have already been sentenced 8 years each. Khin Soe will serve 13 years and Ye Zaw Htike will serve 18 years. (AAPP)

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

March 27

NLD Marks Anniversary with Call for Dialogue

Burma's main opposition party repeated its calls for the ruling junta to begin a dialogue with its opponents and release all political prisoners during a ceremony to mark the anniversary of an important event in the country's military history. "Open talk is the best answer to solve political problems in Burma," said National League for Democracy (NLD) spokesperson Nyan Win. He added that the junta was also urged to allow the party to reopen all of its offices around the country. The NLD held the ceremony to mark Resistance Day—known officially as Armed Forces Day—at its Rangoon headquarters. Around 500 people attended the annual gathering, which commemorates an uprising against Japanese military occupation during the Second World War. [27 march 2009 irrawaddy](#)

March 26

NLD Urges US to Talk to Junta

Burma's opposition party urged the US to open talks with the country's junta, a spokesman said Wednesday, the last day of an American diplomat's visit amid signs of a shifting US approach to the military rulers. The US is Burma's strongest critic and applies political and economic sanctions against the junta for its poor human rights record and failure to hand over power to a democratically elected government. But President Barack Obama's administration has said it is reviewing its Burma policy, which thus far has done little to nudge the junta toward reforms. [26 march 2009 irrawaddy](#)

March 26

Opposition party hails US direct approach

The National League for Democracy yesterday spoke of their support for the United States' direct approach to engaging with the Burmese government during a meeting between NLD members and a senior US official. Steven Blake, Director of the US State Department's Mainland Southeast Asia Office, met with NLD officials for an hour yesterday at the NLD headquarters in Rangoon. NLD spokesperson Nyan Win told DVB that the talks mainly consisted of discussions regarding the NLD's stance on the current political situation in Burma. "It seemed the US official also used this trip to [learn] about the NLD's opinion on Burmese politics," said Nyan Win. [26 march 2009 DVB](#)

March 25

Three NLD members framed and jailed for exposing corruption

The Twante Township Court in Rangoon Division, sentenced three NLD youth wing members, who had exposed the rampant corruption of local authorities, to seven days imprisonment. Township Court Judge Aye Ko Ko sentenced Twante Township, Zaythit Ward, Mibametta fish wholesaler, **Khin Zaw**, his employees and NLD youth members **Zaw Myo Latt, Kyaw Thu Lynn and Than Myint** to seven days imprisonment, under the 1907 Towns Act. "Initially they charged Khin Zaw and seven others. Then they acquitted four of them as they were from Twante town. Khin Zaw and the remaining three were sentenced to seven days imprisonment each," Advocate Kyin Toe from Twante said. According to the 1907 Towns Act, guests coming from other regions need to register at local administrative offices and the guests from the same town do not need to register, if they stay overnight in other wards of the same town. However, the local 'Peace and Development Council' (PDC) office refused to register these employees, without giving any reason, when they went there and tried to register them late last month. Khin Zaw is well-known as the whistle blower of corruption by local authorities and he had also signed in the petition letter for 'Free Aung San Suu Kyi and Tin Oo' signature campaign. He said that he would appeal against this verdict. All four convicted people are still in police custody at Twante Police

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

Station and it has been learnt that they would be sent to Insein prison today. [25 march 2009 mizzima](#)

March 24

Insein Court Sentences 13 More Political Activists

In an apparent warning to Burmese citizens and a snub to the international community, the Burmese military government has sentenced 13 more dissidents. According to sources in Rangoon, a special tribunal in Insein Prison on Monday sentenced 13 pro-democracy activists on a variety of “security” charges—some for participating in relief efforts to help victims of Cyclone Nargis, others for protesting the detention of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Three of them; **Htet Htet Oo Wai, Win Myint Maung and Tun Tun Win**—were members of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD). It was alleged that they had taken part in a march to the People’s Assembly building in Rangoon in December calling for the release of Suu Kyi. They were each sentenced to five years imprisonment under State Emergency Act 5/J. [24 march 2009 irrawaddy](#)

March 18

Prisoners living in dire conditions hundreds of miles from families

Family members of political prisoners languishing in jails across Burma have spoken of appalling living conditions and difficulties in visiting relatives held in remote prisons. Aye Thet, wife of imprisoned Insein township National League for Democracy youth coordinator **Htun Htun Naing**, said that her husband was denied the food and medicine she brought him. “They said they had concerns over food hygiene and medicine intoxication for inmates in the prison,” she said. “But look at what they have been feeding the inmates; they are feeding them some random plants from the side of the street without washing them before cooking. That is definitely not hygienic.” Mandalay’s Meikhtila prison, where Htun Htun Naing is being held along with five other well-known political prisoners, is run by a government official called Cho Lwin, Aye Thet said. [\(dvh.18032009\)](#)

