



**Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)**

နိုင်ငံရေးအကျဉ်းသားများကူညီစောင့်ရှောက်ရေးအသင်း (မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ)

## **Monthly Chronology of Burma's Political Prisoners for June, 2010**



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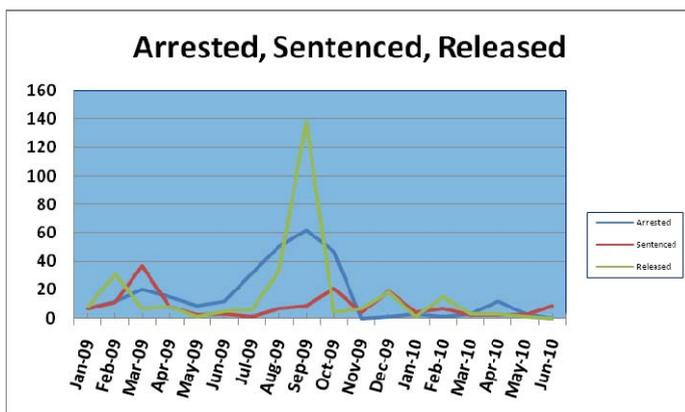
## MONTHLY CHRONOLOGY – June 2010

### Summary of current situation

There are a total of 2,171 political prisoners in Burma. This is an overall increase of 14 in comparison to last month's figure of 2,157. In June, no activists were arrested and no political prisoners were released. The AAPP also received information about activists who were arrested and released before June 2010, and this retroactive information explains why there is actually an overall increase of 14 this month.

CATEGORY	NUMBER
Monks	253
Members of Parliament	12
Students	277
Women	174
NLD members	411
Members of the Human Rights Defenders and Promoters Network	31
Ethnic nationalities	207
Cyclone Nargis volunteers	20
Teachers	26
Media activists	39
Lawyers	12
Labor activists	36
88 Generation Students	40
Doctor	11
In poor health	136

### Monthly Trend Analysis



During the month of June 2010, no activists were arrested and no political prisoners were released. At least 136 political prisoners 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.

Harsh prison conditions continued to impact on the health and wellbeing of political prisoners, in June. Authorities continue to overlook medical problems and deny much needed medical care to political prisoners.

Phyo Wei Aung has Hepatitis B and authorities have yet to respond to his family's request for medical assistance. It has also been reported that Shwe Maung is still suffering from a heart condition and back pain from injuries sustained from torture. NLD members Zaw Min Htun and Sandar are both unwell. Zaw Min Htun has stomach problems, and Sandar has liver and heart problems. After a visit with 88 Generation Leader De Nyein Lin, it has been discovered that he is now suffering from kidney stones and needs emergency medical help.. Additionally, 88 Generation members San San Tin, That That Aung and Noe Noe are in poor health.

This month marked the 65<sup>th</sup> birthday of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. While she spent the day under house arrest, many people around the world celebrated her birthday. At her request, the leaders of the National League for Democracy (NLD) started their road-show of states and divisions to reach out to the grass-roots membership.

The Burmese Junta began interrogating political prisoners this month, including, prominent monk leader Ashin Gambira, about their position on the upcoming elections and their intentions for future political activity.

Burma attracted significant international attention this month, due to the cancelation of two international trips to Burma. The cancellation of these trips was considered a set back to international diplomacy. The first was a scheduled European Union visit, canceled after the Burmese ruling junta denied a request from the EU Presidency Council to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The second was US Senator Jim Webb's planned visit. He decided to cancel the trip due to new allegations about possible nuclear cooperation between Naypyidaw and North Korea. Also of significance at the international level was Slovakia's statement at the Human Rights Council. Slovakia became the fourth government to support the formation of a United Nations commission of inquiry into alleged crimes against humanity committed in Burma.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Award for Democracy, created in memory of the assassinated former Pakistan Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto. On the first of the month, Amnesty International presented its "Journalism under Threat" award to Burma's community of independent journalists at a London ceremony, paying tribute to their bravery in tackling dangerous and difficult work.

## **Treatment of prisoners and their families**

In June, a number of political prisoners suffered from poor health and were denied medical treatment by the authorities. Phyo Wei Aung, detained in relation to the Water festival bombings in Rangoon, has contracted Hepatitis B and authorities are yet to respond to his family's request to give him medical assistance. He is not allowed to exercise. They have denied him access to legal counsel despite repeated attempts by his lawyer to visit and discuss his case. It is reported that Saffron Revolution activist Shwe Maung is still suffering from a heart condition and back pains as a result of torture. His wife requested that the prison authorities give him a medical examination outside the prison, but the authorities refused. NLD members Zaw Min Htun and Sandar are both unwell. Zaw Min Htun has stomach problems and Sandar has liver and heart problems. She is currently kept alone in a jail cell.

After a family visit with 88 Generation Leader De Nyein Lin, it was discovered that he is now suffering from kidney stones and needs emergency medical care. Authorities did not take action, this month, to address the health needs of Shwe Maung, who has stomach, chest and back pains, and insomnia. Additionally, 88 Generation Student Group member San San Tin is in poor health and the health of 88 Generation students That That Aung and Noe Noe is deteriorating.

A political prisoner, recently released from Buthidaung prison, reported on the harsh conditions there, which houses over 20 political prisoners. Most of the political prisoners are forced to live with criminal prisoners, without any rights.

This month the Special Branch police began interrogating political prisoners about their political views, and whether or not they would continue their political activism once released. The reasons for the questioning remain unclear, although it may be a link to releasing 'softer' political prisoners prior to elections this year, as the junta looks for ways to appease the international community.

**30 June 2010**

**De Nyein Lin is suffering from kidney stones**

According to De Nyein Lin's aunt who just came back after visiting, De Nyein Lin has kidney stones. He has been transferred to Monywa Prison from Khamti Prison in order to receive medical treatment for his eyes. Another political prisoner sentenced to a lengthy imprisonment in Khamti Prison is reported to need emergency medical treatment. ([30 June 2010 DVB](#), [30 June 2010 Mizzima](#))

**28 June 2010**

**The man who sent Shwekamauk (Golden Bamboo Hat) to Daw Suu is in poor health condition**

Although family members requested for medical treatment, Shwe Maung, who was accused and arrested for participating in the 2007 Saffron Revolution, is suffering from stomach, chest and back pain, in addition to insomnia. The authorities have not taken any action. ([28 June 2010 Mizzima](#))

**27 June 2010**

**Some Political Prisoners' health is deteriorating**

According to the latest sources, 88 Generation leaders De Nyein Lin, in Khamti Prison, and San San Tin, in Meiktila Prison, are in poor health condition. Furthermore, the health condition of 88 Generation students That That Aung in Myingyan Prison and Noe Noe, in Maubin Prison, are deteriorating. (No health condition details are described for That That Aung & Noe Noe) ([27 June 2010 DVB](#))

**26 June 2010**

**Two political prisoners denied medical treatment**

Shwekamauk (a.k.a) Shwe Maung, imprisoned in Pyapon Prison, is suffering from chest and back pain, and insomnia. Daw San San Tin, in Meiktila Prison, also has serious damage to one of her eyes that is making her almost lose her eye sight. The authorities do not provide any medical treatment for them. ([26 June 2010 RFA](#))