March 18

The wife of Mandalay NLD member **Shwe Maung**, who is currently imprisoned in Pyapon jail, says that he has been suffering gastric diseases. “I gave him some medicines, but we are living in constant fear for his health,” Than Than Win said. “When he was in Insein jail, I was able to see him once a month. Now I can’t even do it one in two months.” During her last trip, she had to travel to Pyapon with her 18-month old daughter by bus and boat, she added. “I lost the food basket I brought for him. We vomited all the way. We are in big trouble for sending him to somewhere faraway.” [\(dvh.04032009\)](#)

March 17

Authorities destroy memorial for deceased opposition member

A stone monument built in memory of a former National League for Democracy chair was demolished by local government authorities on Tuesday, according to his family. Dr Hla Aung, chair of the NLD in Wundwin township and 1990 elected people’s parliament representative for Wundwin, died on March 17. His family erected a stone monument in which his ashes were held on land owned by him in Tae Su village. Local NLD secretary Aung Thu told DVB that the next day the monument was demolished by village authorities and a local Union Solidarity and Development Association official, Kyaw Swa. Hla Aung’s daughter Ma Khine said she was outraged by the authorities’ move. “That is really harsh to us and also very unfair but we had no chance to complain to them as they are government authorities and the power is in their hands,” she said. “I feel so sad and outraged about this.” [26 march 2009 DVB](#)

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

March 16

Fifth NLD arrest this month as junta uproots opposition activity

A National League for Democracy member has been arrested in what one political prisoner expert believes is an attempt by Burmese authorities to destroy opposition activity before the 2010 elections. Rangoon's South Dagon Myothit township NLD member **Kyi Lwin** was arrested and taken away by authorities at around 1.30am on 16 March, party spokesman Nyan Win said. "I was told around 30 policemen came to his house and arrested him," he said. "His health is not good. He is over 50 and had a stroke." Kyi Lwin had been an executive committee member but became an ordinary member due to his poor health.

([dvb.17032009](#))

March 16

Communication impeded as NLD pressured to cancel meetings

Rangoon's Thanlyin township Peace and Development Council has told a local National League for Democracy leader to postpone their March meeting in an effort to stop top NLD leaders from seeing local members. The authorities have told the NLD branch that if members arrive, they will have to postpone the meeting or they will be reported to the authorities, said NLD leader Aye Than. "We said we do not have time to stop our members from coming to the meeting, and that we cannot postpone the meeting as it is a regular activity," she said. [16 march 2009 DVB](#)

March 15

NLD Ahlone Township member and NLD HQ Social Aid Group member, **Ma Cho a.k.a. Ma Myint Myint San** was arrested by the authorities, while on her way home from office on March 13. At about 11 p.m. on that night, the local authority (Ward level PDC committee members) came to her home and informed her family that she was being held in Thuwanna stadium, and they had taken her there to question her about matters relating to a telephone. Ma Cho was helping the families of political prisoners. In addition, NLD Thaketa Township organizing committee member and photographer for every event of NLD HQ, **U Thein Lwin**, was also arrested in Taungoo, two weeks ago ([Mizzima.16032009](#))

March 13

Authorities arrest NLD youth in Akyab

Akyab, Arakan State: The Special Intelligent Agent authority arrested four National League for Democracy (NLD) members at Lawkanandar Pagoda, on March 10, around 8:30 pm, a local devotee from Akyab said.

On the evening of March 10, four youths from NLD, with flower bouquets in their hands had gone to the Lawkanandar Pagoda to pray. They stayed in the Pagoda for about 15 minutes and prayed for the release of Daw Aung San Su Kyi and other political prisoners, a close friend of theirs said.

The arrested youths have been identified as **Hla Shwe** (19) and **Kyaw Ba aka Aung Myint**, both of whom hailed from the stadium area, **Aung Htun Laung** (30), who hailed from **Mingan**, **Kyaw Zaw** (28), who hailed from Sanpya quarter of Akyab. A **monk**, from Tawra Monastery, was also arrested along with the NLD youths, said a devotee. [Kaladanpress](#)

March 9

Eight people arrested after signature campaign

Eight people were arrested in Rangoon's Twantay township on charges of not having valid guest passes after they carried out a signature campaign calling for the release of all political prisoners. **Khin Zaw**, a seafood dealer and owner of a teashop in Zaythit ward, was arrested on 3 March along with seven of his employees and released two days later.

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

Seventy people, including Zaythit ward authority chairman, Than Oo, and the local police force, raided his house, according to Khin Zaw. They were accompanied by Union Solidarity and Development Association members and immigration department staff. ([dvh.09032009](#))

March 6

Two NLD members in unspecified arrest

Two more Rangoon NLD members have been arrested, the party's news and information committee said. **Sein Hlaing** of Sanchaung township was arrested on 6 March, and **Shwe Gyoe** from Hlaing township on the 7 March. It is still not known exactly why they were arrested and where they were taken to, party spokesman Nyan Win said. "Shwe Gyoe is the father-in-law of Aung Hlaing Win who was arrested in 2005 and who died in detention from torture," he said. Three of the nine NLD members arrested last year for a protest demanding the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi remain imprisoned at Insein jail. The other six were released in January. ([dvh.10032009](#))

March 5

NLD member receives added charges after shouting slogans

Imprisoned National League for Democracy member U Tin Yu has been charged, along with nine other people, for obstructing officials in Insein prison court after shouting slogans in the courtroom.

The charge was brought on 3 March after they shouted 'obtaining human rights is our cause'. "Family members were unable to attend the hearing as the door was blocked with benches and police," Tin Yu's daughter Thin Thin Yu said. "They were charged with section 353. We had to miss our job to come here." Tin Yu, of NLD Rangoon's Hlaing Thayar township, and the nine others were forcibly shackled by Hlaing Thayar police, although the prison authority allowed them to be transported without fetters. [5 march 2009 DVB](#)

Monks

There are currently 220 monks in prison. Friends and family members of ABMA leader, U Gambira have received sentences this month.

March 16

Imprisoned monks' leader sends message of solidarity

The imprisoned All-Burma Monks Alliance leader, U **Gambira**, has passed on a message of support to human rights and democracy activists in Burma to keep fighting for change in the political system, said his mother. U **Gambira**, known for playing a key role in initiating the September 2007 monk-led protests, is serving 69 years' imprisonment in Sagaing division's Khandee prison. He was previously held in Mandalay prison before being transferred to Khandee on January 18 for allegedly staging a hunger strike in solitary confinement. His mother, Daw Yay, told *DVB* she went to Khandee last week to visit him. He still remains in solitary confinement. "He reiterated that he was continuing his fight for the people of Burma whose rights were being abused by the government," said Daw Yay. "He reminded everyone to fulfill their duties."

Last week six people, including two close relatives of U Gambira, were sentenced to five years imprisonment each with hard labour under the Immigration Act. The group included U Gambira's brother, **Aung Ko Ko Lwin**, brother-in-law **Moe Htet Hylan**, **Kyaw Myo Satt**, **Hlaing Myo**, **Soe Lwin** and **Ye Nyunt**

Family members said they were first arrested for planning to set off hydrogen balloons in Rangoon last year to mark the one year anniversary of the formation of the ABMA. ([dvh.16032009](#))

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

March 13

Brother-in-law of ABMA leader sentenced to five years' hard labour

The brother-in-law of All-Burma Monks Alliance leader **U Gambira** has been sentenced to five years' imprisonment with hard labour under immigration laws, said his wife.

Moe Htet Hlyan, husband of U Gambira's older sister Khin Thu Htay was sentenced under an emergency provision act by Rangoon's North Dagon township court yesterday for illegally entering the country. He was arrested 9 September 2008 while organising an activity to set off hot air balloons in Rangoon to mark the one-year anniversary of the formation of the ABMA.

The ABMA came to international attention after initiating the nationwide monk protests in September 2007. Khin Thu Htay said the court's judge wanted to let her husband go but was forced to hand down the sentence by high-ranking government officials. "The court judge previously promised me that justice will be sought and that there was not enough evidence to sentence my husband," said Khin Thu Htay. "But then he was pressured by Burma's chief judge to pass the sentence." In other news, two members of the National League for Democracy in Rangoon, Ma Cho and Theingi, who provided aid to victims of cyclone Nargis, were each sentenced to two years' imprisonment by Insein prison special court under charges of having links with unlawful associations. ([dvh.13032009](#))

March 9

U Gambira longs for internet and tea

Activist Buddhist monk **U Gambira** serving 68 years in prison, is longing for internet and tea. The 29 year-old monk's mother Daw Ray who visited Khamti prison in Sagaing Division on March 9 to see him, said as much and added he is in good health. He talked a lot. 'I wish to use the internet. I wish to move around freely I want to drink tea and need one more year to complete my studies etc. But I don't mind having sacrificed my freedom and I'm still struggling,' he was quoted as saying by the 60-year old Daw Ray who travelled eight days to meet her son. This is the first ever visit to Khamti prison by his family which cost them about Kyat 650,000 (more than 600 US\$) as travel expenses. "We could talk with him for about an hour. He laughed all the time during our prison interview and said that he had not laughed for a long time," Daw Ray said. The health situation of U Gambira was poor late last year and now his family is preparing to appeal against his sentence by consulting his lawyer. ([Mizzima.13032009](#))

Cyclone Nargis volunteers

There are currently 21 Cyclone Nargis volunteers in prison. At least 4 people received sentences this month for aiding the victims of the Cyclone.

March 24

Insein Court Sentences 13 More Political Activists

In an apparent warning to Burmese citizens and a snub to the international community, the Burmese military government has sentenced 13 more dissidents. According to sources in Rangoon, a special tribunal in Insein Prison on Monday sentenced 13 pro-democracy activists on a variety of "security" charges—some for participating in relief efforts to help victims of Cyclone Nargis, others for protesting the detention of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Four of the convicted were former student activists: **Yin Yin Wine, Tin Tin Cho, Myat Thu and Ni Mo Hlaing**. In response to the Cyclone Nargis disaster in May they volunteered as relief workers in the Irrawaddy delta and collected donations from friends and relatives. The tribunal sentenced them to three years in prison. [24 march 2009 irrawaddy](#)