**4 June 2010**

**Political prisoners forced to live with criminals in Buthidaung prison**

Political prisoners in the Buthidaung prison have been forced by authorities to live along with the criminal prisoners in a room without any rights, said a prisoner who was released from prison recently. "Some political prisoners have to live with prisoners who are criminals despite that they themselves are not criminals. Sometimes political prisoners were upset by some fellow criminal prisoners," he said. In Buthidaung prison there are over 20 political prisoners, including prominent 88 generation student leader Ko Htay Kwe. Most of the political prisoners have been forced to live with the general prison population, without any rights. Monk U Ithiriya, who led the Saffron Revolution protests in Sittwe in 2007 has also been placed with the criminal population in the Buthidaung prison. "I stayed with U Ithiriya and the political prisoners Ko Moe Nay Soe, Ko Than Htay, Ko Maung Maung Thet, Ko Chit Maung Maung, and some other prisoners in Ward No. 3 in the prison. They have to work in the prison like the other prisoners," he said. The political prisoners several times requested that the prison authority keep them separate from the criminal population because they are facing many problems, but the prison authority has neglected their requests. In Buthidaung there are 1450 prisoners, and they are all facing problems with insufficient food on a daily basis because the prison authority misappropriates the prisoners' rations that are supplied by the government. "24 rice bags have been allocated by the prison department in Naypyidaw to the prisoners in Buthidaung prison per day, but the prison authority in Buthidaung feeds prisoners just 17 bags per day and the other rice bags are sold by the authorities outside the prison for their personal profit," he said. ([4 June 2010 Narinjara](#))

**25 June 2010**

**Junta interrogates political prisoners on election**

The Burmese military junta has been interrogating political prisoners since early June about their opinions of the upcoming election and their intentions for future political activity, according to the families of political prisoners. The family of political prisoner Zaw Thet Htwe said the police have recently interrogated him. "The police asked Zaw Thet Htwe about his opinion of the election and what he is going to do when he gets outside," they said. Zaw Thet Htwe is being detained in Taungyi Township, the capital of Shan State. He was chief sports editor at a journal in Rangoon when he was sentenced in 2008 to nine years in prison for helping Cyclone Nargis victims in the Irrawaddy delta. ([25 June 2010, Irrawaddy](#))

**1 June 2010**

**Burma intelligence probes political inmates**

Political prisoners in northwestern Burma are being questioned about their stance on the National League for Democracy (NLD) party's boycott of elections this year. Intelligence officers from the Burmese government's Special Branch (SB) have been visiting prisoners in Sagaing division's Shwebo prison, according to the sister of Yin Yin Wyne, a jailed cyclone relief worker and one of 22 political inmates in the prison. "[Yin Yin Wyne] was asked for an opinion on the NLD not entering the elections and she answered that she didn't even know what the NLD's stance was," said the sister, Ma Moe, who visited her at the end of last month. "Then [the officials] showed her the NLD's Shwegondaing declaration and let her read to tell them what she thought about it." The Shwegondaing declaration, signed in April 2009, calls for the release of all political prisoners, recognition of the 1990 election results, a review of the 2008 constitution and the start of dialogue between the junta and the NLD. Ma Moe added that the officers had acknowledged they were from the Special Branch and had interviewed every political inmate in the prison. The reasons for the questioning however remain unclear, although it may be a precursor to releasing 'softer' political prisoners prior to elections this year, as the junta looks to further appease the international community. ([1 June 2010 DVB](#))

## **Prisoners Released**

There is no news to report in June.

## **National League for Democracy**

There are at least 428 members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) currently in prison. In the month of June, the National League for Democracy (NLD) continued to reach out to Aung San Suui Kyi and political colleagues. NLD youth members started planting more than 20,000 saplings in states and divisions in honour of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's 65th birthday. The NLD also responded to Daw Suu's request to meet political colleagues and listen to their difficulties. This month, leaders of the NLD started their nationwide road-show to meet grass-roots members, listen to the challenges they are facing since the party was declared illegal, and explain NLD policies.

The military regime continued to repress NLD members. A husband and wife, both NLD members, were denied the right to appeal this month after being jailed on charges of 'disturbing government officials' after they assisted a car crash victim, in Rangoon. Also, a former member of the National League for Democracy (Liberated Area) Malaysia branch was sentenced to a five-year jail term in an eastern Rangoon court for illegally entering the country and alleged contact with an illegal group. As to Burma's foreign relations, the NLD foresees that the cancellation of US senator Jim Webb's visit to Burma may cause increased tension between Washington and the Burmese military regime.

**29 June 2010**

**Jailed car crash 'rescuers' denied appeal**

A husband and wife jailed on charges of 'disturbing government officials' after they assisted the victim of a Rangoon car crash have been denied appeal. The couple, both members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) party who are now reported to be in poor health, have been held in Rangoon's

notorious Insein prison since their sentencing in early May. The husband, Zaw Min Htun, was charged under Act 353 of disturbing a government official on duty, and given a one-year sentence. His wife, Sandar, was given an additional charge of 'intimidation' and sentenced to 18 months in prison. Both have now had an appeal over their sentencing rejected by a district court, their daughter, Thaint Thaint Thu, said. Judges told them at a hearing on 25 June that they will serve their full terms. "They both are in poor health," Thaint Thaint Thu told *DVB*. "[Zaw Min Htun] has stomach problems and [Sandar] has liver and heart problems and she is kept alone in a jail cell." ([29 June 2010, DVB](#))

## **22 June 2010**

### **NLD top leaders take road-show to grass roots**

Leaders of the National League for Democracy are conducting a road-show of states and divisions to meet grass-roots members, explain policies and listen to the challenges they are facing since the party was declared. The tour comes at the request of NLD general secretary Aung San Suu Kyi, central executive committee member Ohn Kyaing said. "We will not hold political meetings, issue political statements or direct the grass roots of the party. But we do need to find out about conditions on the ground. Aung San Suu Kyi told us to meet our political colleagues and listen to their difficulties." ([22 June 2010, Mizzima](#))

## **10 June 2010**

### **20,000 trees planted for Suu Kyi, 65**

National League for Democracy party young members have started planting more than 20,000 saplings in states and divisions in honour of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's 65th birthday on June 19. In tribute to their leader, NLD Youth members plan to grow 66 saplings in each of the 318 townships across the country. ([10 June 2010 Mizzima](#))

## **4 June 2010**

### **NLD predicts rise in US-Burma tensions**

The cancellation of US senator Jim Webb's visit to Burma may cause increased tension between Washington and the Burmese military regime, Burmese opposition party, the National League for Democracy, foresees. "The tension will be heightened between US and the regime based on this matter," NLD central executive committee member Win Tin said. He added that the new engagement policy adopted by US President Barack Obama was failing. ([4 June 2010 Mizzima](#))

## **2 June 2010**

### **NLD member given five years' jail**

A former member of the National League for Democracy (Liberated Area) Malaysia branch was sentenced to a five-year jail term in an eastern Rangoon court for illegally entering the country and alleged contact with an illegal group, according to a family friend. Than Myint Aung, 31, was sentenced to two years under the Emergency Immigration Act and three years under the Illegal Associations Act by Judge Nyunt Nyunt Win of the Thingangyun Township court. "His e-mail account was investigated by the officers during the interrogation period, in which they found supporting evidence that he was a member of NLD LA Malaysia branch," a person close to Than Myint Aung's family said. He has also been charged with violating the Electronics Act, section 33 (a), which contains provisions that establish long prison terms for disseminating news considered to tarnish the junta's image. It has been increasingly used to silence opposition voices. That case will be heard at Tamwe East District Court on Friday. ([2 June 2010 Mizzima](#))

## **88 Generation Students**

There are 40 members of the 88 Generation Student group currently in detention.

There is no news to report in June.

## **Ethnic Nationalities**

There are 207 members of ethnic nationalities currently held in prison. This month the authorities arrested three Muslim leaders as they protested for the right to an ID card. Also, General Aung Than Lay, who fought for Karenni freedom for over 60 years, passed away.