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

March 20

Zarganar's mother Kyi Oo dies

Kyi Oo, the mother of imprisoned variety artist **Zarganar**, died at her home in Rangoon this evening from cancer at the age of 81. She was married to Aung Thein, popularly known as writer, artist Nang Nyunt Swe. They have three sons; Wunna, Bala (also known as Tayza, Nyi Nyi Kyaw) and Thura. The oldest son Wunna was involved in 1974 U Thant uprising and severely tortured by the police until he went mad. He eventually died from the wounds he received in prison. The youngest, Thura, popularly known as comedian Zargana, is languishing in Myikyina jail in northern Burma, serving a 35 years' jail term which was reduced from 59 years. ([dvh.20032009](#))

March 18

Five people detained in Rangoon's Insein prison for helping victims of Cyclone Nargis have been transferred to prisons away from their families, relatives said. They are National League for Democracy members **Ma Cho** and **Ma Theingi**, and **Min Thein Tun** (also known as Thiha) and two unnamed people. **Ma Cho** was transferred to Pyay jail, **Ma Theingi** to Ma-upin jail, **Thiha** and the other two to Thayet jail. Thiha was given a 17-year sentence on 11 March under the Unlawful Associations Act, Electronics Act and Immigration act, after helping coordinate relief efforts over the internet. His father said that the authorities did not notify him of his son's transfer. "I heard rumours and went to investigate and they confirmed he was sent to Thayet jail on 15 March," he said. "I only found out about it afterwards." ([dvh.18032009](#))

March 11

Cyclone relief coordinator sentenced to 17 years

A man who organised rescue efforts via the internet for Cyclone Nargis victims has been sentenced to 17 years in jail. **Min Thein Tun** (also known as Thiha) was charged under the Electronics Act, Unlawful Associations Act and Immigration Act. The sentence was passed on 11 March in a court inside Insein prison. He had carried out the efforts whilst working legally in Malaysia, but was arrested on his return to Burma last year, his mother Thein Thein said. "On 11 July 2008 [the police] came to my house and searched it," she said. "They found nothing. They searched the house a second time and told Thein Thein that her son had been arrested. "When I asked [Min Thein Tun] what had happened, he said he was not involved in politics, just social work and support," she said. Six members of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions are currently on trial following their arrest last year for collecting and burying corpses in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis. They are defending allegations of sedition and Unlawful Associations Act. ([dvh.12032009](#))

Women

March 9

Marchers call for release of women political prisoners

Exiled Burmese women's activist group, the Women's League of Burma, have marked International Women's Day by calling for the release of all women political prisoners in Burma. The WLB in India, Bangladesh and Thailand yesterday organized social gatherings, discussion forums and marches to show solidarity for imprisoned women activists. Saw Mya Yazar Linn, a board member of the WLB, said that about 50 people attended the Women's Day discussion forum organized by the group in Dhaka, Bangladesh. [9 march 2009 DVB](#)

Lawyers

12 lawyers are currently in detention. 2 lawyers were released this month, while one received a sentence.

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

March 18

Farmers' lawyer sentenced to four years in prison

A young lawyer defending farmers whose land had been forcibly seized by the army was sentenced to four years' imprisonment by Magwe division court yesterday, said a source close to the court. Around 50 farmers reported to the International Labour Organisation office in Rangoon in January, complaining that the army confiscated more than 5,000 acres of paddy fields at Myetyeh-kan and Kyaung-ywalay villages in Natmauk township. **Pho Phyu**, well-known as a political activists' lawyer, had been requested by family members to represent four farmers who were arrested and detained when news of their visit to the ILO reached authorities. He was charged under the Unlawful Associations Act. One of the farmers, Zaw Htay from Aunglan, was sentenced to 10 years on 23 January with the charge of leaking national secrets for taking photographs of confiscated farmlands. Lawyers defending political and human rights activists have been harassed and intimidated in various ways. ([dvb.18032009](#))

March 6

Activist lawyer released while others remain in prison

Well-known central court activist lawyer, **Aung Thein**, has been released from Irrawaddy's Patheingyi prison, while another lawyer **Khin Maung Shein** was released from Myaung Mya prison. The two lawyers were sentenced to four months' imprisonment each last year November for contempt of court. "This is going into our country's history; the government have jailed a lawyer for speaking out his opinion, about having no confidence in a judicial system where courts no longer hold balanced trials," Aung Thein said. "This is a highly inappropriate act. They sentenced me so quickly, the day after they filed the charge upon me," he said. "Actually I still haven't seen the verdict on my sentence – I might have a look at it when I get home." ([dvb.06032009](#))

Other organizations

March 8

Former political prisoner detained

Burmese military authorities in Rangoon rearrested a former political prisoner in the early hours of Saturday, family members said. Family members said Rangoon Special Bureau Police on Saturday came at about 1 a.m. (local time) to the house of **Sein Hlaing's** in Sanchuang township and said they needed to interrogate him and took him away. "Everybody was asleep at that time but we woke up because of the noise. There were six SB officers including the township chairman. They said they needed to interrogate him and took him away," the family member said. "They [SB] questioned him as to where he got his antiques and he told them he got it from Pansodan Street," the family member said. **Sein Hlaing** was earlier arrested and sentenced to 14 years on charges under article 5 (J) and was released in 2002. After he was released from prison, he got involved in the National League for Democracy's humanitarian assistance programmes and helped former political prisoners, a colleague said. ([Mizzima.08032009](#))