### **6 June 2010**

#### **3 arrested for protesting Green ID cards**

Three Muslim leaders were arrested by police in Kyauktaw Township in Arakan State for reportedly leading a protest against the issuance of new Green ID cards to residents in their village by the immigration department, said a village source. The arrestees were identified as U Maung Hla, a teacher, Molavi U Nurl Baw Saw, and Nurl Maund, from Pesi Pipe Village in Wa Khong Village Tract in Kyauktaw Township. The protest took place in the village on 6 June, when immigration department officials were issuing the new national ID cards to villagers. One villager said, "The Green color national ID card is for foreign citizens, not for Burmese nationals. The three are being detained in a police station in Kyauktaw but there has been no information regarding their situation or condition since the arrest. ([6 June 2010 Narinjara](#))

### **1 June 2010**

#### **Karenni resistance leader dies at 81**

Karenni militia senior leader and revolutionary General Aung Than Lay, who fought almost six decades for a separate homeland for his people, died of natural causes in a Thai hospital. General Aung Than Lay was a permanent central committee member of the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP). The death of one of the Karenni people's great leaders, who had a forbearing nature and many revolutionary experiences, was a great loss for the Karenni revolution. General Aung Than Lay joined the Union Military Police No. 13 before the Karenni revolution started on 9 August 1948, and he participated in the cause until he died. ([1 June 2010 Mizzama](#))

## **Monks**

There are at least 253 monks currently held in prison. This month, prominent monk Ashin Gambira faced questions regarding his political views.

### **25 June 2010**

#### **Junta interrogates political prisoners on election**

Ashin Gambira, a prominent monk and leader of the Saffron Revolution, has been asked by authorities to give his opinion on the election and tell them whether he will continue his political activity when he gets released. Gambira was sentenced to 63 years in prison and is being held in Kalay prison, Sagaing Division. ([25 June 2010, Irrawaddy](#))

## **Cyclone Nargis Volunteers**

There are currently 20 Cyclone Nargis volunteers held in prison. Cyclone Nargis volunteers, Yin Yin Wyne and Zaw Thet Htwe were both questioned, in regards to their position on the upcoming elections.

### **25 June 2010**

#### **Junta interrogates political prisoners on election**

The family of political prisoner Zaw Thet Htwe said the police have recently interrogated him. "The police asked Zaw Thet Htwe about his opinion of the election and what he is going to do when he gets outside," they said. Zaw Thet Htwe is being detained in Taungyi Township, the capital of Shan State. He was chief sports editor at a journal in Rangoon when he was sentenced in 2008 to nine years in prison for helping Cyclone Nargis victims in the Irrawaddy delta. ([25 June 2010, Irrawaddy](#))

**1 June 2010**

### **Burma intelligence probes political inmates**

Political prisoners in northwestern Burma are being questioned about their stance on the National League for Democracy (NLD) party's boycott of elections this year. Intelligence officers from the Burmese government's Special Branch (SB) have been visiting prisoners in Sagaing division's Shwebo prison, according to the sister of Yin Yin Wyne, a jailed cyclone relief worker and one of 22 political inmates in the prison. ([1 June 2010 DVB](#))

## **Journalists, Bloggers and Writers**

There are currently 39 media activists held in prison. The aftermath from the April bombings continues to affect people who maintain they are innocent. Father and son, Maung Maung Zeya and Sithu Zeya, who took photos of the bombings, were charged under the Electronics Act and the Unlawful Associations Act. Additionally, two youths, Myo Gyi and Thaw Zin, accused of being involved in the bombings are awaiting sentencing.

**14 June 2010**

### **Rangoon photographer sent to Insein**

A man, who was arrested in April along with his son after photographing the aftermath of the Rangoon bombings, has been sent to Burma's notorious Insein prison. Maung Maung Zeya, 55, and his son Sithu Zeya are yet to be convicted of any offense, but have been held in detention since their arrest on 15 April. The two are being kept in different cells in Rangoon's Insein prison. "I [visited] the two on Monday [14 June]," said wife and mother, Yee Yee Tint. "I was only allowed to meet them one by one. [Maung Maung] will be brought to the court on 22 June and Sithu," she said. Biology student Sithu appeared in court earlier this month on two charges of breaching the Electronics Act and holding links to so-called 'unlawful associations', a label often used by the Burmese junta to tarnish exiled media and pro-democracy groups. Maung Maung has also been charged under the Unlawful Association Act, as well as the Immigration Act, and will begin his trial on 22 June. Neither party is said to have had anything to do with the bombings; the charges stem from the Burmese government's draconian press laws, which target media workers suspected to be providing material to exiled news outlets. Yee Yee Tint said in May that her son had told her he had been beaten and denied food during the early stages of interrogation in April. ([17 June 2010, DVB](#))

**1 June 2010**

### **Rangoon photographer facing two charges**

A man arrested by Burmese police after photographing the deadly Rangoon bombings in April appeared in court on two charges of breaching immigration laws and alliances with 'unlawful' groups. Details of the charges are unclear, but judges reportedly claimed that Sithu Zeya had crossed into Burma illegally. His Rangoon-based legal advisor, Aung Thein, said that he had been charged under the Unlawful Associations Act and the Immigration Act. "Just taking photos of the bombing is not a good enough reason for the prosecution," said Aung Thein. "However, throughout the interrogation, the authorities found other reasons and used the Unlawful Association Act instead." His father, Maung Maung Zeya, meanwhile appeared in court on 31 May where his reprimand was extended for another week, his wife and mother of Sithu Zeya said. "He's not really okay [in detention]. He is being held with other people of various crimes. But he said he was trying to get along with them and is also giving them moral support for their problems...I gave him some liver medicine." Meanwhile, Myo Gyi was arrested on 20 April also in connection with the bombing and is now being charged at Kamaryut township court in Rangoon division. His brother said however that Myo Gyi was at a religious retreat around the time of the bombings and there was no evidence that he had connections with the incident, arguing instead that he was "being tried...for something he did in the past". Myo Gyi, a 27-year-old university graduate, was charged under the Immigration Act and the Unlawful Association Act, along with another youth, Thaw Zin. Sources close to Insein prison said that authorities could not find any evidence of a link to the bombings for the other youths, also detained in the prison, and who were now being charged for use of drugs. ([3 June 2010, DVB](#))

## Women

There are currently 174 women held in prison. In the month of June, Burmese women activists vocalized their fear that the military regime will have an increased amount of power after the elections, and they are calling on the international community to reject the election outcome.

**18 June 2010**

### **Burmese activists fear extension of army's power**

Burmese women activists fear Burma's military will be entrenched in power after elections later this year and are calling on the international community to reject the outcome. The activists made the calls as they marked Women of Burma Day and the birthday of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi. Fears over the transparency of Burma's national elections scheduled for this year have led to calls by Burmese political activists for the international community to boycott the election result. Lae Lae Nwe, a former political prisoner who served four years of a 21-year jail sentence before fleeing to Thailand, says she fears the outlook for Burma after the elections. "We can see no justice and also the release of the election law," she said. "The election laws are not fair. I would like to say to the international community please wipe out the 2010 elections and don't support military junta." ([18 June 2010, 1.voa](#))

## Human Rights Defenders & Promoters Network

There are at least 31 members of the Human Rights Defenders & Promoters Network currently held in prison.

There is no news to report in June.

## Labour Activists

There are currently 36 labor activists held in prison. Lawyer and ex-political prisoner, Pho Phyu, continues to fight for labour rights.

**24 June 2010**

### **Labour union work 'punishable'**

Burmese authorities rejected requests for the formation of an 18-strong independent labour union and warned that continued union organisation would be punished. The proposal had been put forward by prominent labour rights lawyer Pho Phyu, who was released from prison three months ago after being sentenced in March last year. He had been advocating on behalf of a group of farmers in central Burma's Magwe division whose land was confiscated by the military. Pho Phyu said that he and six others were summoned by the Rangoon police chief on 23 June and told that their request for the union had been rejected, with officials from the Burmese government's labour department reportedly citing "international law". He added that Rangoon authorities had said following the rejection that if the group published any manifestos or other written material then they would be charge under Burma's notoriously draconian Press Law. The group, he said, will continue with its work regardless of the threats. ([24 June 2010, DVB](#))

## Students

There are currently at least 277 students held in prison. The April bombings in Rangoon led Burmese authorities to crackdown on student groups. Last month, the authorities arrested Phyo Wei Aung, a member of the Vigorous Burmese Student Warriors (VBSW) organization. He is currently detained without charge and has been denied legal aid, despite repeated attempts by his lawyer to consult with him.

**22 June 2010**

### **Burmese courts 'breaching domestic law'**

Denial of legal aid and detention without charge for the man arrested in connection to a series of grenade attacks in Rangoon in April is in violation of Burmese domestic law, his lawyer has said. Phyo Wei Aung, a member of the Vigorous Burmese Student Warriors (VBSW) organization, was initially held in Rangoon's Insein prison on a 14-day remand after being arrested on 23 April, although the remand appears to have been extended. Police claim he was behind the bombings on 15 April, although no charges have been brought. His lawyer said that he tried to meet with his client on June but was denied access. Kyaw Ho is apparently yet to be given approval by the government's intelligence branch to speak with Phyo Wei Aung, but said the restriction breaches Burmese domestic law. It is the fourth time he has requested permission to see his client. "There was no reason given for not allowing the meeting," he said. "His detention is also not in accordance with the law which states that a person cannot be detained for more than 30 days [without charge], even if facing a charge that can be penalised by the death sentence." The lawyer said that his client is likely to be brought before the court on June 28 when his remand expires. Htay Htay, wife of Phyo Wei Aung, said he has been denied medical assistance and not allowed to exercise since his arrest. Furthermore, prison authorities have allegedly ignored his requests to see a doctor. She said the prison also refused to hand him a copy of the state-run Myanmar Ahlin newspaper issue which carried a report on Burma police chief Khin Yi's press conference on the bombing. "[Phyo Wei Aung] said he wanted to read about the conference in the newspaper so I sent it [to the prison] about three weeks ago, but he didn't receive it. So I took another copy [on Monday] and was told that newspapers will not be allowed," she said. "I complained that the newspaper was a legally published material but [the prison officials] said the government ones are not allowed." ([22 June 2010, DVB](#))

### **Lawyers**

There are currently at least 12 detained in prison.

There is no news to report in June.

### **Daw Aung San Suu Kyi**

It was Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's 65<sup>th</sup> birthday on 19 June. Her continuing popularity, world wide, was reflected in the large number of events to celebrate her birthday and the wishes received from all over the world. Daw Suu was also awarded the Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Award for Democracy, in memory of the assassinated former Pakistan Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto. Additionally, the authorities warned Nyan Win, the lawyer of Aung San Suu Kyi, not to relay her opinions about the upcoming elections to the media. Though, this month he reported that she is glad her NLD party members remain united despite the dissolution of the party, in accordance with the junta's one-sided electoral laws.

International leaders, including Kofi Annan, Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama, joined thousands of activists and democracy figureheads in celebrating Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday. Marry Robinson, the former president of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner, made a statement this month about the placed empty chair for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at all meetings for the Elders, a group of eminent global leaders including Kofi Anan, Jimmy Carter and Desmond Tutu. They drape the chair in Burmese silk as a reminder not only of her continued suffering, but of the more than 2,100 other political prisoners in Burma.

There were many gatherings this month to honour Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday, including the ceremony by a coalition of 10 Burmese opposition groups' at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand (FCCT). In New York, there was a gathering for her birthday at Burma's permanent mission to the UN, where a staff member planted his foot on the poster directly over Suu Kyi's face and then started yelling at everyone to leave the compound. According to Nyan Win, more than 500 people attended a birthday celebration at the home of May Hnin Kyi, an elected NLD member of parliament, in Rangoon's Insein Township. "More people joined the birthday events this year than last. It means that whatever lies ahead with the election, Suu Kyi's popularity is still strong and she remains as

relevant as ever,” said Nyan Win. Meanwhile, Aung San Suu Kyi spent her birthday alone in her home in Rangoon.

## **28 June 2010**

### **Suu Kyi’s lawyer warned on reporting**

The lawyer of Aung San Suu Kyi, Nyan Win, has been warned by the government not to relay her opinions about the upcoming elections to media outlets. He is one of the few people permitted by the military junta to visit Suu Kyi, and reported, “The last time I met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, she talked about some legal facts – that by law a voter has the right to vote and the right to not vote. I told this to the media and they reported it but now I’ve been warned against doing this again,” he said. Suu Kyi’s response to the warning was one of “disappointment,” Nyan Win said. “She also said it was just ‘educating about law’, and that the government has the responsibility to help people understand the law. She said she will complain to those concerned and asked me to find facts,” he said. Nyan Win added that authorities told him he was restricted to reporting about her response to her court case. In May, Suu Kyi launched a final appeal against her house arrest, which was handed down in August last year after she was found guilty of ‘sheltering’ US citizen John Yettaw. Burma already has some of the world’s strictest media laws, and authorities are expected to clamp down on reporters working for exiled media groups as the polls near. Already some 15 journalists are behind bars in the pariah state, some serving sentences as long as 35 years. ([28 June 2010, DVB](#))

## **26 June 2010**

### **Amnesty International, York, England**

AAPP was sent a birthday card from Amnesty International, York, England for Aung San Suu Kyi’s 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Pictures were also sent showing many signatures from the event and the great amount of support for the democratic movement in Burma.

## **23 June 2010**

### **Burmese mission official steps on Suu Kyi’s ‘face’**

Protests outside Burma’s permanent mission to the UN in New York were victim to junta violence. As a staff member walked through the crowd to enter the building, he paused to sweep aside the flowers with his foot then planted it on the poster directly over Suu Kyi’s face. “He started yelling at us to leave the compound,” Aung Moe Win, an activist who witnessed the event, said. Burmese activists often rally in front of the mission at 10 East 77<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan in continuing calls for the release of Suu Kyi and the 2,100 plus political prisoners held by Burma’s military junta, but its staff almost never shows their faces. For Burmese, the head is the most sacred part of the body while feet are the most inferior. Even pointing one’s foot in another’s direction is considered highly offensive, let alone this official putting his foot on the venerated leader’s face. Rights groups Amnesty International USA and Burma Point organised the gathering at which protesters donning matching T-shirts held up posters of Suu Kyi bearing the message: “I stand with Aung San Suu Kyi.” Activists also laid 65 yellow roses in front of the steps of the mission. “All of us were in shock and angered by it.” ([23 June 2010, Mizzima](#))

## **22 June 2010**

### **Suu Kyi receives Benazir Bhutto award**

Aung San Suu Kyi has been honoured with an award created in memory of the assassinated former Pakistan Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto. It is the first time the Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Award for democracy, instituted by the Pakistan People’s Party, which Bhutto chaired until her death in December 2007, has been bestowed. Bhutto had become the first female prime minister of an Islamic country, and like Suu Kyi, had inherited a political legacy from her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was assassinated in 1979. ([22 June 2010, DVB](#))

## **21 June 2010**

### **Opposition alliance marks Suu Kyi's 65th birthday**

The Ten Alliances of Burma, a movement for democracy and ethnic rights, joined the people around the world in marking opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Ten Alliances also used the event to present the results of its "People's Elections," a worldwide campaign that commemorated the anniversary of the landslide victory of the National League for Democracy, in the 1990 elections. At the end of May, in a "Global Day of Action," Burmese activists in exile protested against what they coined a "military selection" by holding their own polls. They handed out and collected nearly 40,000 ballots listing candidates Suu Kyi and junta leader Senior General Than Shwe, which would then be sent to Asean and international ambassadors along with a plea to denounce the junta's elections. ([21 June 2010, Mizzima](#))

## **20 June 2010**

### **Suu Kyi's 65th birthday celebrated in New Delhi**

Burmese activists based in New Delhi, India yesterday marked the 65th birthday of Burma's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Over 60 people attended the celebrations. San Suu Kyi's personal courage provides inspiration and hope for the Tibetan people along with many other dispossessed and oppressed peoples," the Dalai Lama said in a press statement on June 15. ([20 June 2010, Kachin](#))