March 3

Generation Wave activists sentenced

In March it was reported that Generation Wave members **Nyein Chan** and **Aung Ko Min** were handed down jail terms by Sanchuang township court on 27 February for distributing leaflets marking the one-year anniversary of the group's formation. The two are currently being held at Insein prison and will be transferred to remote prisons. **Nyein Chan** was sentenced to eight years under section 6 of Unlawful Associations Act and section 17(1) of Immigration Act. He still faces further charges. **Aung Ko Min** was sentenced to five years with the Unlawful Association Act, a relative of theirs said. They were arrested at home on 10 October 2008, a day after the first anniversary of the formation of GW. Eight more members were arrested on the same day, GW member Moe Thway said. "We distributed leaflets on 9 October to mark the anniversary and they were arrested in connection with that," he said.

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

“Others arrested were **Zin Min Aung, Aung Paing, Yeh Khaung Htut** from south Okkalapa. **Arkar (also known as Kyaw Thu Myo Myint)** was arrested three or four days later and sentenced to 10 years.” They were all transferred to remote jails at Kawthaung, Taungoo, Kyaukpyu and Mong Sat. ([dwb.03032009](#))

Journalists, Bloggers, and Writers

There are currently 46 media activists in detention.

March 28

Businessman Sentenced to One Year in Prison for Sharing Information

A businessman from Maungdaw was sentenced to one year in prison by the Maungdaw district court on Monday for sending information to an exiled media group in Bangladesh, said a monk from Maungdaw. “He was sentenced to one year in prison as he was sending out information abroad through an exiled Burmese news agency, but authorities in Maungdaw charged him under immigration law,” the monk said. **Ko Nyunt Maung**, age 45, was arrested by military intelligence on 2 January, 2009, during a night raid on his home. Intelligence officials reportedly accused him of sending information to Bangladesh from Burma. ([dem4burma.28032009](#))

March 26

Retired Police Official Arrested for Connections with Exiled Media

Retired police official U Mrat Tun was arrested by Burmese military intelligence last week while he was on his way to Buthidaung from the border town on Maungdaw, due to suspicion that he had links to an exiled media group in Bangladesh, said his friend. U Mrat Tun, aged 60, is from Tha Win Chaung Village in Pauktaw Township 20 miles east of Sittwe, and is a businessman working in the western border area. U Mrat Tun is being detained in the police lockup at the Maungdaw Myoma police station and he has had no chance to visit with family members that had come out to see him. Recently Burmese military intelligence agents have been arresting people in Arakan State on accusations that they have connections and involvement with exiled media groups in Bangladesh. According to a local source, the military authority is likely determined to crackdown on media activities in Arakan State because many stories of human rights violations and forced labor are being published by exiled media organizations. (<http://www.narinjara.com/details.asp?id=2106>)

March 6

Weekly Eleven journal editor **Kyaw Kyaw Thant**, who is imprisoned at Insein jail for reporting on Cyclone Nargis, has reported breathing difficulties after being kept in a small cell and denied regular exercise, his sister Thanma Thant said. Kyaw Kyaw Thant was arrested with Ecovision's reporter Eint Khaing Oo. ([dwb.06032009](#))

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

The UN issued a new ruling on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's detention this month.

March 25

US Disappointed by Suu Kyi's Detention

The United States said on Tuesday it is disappointed by the continued detention of Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest and the Burmese junta's failure to heed international calls for her release. “We are disappointed that the regime continues to ignore the calls of the international community, including the UN Security Council, to release the more than 2,100 political prisoners immediately and unconditionally,” US State Department acting spokesman Robert Wood said in a statement. ([25 march 2009 irrawaddy](#))

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

March 24

UN concludes Suu Kyi's detention violates Burmese law

A United Nations body has for the first time ruled that opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's detention is illegal under both Burmese domestic law and international law.

The leader of opposition party National League for Democracy has been under house arrest for 13 of the last 19 years. This is the fifth time that the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has found that her detention violates international law, but the first time that it has stated it contravenes the regime's own law. It is rare for a UN body to accuse a state of violating its own law. "The Working Group request the Government to immediately release, without any condition, Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi from her continued placement under house arrest," said a UNWGAD statement. Since May 2003, Aung San Suu Kyi has been consecutively been put under house arrest by the ruling State Peace and Development Council on an annual basis. "No warrant or decision was presented to Ms Aung San Suu Kyi," said the statement. "No reasons were given to given to her for the extension of her house arrest, and she has not been charged with any offence." Jared Genser, the Washington-based legal counsel to Daw Suu and President of Freedom Now, said: "Previously, the UN Security Council, the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, ASEAN, European Union and United States have all called for Ms Suu Kyi's release. "The only question remaining is how long will Burma's bold-faced defiance of the international community be tolerated?" ([DVB.24032009](#))

March 20

Mother-in-law of Aung San Suu Kyi dies

The mother-in-law of imprisoned opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi died at her house in London from natural causes, according to a family member. Josette Vaillancourt, the mother of Daw Suu's late husband Michael Aris, passed away on Monday. She was aged 92.