## **19 June 2010**

### **Isolated, but as influential as ever**

Aung San Suu Kyi spent her birthday alone in her home in Rangoon, cut off from the outside world and separated from her supporters. "Her current situation is even more isolated than it was when she was in Insein Prison last year," Nyan Win, her lawyer, told The Irrawaddy on Saturday. "On her last birthday, she was at least able to donate food to her fellow prisoners." Members of her party, who continue to meet discreetly, sent a birthday cake to her through a man who usually delivers groceries to her home. "That is all we could do to have some contact with her on her 65th birthday," said Nyan Win. According to Nyan Win, more than 500 people attended a birthday celebration this morning at the home of May Hnin Kyi, an elected NLD member of parliament, in Rangoon's Insein Township. Elsewhere, supporters in Mandalay held their own party to celebrate Suu Kyi's birthday. "We celebrated her birthday at the famous Masoeyin Monastery in Mandalay," said Ohn Kyaing, an executive member of the NLD. "Birthday events were also held in many other places, including Arakan State in western Burma and Tenasserim Division in the south." Some of her supporters donated food to monks and people at monasteries, while others gave money to the children of political prisoners or planted trees. "More people joined the birthday events this year than last. It means that whatever lies ahead with the election, Suu Kyi's popularity is still strong and she remains as relevant as ever," said Nyan Win. Another difference between this year's celebrations and those of the past is that none were held at NLD offices this time around. Although many branches of the party are still open, members no longer use them for large gatherings, to avoid confrontations with the authorities. "The junta may say that the NLD is no more, but the party is still working as normal with the support of the people," he said. Suu Kyi's popularity is not confined to the civilian population, according to Chan Tun—she also commands strong support among many in the military. "She could still win soldiers' hearts in any elections in the future," he said. Even politicians who have decided to join this year's election acknowledge that Suu Kyi is still a force to be reckoned with. "She will be an important leader in the future," said Cho Cho Kyaw Nyein, a leader of the Democratic Party (Myanmar). ([19 June 2010, Irrawaddy](#))

## **19 June 2010**

### **World unites to honour Suu Kyi**

Eminent international leaders including Kofi Annan, Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama have joined thousands of activists and democracy figureheads the world over to honour Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday today. Jimmy Carter, former US president and 2002 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, said that Suu Kyi remains "a global symbol of moral courage in the face of repression". ([19 June 2010, DVB](#))

**19 June 2010**

**Wishing Suu Kyi happy birthday**

US President Barack Obama led the world in wishing Aung San Suu Kyi a happy birthday today. Obama called for her immediate and unconditional release and strongly condemned Burma's military junta for keeping her under house arrest. "Her determination, courage and personal sacrifice in working for human rights and democratic change in Burma inspire all of us who stand for freedom and justice," Obama said in a statement. "I once again call on the Burmese government to release Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners immediately and unconditionally and to allow them to build a more stable, prosperous Burma that respects the rights of all its citizens," he said. "Towards this end, I encourage all stakeholders in Burma to engage in genuine dialogue towards national reconciliation, a vital step to set Burma on a more positive course for the future," Obama said. State Department spokesman Philip J. Crowley said, "Sadly, she marks yet another birthday under house arrest; the world's only imprisoned Nobel Laureate." Six women Noble Peace Prize laureates, Betty Williams, Mairead Maguire, Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Jody Williams, Shirin Ebadi and Wangari Maathai, issued a joint statement urging the UN Security Council to take action against the Burmese junta, specifically calling for the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry into possible crimes against humanity and war crimes in Burma. Wishing her a happy birthday, members of the US Senate Women's Caucus said in a statement that they hoped to be able to celebrate this day with Suu Kyi in person in a free and democratic Burma. "Suu Kyi's message of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law continues to inspire not only her fellow citizens but the people of the world with her courage and resolve in the face of constant oppression," the senators said. "For too long, the people of Burma have suffered indignity, discrimination and cruelty at the hands of the military junta. Their dream of a truly democratic and free Burma continues to be ignored and undermined by Burma's military regime. We deplore the regime's failure to create a road map to true democracy that allows all of Burma's people to participate in a free and fair manner," the senators said. In an open letter to Suu Kyi, the European Parliamentary Caucus on Burma, representing MPs from 16 countries, pledged to continue to work for genuine democracy and human rights in Burma, rejecting sham elections due later this year. ([19 June 2010, Irrawaddy](#))

**19 June 2010**

**Amnesty International UK, Manchester Group**

AAPP was sent two birthday cards for Aung San Suu Kyi by Amnesty International UK, Manchester Group. The cards were made at an event for her 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, and included photograph prints from the event.

**18 June 2010**

**Before duty called: pictures show Aung San Suu Kyi as a wife and mother**

This month, a collection photographs from the private Aris family trust were released for the first time to mark and celebrate Aung San Suu Kyi's 65th birthday. In these photographs Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi is shown not as the fearless campaigner who has given up her liberty for the sake of her nation, but as a young woman in love and a doting mother. Many of these pictures come from the private collection of her late husband, the Oxford academic Michael Aris, who died from prostate cancer in 1999. Perhaps the most striking picture in the collection shows Aung San Suu Kyi walking down a snowy track in the mountains of Bhutan. She could easily be a young girl of 13 in her oversized Tibetan gown and boots and men's gloves, but this picture was taken in January 1971, when she was 25 years old and already an established figure at the United Nations, where she worked in New York. In another photo the future leader of the Burmese Democracy Movement is tending a barbecue on the Norfolk Broads, where the family was enjoying a narrow boat holiday with friends. Within 10 years she was back in Burma, leaving them all behind in order to fight for what she believed in. It was her destiny, she said, and her family accepted it. Before her marriage to Michael Aris, she told him, "I only ask one thing, that should my people need me, you would help me to do my duty by them." ([18 June 2010, The Guardian](#))

**18 June 2010**

**Mary Robinson: We are walking a long road to peace and freedom**

Mary Robinson made a statement this month about the placed empty chair for Aung San Suu Kyi at all meetings for the Elders. They drape the chair in Burmese silk as a reminder not only of her continued suffering, but of that of more than 2,100 other political prisoners in Burma. Mary Robinson said, "With such deep fractures in society, the country needs an avenue for dialogue. My fellow Elders and I urge ASEAN and the international community to assist the government, opposition, ethnic minorities and religious groups of Burma to begin a process of reconciliation. Without a way to talk and reconcile with one another, the people will never achieve the peace and prosperity they deserve." ([18 June 2010, Independent](#))

**18 June 2010**

**Aung San Suu Kyi's desperate plea to the world**

As Aung San Suu Kyi prepared to celebrate her 65th birthday, a confidante of the Burmese opposition leader has made a simple but passionate appeal to those in the West to use their freedom to help his country achieve the same. In a hand-written letter smuggled out of Burma and passed to *The Independent*, U Win Tin writes, "I want to repeat and echo her own words – 'please use your liberty to promote ours'. I want to add more to it. Please bring more and more liberty to us, to our country, Burma. We are starving for it and we are waiting for someone or some institutions or some countries to bring it to us." The plea from Ms Suu Kyi's friend and senior political ally, who himself spent almost 20 years in solitary confinement, comes at a desperately difficult time for the opponents of Burma's military junta. ([18 June 2010, Independent](#))

**18 June 2010**

**The relevance of Suu Kyi in Burma**

In Burma, Suu Kyi's struggle continues with a plethora of seemingly endless and essentially fruitless legal cases surrounding her detention and repairs to her house. She must also deliberate statements to the people of Burma and to the outside world at large—messages that will be relayed through her lawyers—but which have become increasingly symbolic since her political party was officially dissolved last month. Even after that controversial decision, Suu Kyi remains widely popular in Burma, and still finds support in the outside world. Shortly after the United States said it will continue to stand behind all those working to support the people of Burma, including the NLD, neighboring Canada also reaffirmed its continued support for Suu Kyi and Burma's democratic struggle. There is lingering hope that one day Suu Kyi might be able to accomplish her dream of democracy for Burma, following in the footsteps of fellow Nobel Peace Prize winner Nelson Mandela. ([18 June 2010, Irrawaddy](#))

**18 June 2010**

**Happy birthday to Aung San Suu Kyi!**

Aung San Suu Kyi will spend her birthday under house arrest, celebrating in a low-key party with her two companions this time in her lakeside home in Rangoon. Her colleague and lawyer, Nyan Win who is a spokesperson of the National League for Democracy (NLD), said, "We always hope she can celebrate her birthday together with people freely. We are very sorry that we will not have this opportunity... My birthday wish for her is that I hope everyone who loves her will always support her and call for her release." Suu Kyi's party will also hold a birthday event in Rangoon on Saturday. The party will offer food to monks, make donations to needy people and provide school material to students. World leaders as well as her Burmese supporters called for her immediate release to mark her 65 birthday which will be celebrated around the world. The Elders—a group of eminent global leaders founded by South African Nobel Peace laureate Nelson Mandela—called on Asean and the international community to assist the government, the opposition, ethnic minorities and religious groups in Burma to begin a UN-led process of reconciliation. The Elders includes former United Nations secretary-general Kofi Anan, ex US president Jimmy Carter and South African Archbishop

Desmond Tutu, who have all made statements regarding Aung San Suu Kyi's importance and necessary release.

## **18 June 2010**

### **Burmese to celebrate Suu Kyi's birthday**

The Burmese communities living in different parts of the world are celebrating the birthday of pro-democracy icon, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and spreading the message that the great lady continues to be a symbol of freedom and democracy for people in Burma. It will be a part of the coordinated demonstrations against the military controlled election in Burma. ([18 June 2010, Narinjara](#))

## **11 June 2010**

### **Suu Kyi 'happy with party unity'**

Burma's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi is glad her National League for Democracy party's member are united despite its automatic dissolution in accordance with the junta's one-sided electoral laws, the opposition leader said in a two-hour meeting with a lawyer and engineers on Friday. "I'm very glad that all of NLD members, including young members and women, are very united even at the difficult time," lawyer and NLD central executive committee member Nyan Win told Mizzima, quoting Suu Kyi. "She said it was the duty of government, political parties and people to raise the young people," Nyan Win said. "She said when we provide moral support to nations' young, it must be done with generosity and comradeship." Suu Kyi also said party members needed to help the people clearly understand democracy. According to her, political parties and the people were responsible for understanding democratic values and putting them into practice, Nyan Win said.

([14 June 2010, Mizzima](#))

## **Other News**

## **28 June 2010**

### **'Unprecedented' censorship rules enacted**

A wave of new censorship rules, unprecedented in their severity, were today introduced in Burma as a first step in the government's quest to control news flows in the build-up to elections this year. A 'news branch' has been set up within the government's Press Scrutiny and Registration Division (PSRD), led by a lieutenant within the Burmese army, Myo Myint Aung. According to a Rangoon editor, "This is not a change by the censorship board itself. This is a policy shift. The government initially allowed the media a small space to legitimize its planned election in the eyes of the public and the international community. Now it seems to think enough is enough." ([28 June 2010, DVB](#) and [28 June 2010, Irrawaddy](#))

## **24 June 2010**

### **USDP uses coercive canvassing tactics in Mon State**

The party created by Burma's ruling military junta is employing coercive measures to recruit new members while canvassing in Chaungson Township, Mon State, according to residents. On an election campaign tour this week, Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) township organiser Myo Min Hlaing's team ordered village peace and development council chairmen to assemble 50 people from each village to tell them to vote for the USDP, led by Prime Minister Thein Sein, a resident said. The organisers said that only their USDP party would win the elections, he said. "They told us to vote for the lion [the election logo of the USDP] in case we made a mistake in voting," the villager said. "The lion is the king of forest and no other beasts can win against it," they said." ([24 June 2010, Mizzima](#))

## **23 June 2010**

### **Burma cyclone film wins top UK award**

The documentary *Orphans of Burma's Cyclone* was honoured with a prestigious One World Media Award at a ceremony in London. The film charts the life of a group of children orphaned by cyclone Nargis, which struck Burma's southern Irrawaddy coast in May 2008 and killed 140,000. A team of undercover *DVB* cameramen arrived in the delta region two months after the cyclone and began filming the nine children, some as young as two. One of the cameramen, Ngwe Soe Linn, was eventually tracked down by Burmese intelligence and sentenced to 13 years in prison. His fellow cameraman, 'Z', has since managed to flee Burma. He told *DVB* that the award was a "big victory" for Ngwe Soe Linn. "He does not know what's happening; he doesn't know what the results of his documentary are. I believe that if he knows he will be very happy. I hope I will send this information to him very soon." ([23 June 2010, DVB](#))

## **23 June 2010**

### **Burma unveils campaigning laws**

Political parties running for elections in Burma this year will have to give a week's notice before holding public speeches and are barred from chanting slogans and waving flags. The rules, announced today in the state-run *New Light of Myanmar* newspaper, appear to be an attempt at dampening the impact of party campaigns and stifling debate. One directive bans parties from giving talks or publishing material "that can spark disputes on racial affairs or religious affairs or individuals or others, and that can harm dignity and morality". Another law orders that parties must not campaign in public places, such as schools, workplaces, markets and government offices, while marching and chanting of slogans is banned. Thu Wei, from the Democratic Party, said that the laws "restrict [parties] from publicising themselves". Regional observers also believe that the campaigning laws are an attempt to weaken the opposition and ensure a smooth passage to office for government proxy parties. Last week the National Democratic Force (NLD), an offshoot of Suu Kyi's party, was approved to run in the elections but is yet to be given permission to campaign. "It will be interesting to see what happens with the NDF; how much the government restricts their freedom [to campaign], whether they allow them to have media access and campaign on television and radio," said Somsri. ([23 June 2010, DVB](#))

## **22 June 2010**

### **First posters against 2010 elections appear in Kachin State**

Kachin State is witnessing the first of the poster protests against the Burmese military junta's forthcoming 2010 general elections. Pamphlets are being distributed and posters pasted in Myitkyina the capital of Kachin State against the polls since June 19. The posters are A-4 size papers with a "Cross Mark" on the sentence – '2010 election.' The posters have also been pasted on the walls around three major cities in Kachin State--- Myitkyina, Bhamo and Waingmaw Townships, said eyewitnesses. "We are putting up posters in places where people gather and where it is easy to spot like bridges and lampposts," said an activist. However, the authorities have ordered the police and the fire brigade, who uses as a security force to take down all the posters immediately. ([22 June 2010, Kachin](#))

## **17 June 2010**

### **Caught on camera: Burma's political prisoners**

A British documentary photographer, James Mackay, has been awarded both 1st and 2nd prizes for two separate pieces of work about Burma in the "Political Photojournalism Category" at this year's Prix de la Photographie Paris (PX3) Awards 2010. The 2nd Place prize was a major photo essay project by Mackay that publicized the plight of Burma's more than 2,100 political prisoners. Titled "[Even Though I'm Free I Am Not](#)", it portrays former Burmese political prisoners showing solidarity for current prisoners by writing their [the current prisoners'] names on their palms. The work calls for the unconditional release of all Burmese political prisoners. Over 160 former prisoners have been photographed and their stories recorded by Mackay which is due to be exhibited at Amnesty International's UK headquarters next week. Mackay has been working closely with human rights

organizations the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) and the Democratic Voice of Burma for the last 18 months to locate and talk to former prisoners, many of whom agreed to be photographed with the name of a current political prisoner emblazoned on their palm. "I came up with the idea initially then I approached the AAPP to discuss it with them. I wanted to see if they thought people would be happy to get involved. I was keen to do it only if the former prisoners were completely happy about it," said Mackay "But it just took off. This is perhaps because, as you can imagine, former prisoners form quite a tight knit group. ([17 June 2010, Independent](#) and [8 June 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

## **Key International Developments**

Burma attracted significant international media attention as a result of two canceled trips to Burma, concerns about the upcoming elections, continued engagement through the United Nations, and Amnesty International's award to Burma's community of independent journalists. The first was of a scheduled European Union visit, canceled after the Burmese ruling junta denied a request from the EU Presidency Council to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi. The second canceled trip was of US Senator Jim Webb. Unlike the European Union, he decided to cancel the trip due to new allegations about possible nuclear cooperation between Naypyidaw and North Korea.