The French-Canadian spent her life as a painter and was known to be supportive of the struggle for democracy in Burma. Born in 1917, she was married to British diplomat John Aris, and had two sons and one daughter. The family member said a memorial prayer service for Vaillancourt was planned to be held in a Catholic church in London next week. ([dvh.20032009](#))

March 17

Suu Kyi's Lawyer Appeals to PM over House Arrest

A lawyer representing Burma's pro-democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, has asked Prime Minister Gen Thein Sein to hold a hearing on his client's appeal against her continued house arrest. Lawyer Kyi Win sent a letter to the prime minister on March 13 through his assistant in Naypyidaw. "Her appeal has not been heard," he said. "So we have sent a request to the authorities to act on the appeal. We can't say for sure what will happen next. We can only do what we can." Suu Kyi has been detained since May 2003 after her convoy was ambushed by thugs in Depayin in Upper Burma. She was placed under house arrest under State Protection Act 10/B. Her current term of house arrest is due to expire on May 24."

([Irrawaddy.17032009](#))

March 13

Suu Kyi a 'Beacon of Hope': Clinton

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Thursday called the iconic Burmese pro-democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, a beacon of hope for people around the world. Clinton's comments occurred at a function at the State Department on the occasion of Women's History Month. "Aung San Suu Kyi, whom I mentioned yesterday and I mention as often as I can because having been in prison now for most of the past two decades, she still remains a beacon of hope, strength, and liberty for people around the world," Clinton said. [13 march 2009 irrawaddy](#) , [13 march 2009 mizzima](#)

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

Labour activists

Labour activist Su Su Nway's suffering serious health problems in prison.

March 31

Villagers afraid to report forced labour to ILO

The International Labour Organisation has stated that complainants of forced labour in Burma are at greater risk of imprisonment if they have affiliations with political opposition groups. The comment came after reports surfaced that villagers in Irrawaddy division had been forced to work on the reconstruction of a road, and were afraid to make a complaint to the ILO for fear of imprisonment. "The ILO is of the belief that in those cases it is because they are firstly politically active, but are secondly active within the ILO's supplementary framework as well," he said. "If someone who has got affiliations and is active in other political activity takes action then the risk of them having some retaliation taken against them increases," he added. ([dvh.31032009](#))

March 23

Imprisoned activist Su Su Nway 'too weak to even walk'

Labour rights activist **Su Su Nway**, who is serving eight and a half years' imprisonment in Sagain's Kalay prison, is feared to be seriously ill. Kyi Shwe, whose son Yan Shwe was a political prisoner inmate in Kalay, said he saw **Su Su Nway** being carried into the woman's ward who looked weak and pale. "I was talking to my son when I saw Su Su Nway, not in her inmate uniform, being taken back into the prison from the outside with support from wardens," said Yan Shwe. "She seemed too weak to even walk by herself."

Su Su Nway was jailed in November 2008 after reporting forced labour practices to the International Labour Organisation. She was initially sentenced to 12 and a half years but this was later reduced. ([dvh.23032009](#))

March 20

Su Su Nway in Kalay Hospital

A prominent labor rights activist, Su Su Nway, 37, is in poor health and has received medical treatment at Kalay General Hospital outside Kalay Prison in Sagaing Division.

"Her health condition was getting worse and worse in Kalay Prison," said a local resident close to Kalay Prison. "She is suffering from heart disease because of her long-term imprisonment." No details were available about her condition. According to her sister, Htay Htay Kyi, Su Su Nway has hypertension and heart disease. Su Su Nway, a member of the opposition National League for Democracy, was sentenced to 12 1/2 years in prison for participating in the 2007 democracy uprising. She was transferred from Insein Prison to Kalay Prison in November 2008. ([20 march 2009 irrawaddy](#))

Individual activists

Conditions remain dire for activists in prison.

March 27

Lone protestor detained

A lone demonstrator in Twante Township, Rangoon was arrested by the police on Friday, an eyewitness said. Aung Phe, a private tutor, was detained by local authorities including the police and township officials, after he stood for over five hours outside the township National League for Democracy office, the eyewitness said. "He did not shout slogans or hold aloft placards but stood still inside a circle from 6 a.m. to about 11 a.m. (local time). The police along with township officials came and whisked him away," said the eyewitness, who saw the incident from her shop located near the protest site. ([27 march 2009 mizzima](#))