Meanwhile, the international community continued to reach out to the Burmese government and advocacy organizations out of concern for the upcoming elections. US Senator John Kerry's assistant, Robin Lerner, met with senior members of the National League for Democracy this month to discuss the party's stance on the upcoming national elections. Also this month, the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) said that the directive released by Burma's election commission is a violation of human rights. The Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was concerned that Burma's military regime has not signaled that it wants regional help in holding the country's first election in 20 years.

A number of efforts were made to use the UN to achieve change in Burma. The Indian Parliamentarian's Forum for Democracy in Burma (IPFDB) urged the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, and also friendly countries of the Burmese junta, to adopt pragmatic actions for the release of Suu Kyi and over 2,000 political prisoners in Burma. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has ruled that her detention is "in contravention of articles 9, 10, 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," which forbids arbitrary arrest, closed-court hearings and suppression of free speech and assembly. Slovakia became the fourth government to support the formation of a United Nations commission of inquiry into alleged crimes against humanity committed in Burma, at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, on 8 June.

Amnesty International presented its "Journalism under Threat" award to Burma's community of independent journalists at a London ceremony, paying tribute to their bravery in tackling dangerous and difficult work. Amnesty International's Kikabhoy said, "These journalists persevere because they want the people of Myanmar—and the world—to receive other news besides state propaganda. This award recognizes their commitment and bravery as well as the contribution they make to the ongoing struggle for human rights in the country."

This month, AAPP received a petition from Amnesty International, Bath group. The petition was signed by 680 people from 40 different countries all calling for the release of Myo Min Zaw.

### **28 June 2010**

#### **EU cancels visit after request to meet Suu Kyi denied**

A scheduled European Union high-level visit to Burma was cancelled after the Burmese ruling junta denied a request from the EU Presidency Council to meet pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Julius Georg Luy, representing the EU presidency currently held by Spain, had asked, on 15 June, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) Foreign Affairs Minister Nyan Win in Naypyidaw for a meeting with Suu Kyi. It was to be part of a high-level EU visit. In response to the junta's decision to bar EU access to Suu Kyi, the National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB), a coalition of Burmese pro-democracy groups and political dissidents, released a statement condemning the military regime. The council's joint general secretary No.1, Myint Thein of the National League for Democracy

(Liberated Area), called upon the EU to reaffirm international demands and denounce the junta's upcoming election and its results. "They still don't have any plans to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the other political prisoners," he said of the military regime. "They have refused proposals from all world leaders to release her and have dialogue." ([28 June 2010, Mizzima](#))

## **24 June 2010**

### **Democratic rights group criticizes Burma's election directive**

The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) said that the directive released by Burma's election commission (EC) which prohibits political parties from marching in procession to designated gathering points or venues while displaying party flags is a violation of human rights. ANFREL media officer and political columnist, Bidhayak Das, said, "This is a total violation of Article 21 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The ruling side is trying to use this regulation to prevent people, political parties and candidates from expressing their agenda. They don't want people to know what the political agenda of other parties is," he said. ([24 June 2010, Irrawaddy](#))

## **24 June 2010**

### **Aide to US Senator John Kerry meets NLD leaders**

US Senator John Kerry's assistant, Robin Lerner, met senior members of the National League for Democracy on Tuesday to discuss the party's stance on upcoming national elections. Lerner, a counsel to the Senate foreign relations committee who arrived in Burma on June 19, met NLD vice-chairman Tin Oo and central executive committee members. Tin Oo explained the party's current situation, future plans and outlined the party's decision not to re-register with the junta's Union Election Commission in time for the junta's March 29 party-registration deadline. According to Nyan Win, Lerner asked the NLD how it expected to survive after the forthcoming election and Win Tin, the elderly but spry former political prisoner, responded that as things were still up in the air the group could not provide an answer. ([24 June 2010, Mizzima](#))

## **21 June 2010**

### **Indian Parliamentarians urge for Suu Kyi's release**

While the pro-democracy activists and sympathizers around the globe observed her 65th birthday on June 19, a group of Indian Parliamentarians raised voice for immediate release of Burmese democratic leader and Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. The Indian Parliamentarian's Forum for Democracy in Burma (IPFDB) urged the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and also friendly countries of the Burmese junta to adopt pragmatic actions for the release of Suu Kyi and over 2,000 political prisoners in Burma. The Parliamentarian's Forum has sent letter to the Heads of the States and Governments of Australia, European Union, UK, France, Norway, Russia, US, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, China and India strongly urging them to keep on pressurizing on military rulers of Burma to engage Suu Kyi in the process of democratization. The Forum has also appealed the leaders not to endorse and recognize the 2010 election result if the constitution announced in 2008 is not amended and if political prisoners are not released before the polls. ([21 June 2010, Narinjara](#))

## **17 June 2010**

### **UN slams Suu Kyi's 'unlawful' detention**

The continued detention of Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi is in violation of international law, said an independent body of the UN's Human Rights Council in a letter sent to the Burmese government. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has ruled that her detention is "in contravention of articles 9, 10, 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights", which forbid arbitrary arrest, closed-court hearings and suppression of free speech and assembly. The Nobel laureate "was not informed of the reasons for her arrest [and] had no effective remedy to challenge her detention," it said. "No records were given to her; she was never informed of her rights; she has been denied communication with the outside world; and is being detained because of her political views." A recent statement released by state media in Burma claimed that the country "always respects UN declarations and decisions as it is a UN member country." ([17 June 2010, DVB](#))

## **8 June 2010**

### **Commission of inquiry inches closer to realization**

The formation of a United Nations commission of inquiry into alleged crimes against humanity committed in Burma during the course of the country's decades long civil war and political standoff has gained a further advocate. During 8 June 2010 debate of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Slovakia became the fourth government to support such an inquiry, joining the ranks of Australia, the Czech Republic and United Kingdom. Either the Human Rights Council or Security Council may initiate a commission of inquiry, though it is generally assumed China and Russia would automatically oppose any such undertaking at the Security Council level. ([10 July 2010 Mizzima](#))

## **6 June 2010**

### **Burma snubs ASEAN election offer**

Burma's military regime has not signaled that it wants regional help in holding the country's first election in 20 years, said the secretary-general of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Vietnam on Sunday. "We don't have any clear signal that member states of Asean will be asked to help, but the offer is on the table," Asean Secretary-General Surin. Surin recently told BBC that Asean expects a credible and transparent election in Burma, but added that the organization cannot interfere in the details of the poll and that no election is perfect. The European Union (EU) is currently seeking a deal to send an election mission to Burma. ([7 June 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

## **3 June 2010**

### **Senator Webb cancels Burma visit**

US Senator Jim Webb has canceled his planned visit to Burma, saying it would be "unwise and counterproductive" for him to go there while new allegations were surfacing about possible nuclear cooperation between Naypyidaw and North Korea. In a statement issued by his office in Washington, Webb also said he would urge President Barack Obama to appoint a special envoy to tackle all issues relating to US-Burma relations. Webb was to have begun his visit to Burma on June 3. ([3 June 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

## **1 June 2010**

### **EU meets old and new opposition**

An EU delegation in Burma yesterday met with both the National League for Democracy (NLD) and the National Democratic Force, two parties that could come to represent 'old' and 'new' Burma following elections later this year. ([1 June 2010 DVB](#))

## **1 June 2010**

### **AI honors Burma's independent journalists**

Amnesty International presented its "Journalism under Threat" award to Burma's community of independent journalists at a London ceremony on Tuesday, paying tribute to their bravery in tackling dangerous and difficult work. One video journalist, identifying himself solely as Z Filmmaker, said an urge to "serve the people" had led him to cover the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis in May 2008, despite the risks he ran. "Actually, I was very scared to do such adventurous work because if I got arrested, all my whole life could end up in prison," he said. He visited the worst-hit areas of Laputta and Bogalay Townships in the Irrawaddy delta, interviewing and filming local villagers. He and a foreign journalist friend were briefly arrested. The video journalist said the experience had left its mark on him. "I feel that I can get arrested and jailed at anytime," he said. "It affected me psychologically. If I hear knocking on my door, I feel scared." "We need to approach the authorities cleverly," said Khin Thwe, a Rangoon journalist. "If we want to get the official statistics for our story, we can't approach them as journalists." Another woman journalist who worked for The Myanmar Times said: "Being an independent journalist in Burma is very risky job. We have to keep everything secret. Otherwise, you can get arrested anytime." One editor who works for a Rangoon journal said: "Your words can put you in jail. So, you have to be careful about every single word." Recognizing the difficulties of journalists working under such conditions in Burma, Amnesty International's Kikabhoy said: "These journalists

persevere because they want the people of Myanmar— and the world—to receive other news besides state propaganda. This award recognizes their commitment and bravery as well as the contribution they make to the ongoing struggle for human rights in the country.” ([2 June 2010, Irrawaddy](#))

## Opinion Section

### **Beauty Vs. Beast – Kyaw Zwa Moe (18 June, 2010)**

Online at: [http://www.irrawaddy.org/opinion\\_story.php?art\\_id=18752](http://www.irrawaddy.org/opinion_story.php?art_id=18752)

### **Stop this ‘better than nothing’ talk - Bo Kyi - AAPP (17 June, 2010)**

Online at: <http://www.dvb.no/analysis/stop-this-%E2%80%98better-than-nothing%E2%80%99-talk/10316>

In recent comments to the media, US senator Jim Webb urged the people of Burma to vote in order to “build the future a step at a time”. Webb is not alone: a number of commentators have adopted the position that an election in Burma is better than nothing. Many have asserted that the opposition movement would do better to participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections, and that protest from the sidelines rarely works. Indeed the newly formed National Democratic Front party also believes that change may come through the parliamentary system. The ‘better than nothing’ approach of Webb and others, whether pragmatic, hopeful or naive, is not good enough. Proponents of this approach are in essence accepting the fate of elections; they are conceding to the fact that they will not be free and fair and that this is somehow acceptable. Some people in the international community see these elections as a hopeful step forward. For the people of Burma, the elections will not bring about change, nor will they improve the lives of the people. If anything, they have the potential to worsen the already fraught human rights situation. The Burmese junta has made clear its thoughts on “the process of fostering democracy,” when it said that “improper and inappropriate campaigns” would not be allowed. It is not hard to imagine what is meant by “improper and inappropriate,” and it is evident what the consequences for those found engaging in such campaigning would be. ‘Disciplined democracy’ in Burma should be exposed for what it is: continued military rule. Of course, it is unrealistic to expect the same democratic standards we see in countries with years of practice, and no one doubts that true democracy takes time. But there are certain conditions that must be met. Unless those conditions are met the international community should not recognise the election result. Without a genuine democratic transition, any election, regardless of how it is sold abroad, will be meaningless, and it will be ‘business as usual’ in Burma. Senator Webb needs to face up to this unpleasant reality. ‘Better than nothing’ must be that – it must be better. If this election cannot offer the people of Burma a better future then it must be exposed for what it is: a cruel charade.

### **Opinion of One Exiled Arakanese Political Leader on Arakanese Parties Contesting in 2010 Election - Dr. Khin Maung (6 June, 2010)**

Online

at:

<http://www.narinjara.com/Interviews/Opinion%20of%20One%20Exiled%20Arakanese%20Political%20Leader%20on%20Arakanese%20Parties%20Contesting%20in%202010%20Election.html>

## Conclusion

“The late Act for preserving the health of prisoners requires that an experienced Surgeon or Apothecary be appointed to every jail... His business is to order the immediate removal of the sick, to the infirmary; and see that they have proper bedding and attendance. They should have, not only medicines, but also diet suitable to their condition. He must diligently and daily visit them himself...He should constantly inculcate the necessity of cleanliness and fresh air”, John Howard, *The State of Prisons in England and Wales* (1777).

This excerpt by, 18th century prison reformer, John Howard, discusses the then newly passed *Act for Preserving the Health of Prisoners in Gaol*. The Act was one of the first pieces of legislation, in the world, to specifically address the health needs of prisoners. More than 230 years later, the principles outlined in this Act, now enshrined in international law, are not being met in Burma or most prisons worldwide. The number of Burma's political prisoners suffering from ill health and denied the medical treatment needed for survival, in the past month, alone, is illustrative of this.

The Special Rapporteur for Torture, Manfred Nowak, in reflecting on his mandate, recently said:

“When I took up this function more than five years ago, I knew that torture was widely practiced in many countries in all regions. But I was not aware of the *appalling conditions of detention in most countries of the world...* I was told time and time again by detainees that their daily suffering during many years of detention, before and after conviction, is much worse than the physical torture they were subjected to by police officers after their arrest for the purpose of extracting a confession. In my assessment, the majority of the roughly 10 million human beings detained worldwide, are subjected to appalling conditions of detention, which can only be qualified as inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”.

Manfred Nowak has conducted official fact finding missions in 16 countries. While he has never been invited by the military Junta to enter Burma, on a fact finding mission, it is evident what he would find there if he was. In Burma, being held behind bars has life-threatening consequences. Untreated injuries from torture, transfers to remote prisons, grossly inadequate medical care, and routine violence is taking a toll on prisoners' health. As of June 2010, there were at least 136 political prisoners in poor health, 19 requiring urgent medical treatment. For prisoners in Burma, the conditions in which they are forced to live differ little in quality to those reported by John Howard over 200 years ago.

Political prisoners continue to be transferred to remote prisons, in malarial zones, with extreme weather conditions, where there are no prison doctors.<sup>i</sup> Political prisoners are not given preventative medicines or mosquito nets. Medical supplies in prisons are inadequate and often only obtained through bribes to prison officials. It is left to the families to provide medicines and food, but prison transfers prohibit this. Often prisons are hundreds of miles from the political prisoner's hometown, and the travel costs too high. Regardless of their illness, prisoners report receiving the same medication and are given fake or sometimes the wrong medication. Prison officials took common criminals to the local hospital for treatment but were required to seek authorization from higher authorities before allowing political prisoners to seek medical assistance outside the prison, resulting in their waiting for weeks or sometimes months to receive treatment for life-threatening and chronic problems.

The Regime's treatment of political prisoners is in direct contravention to international human rights law and standards, as well as its own prison standards, set out in the Jail Manual. International law protects prisoners against discrimination in receiving health care; all people have a right to the highest attainable standard of health. The right of all persons deprived of liberty to the highest attainable standard of health is guaranteed in a wide range of international instruments, including: human rights treaties, United Nations resolutions, and standards and guidelines for the treatment of prisoners adopted by the UN General Assembly.

Prison authorities failed to address the health needs of a number of political prisoners this month, including activists Phyo Wei Aung, and Shwe Maung, General Hso Ten, leader of the Shan State Peace Council, NLD members Zaw Min Htun and Sandar, and Than Lwin MP. As the rainy season continues, it is likely that prison conditions will worsen, especially in the remote areas, and more prisoners will face down death in the struggle to survive.

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<sup>i</sup> According to the World Health Organisation, morbidity rates for malaria in Burma are highest in Arakan, Karen and Kayah states, and Sagaing and Tenasserim Divisions, where high profile political prisoners were transferred.