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

March 23

A political prisoner suffered a stroke while serving his prison term in Buthitaung prison In western Burma, according to sources close to the prison. Political activist **Maung Maung Thet** (20), hailing from Tungup Township, Rakhine State, reportedly suffered a stroke after which he could not move his arms or legs. A source close to the prison said that cells inside the prison are always wet and damp, factors which could contribute toward the occurrence of a stroke. The detainee in question, along with political prisoners including **Moe Naing Soe, Chit Maung Maung and Than Lwin, was beaten**, by prison ward Sein Tun for purportedly communicating between prison cells. But he added that he knew only that their health situation is deteriorating, absent of any details. Political prisoners in Buthitaung, unlike criminal lock-ups, are not allowed to exercise. Sources close to the prison said those detained suffer discrimination and oppression at the hands of prison authorities, in addition to stints of forced labor. ([mizzima.23032009](#))

March 5

Youth detained over Rangoon bomb blasts

Rangoon division police have detained **Than Myint Aung**, in connection with the 3 March bomb blasts in Rangoon. He was arrested at his mother-in-law's home in Thingangyun township around midday on 5 March. "They also searched my house for explosives," his mother-in-law said. "There are no explosives, no documents and the like that could incriminate him. I am concerned what they will do to him." The bombs exploded near Hledan junction in Kamayut township and Padoma park in Sanchaung township. There was no loss of life. About 20 people in civilian and police clothing came to the house, according to his mother-in-law. "**Than Myint Aung** was kept in the car, and his face was black from the beatings and his mouth was swollen," she said. "He hasn't eaten a thing since this morning." She insisted that he had been outside Rangoon in Thanlyin with his mother when the explosions occurred. Rangoon division police said no report of the arrest has been received. "We are still investigating," a police officer on duty said. ([dvh.06032009](#))

March 9

Activist arrested for supplying news

In March it was reported that Human rights activist **Thein Thein Yin** was arrested on 11 February by authorities for allegedly supplying news to foreign news agencies, her relatives said. The 27-year-old was arrested at her home in Mingan ward, Sittwe township, in Arakan State. "Thirteen policemen, including three female officers, came on three motorcycles and one police van," an eyewitness said. "They arrested her and took her to army base in Ann." Her six-year-old son Kyaw Myat Han was left in the care of his grandparents as his father is working away from home. ([dvh.09032009](#))

Key international developments

UN releases ruling on arbitrary detention following UN Special Envoy Gambari and UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Burma Tomas Ojea Quintana's visit. The leaders of the ASEAN nations called for the release of all of Burma's political prisoners.

March 26

Changes Proposed on US Economic Sanctions

A high-level US official told the Committee Representing People of Parliament (CRPP) on Wednesday that some existing economic sanctions may be withdrawn while other targeted sanctions may remain in place. Aye Thar Aung, secretary of CRPP, said that Stephen Blake, the director of the US State Department's Office of Mainland Southeast Asia, made his remarks at a meeting in Rangoon. No details of the new policy were available. The CRPP was formed following the 1990 election and is made up of elected members of parliament and various opposition groups. ([26 march 2009 Irrawaddy](#))

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

March 25

The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued an opinion on 25 March saying the continued detentions of Aung San Suu Kyi, Aung Myin, Ko Jimmy, Paw Oo Tun, and Mtay Win Aung are arbitrary and unjustified. It said the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi is in contravention of Burma's own law. The UN working group urged the Burmese government to release these individuals immediately. "The Working Group . . . declare[s] Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi's placement under house arrest [is] arbitrary, being in contravention of Articles 9, 10, and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights . . . and even domestic law . . . which itself contradicts to [sic] the basic principles and norms of modern international law . . . Consequent upon this Opinion, the Working Group requests the Government to immediately release, without any condition, Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi from her continued placement under house arrest," the order said. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention is an independent and impartial body of the Human Rights Council. It consists of experts from Chile, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Senegal and Spain. Meanwhile, Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel Schwarzenberg also announced his concern upon the release of the UNWGAD opinion on the ongoing detention of Suu Kyi. ([Irrawaddy.25032009](#))

March 17

UN Right Expert: Release Political Prisoners

A UN human rights investigator has urged Burma to release its 2,100 or so political prisoners before holding next year's elections—the country's first ballot in two decades. In a report to be presented to the UN Human Rights Council on Tuesday, Tomas Ojea Quintana said Burma's military-run government should release all "prisoners of conscience"—starting with the elderly, the sick and political leaders—because their detention breaches basic human rights. "Release must be without imposing any particular condition which may result in new forms of diminishing enjoyment of human rights, such as written statements renouncing the right to political participation or campaign," Quintana said. Prisoners who remain in custody should be spared cruel treatment and should be given better conditions and urgent medical treatment, he said. Among those detained is Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been held without trial for 13 of the past 19 years. Her pro-democracy movement won Myanmar's 1990 democratic elections, a result the military junta never recognized. Quintana said he regretted that the government denied his request to meet with Suu Kyi and other detainees during his February visit to the country. In the 41-page report, which was made available on the Web ahead of its presentation, he called for "an urgent, impartial and independent review" of Suu Kyi's case. Quintana also recommended other measures be taken in the run-up to next year's elections, including reform of the judiciary, a review of 380 laws that may breach international standards, an end to the recruitment of child soldiers, and end to use of anti-personnel mines and the abolition of forced labor. ([Irrawaddy.17032009](#))

U.N. envoy urges Myanmar to free political prisoners

A United Nations investigator called on Myanmar's ruling junta on Tuesday to release more than 2,100 political prisoners and allow them to participate in an election set for 2010. Tomas Ojea Quintana, U.N. special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar, also urged the military to halt its use of civilians in forced labor, including as "human minesweepers." "I call for the progressive release of all prisoners of conscience when we know that more than 2,100 are still in detention, either under house arrest or in remote prisons," Quintana told the U.N. Human Rights Council. "The prisoners of conscience should be released long before the elections in order for them to participate, either by casting their votes or even running as candidates," he said. Authorities should also carry out an impartial review of the detention of opposition leader and Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, whose latest house arrest began in 2003, Quintana added. 'NO PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE' Wunna Maung Win, Myanmar's ambassador to the U.N. in Geneva, said: "There are no prisoners of conscience in Myanmar. In fact these are only individuals who are serving the prison terms for breaking existing laws of Myanmar. He told the council the prisoners were

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

entitled to lodge appeals. The military, which has ruled the former Burma in various guises since 1962, has promised an election in 2010 as part of what it calls a "roadmap to democracy."([Reuters.17032009](#))

March 17

U.N. Calls for Burma Reform

A U.N. human rights investigator is calling on Burma's military government to free all political prisoners and reform its military, police, and judiciary before elections scheduled for next year. "These recommendations should be implemented before 2010," U.N. special rapporteur Tomas Ojea Quintana said in an interview on March 16, referring to a report to be presented to the U.N. Human Rights Council. "These recommendations are the review of national legislation which is against international law and the new Constitution, the second one is the progressive release of prisoners of conscience, the third one is the reform of the armed forces and the police, and the fourth—the core element—is the reform of the judiciary for an independent and impartial judiciary." [16 march 2009 RFA](#)

March 13

Political Prisoners Doubled in Two Years, Say Activists

The number of political prisoners in Burma has almost doubled since July 2007, according to activists who launched a campaign on Friday to press for their release. Before the start of demonstrations in August 2007, it was estimated that Burmese jails held 1,100 political prisoners. Today the number stands at 2,100, said Khin Ohmar, a leading Burmese activist at the launch of the campaign "Free Burma's Political Prisoners Now!" (www.fbppn.net) in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand. "Unless political prisoners are released, there is no peace and stability in the country," she said. The "Free Burma's Political Prisoners Now!" campaign is organized by the Thailand-based Burmese Assistance Association for Political Prisoners-Burma (AAPP) and the Forum for Democracy in Burma (FDB), an umbrella dissident group of seven organizations in exile. Khin Ohmar, of the FDB, was banned from attending the Asean summit in Thailand last month, along with a Cambodian activist. The current campaign aims to collect a symbolic 888,888 signatures on a petition for the release of Burma's political prisoners. The petition will be circulated in Thailand, Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, and the United Kingdom. In Thailand, the launch was held at the Foreign Correspondents Club in Bangkok and Chiang Mai University's International Center. Friday was chosen for the launch because March 13 was proclaimed Burma's Human Rights Day by pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other leading dissidents to mark the anniversary of the deaths of activists Phone Maw and Soe Naing in clashes with police in 1988. The petition calling for the release of political prisoners will be circulated until May 24, the day that Suu Kyi should be released from her current term of house arrest under Burmese law. It will be sent to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, The UN General Assembly has been urging the release of Burma's political prisoners for more than a decade. AAPP Secretary Tate Naing said at Friday's launch that the 2010 election would be meaningless if political prisoners were still behind bars on polling day. "The release of political prisoners is number 1 priority for national reconciliation and democratization in the country," he said. ([Irrawaddy.13032009](#))

March 2

Asean Leaders Call for Political Reform in Burma

The heads of state at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit in Cha-am, central Thailand, raised Burmese issues at meetings, calling for the release of political prisoners and an "all-inclusive process" as the country moves toward a general election next year, the Thai Prime Minister, Abhisit Vejjajiva, said. Addressing journalists on the final day of the summit, the Thai premier said that Burma had been discussed again that day among other issues. He said that his counterparts had echoed earlier calls to make the political process in Burma "as all-inclusive as possible." Abhisit also said that the Asean leaders had

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for March 2009

called for the release of political prisoners in military-ruled Burma, where currently about 2,100 political activists are being held in prisons around the country. However, unlike the 13th Asean Summit in Singapore in November 2007, no Asean delegate mentioned Aung San Suu Kyi's name at the summit. "Nobody mentioned the name of Aung San Suu Kyi," said Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. According to Badawi, Asean's responsibility on Burma is to cooperate with the United Nations' efforts, in particular UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Good Offices in Burma. All Burma efforts by Asean will go through the UN, Badawi said. Asean delegates agreed to pool military resources to respond to humanitarian disasters in the region, such as the 2004 tsunami and the 2008 Cyclone Nargis, said Asean Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan on Sunday. However, he did not clarify whether Asean had discussed a R2P (Responsibility to Protect) mandate or not. ([Irrawaddy.02032009](#))