



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

နိုင်ငံရေးအကျဉ်းသားများကူညီစောင့်ရှောက်ရေးအသင်း (မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ)

P.O Box 93, Mae Sot, Tak Province 63110, Thailand
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Monthly Chronology November 2010

Summary of current situation

There are at least **2203** political prisoners in Burma, this figure is the same as October. At least **3** activists were arrested, although unconfirmed reports indicate that more than 100 ethnic individuals were arrested and detained in relation to the elections. **6** political prisoners were released this month.

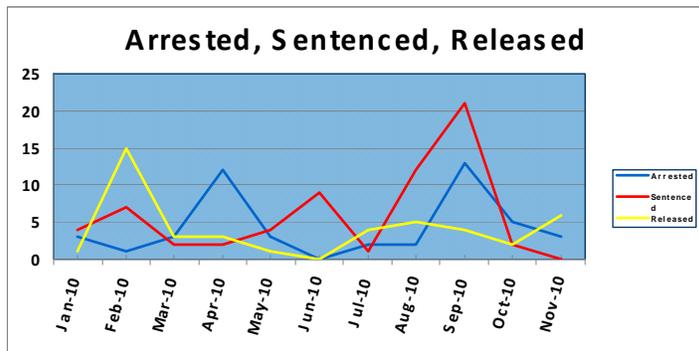
The total number of political prisoners is 2203.

These prisoners include:	NUMBER
Monks	256
Members of Parliament	12
Students	285
Women	175
NLD members	408
Members of the Human Rights Defenders and Promoters network	31
Ethnic nationalities	225
Cyclone Nargis volunteers	20
Teachers	26
Media activists	40
Lawyers	12
Labor activists	45
88 Generation Students	39
Doctors	11
Individual activists	607
In poor health	142

Since the protests in September 2007 leading to September's Saffron Revolution, a total of **1,168** activists have been arrested and are still in detention.

Monthly Trend Analysis

During the month of November at least **3** activists were arrested, **3** political prisoners were transferred, and **6** political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, were released.



Political prisoners continue to suffer the consequences of inhumane living conditions. At least **142** 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.

On 7 November 2010 the first elections in 20 years were held in Burma. This should have been cause for much celebration, instead the day and the weeks preceding were tarnished by extensive disenfranchisement, intimidation, vote buying, violence, arbitrary arrests and consequently a victory by the military backed Union Solidarity and Development Party. These elections presented an opportunity for Burma to make meaningful human rights changes on its own terms, and with the world watching. These changes never happened.

Highlighting the month, just days after the election, was the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Upon her release Daw Suu spoke to the people of Burma about national reconciliation, working in unison, emphasizing that she alone could not bring democracy to Burma. The day after her release, she stated she is willing to talk with General Than Swe. "We [Than Shwe and I] can talk about anything so let's just talk...let's speak directly. Everything starts with dialogue and exchange." She asked the people of Burma to pray for the release of all political prisoners and stated that she would listen to the needs of the people and obey their wishes.

The release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is warmly welcomed by both the international community and the people of Burma and provides much hope for the future. The timing of her release on 13 November is hardly coincidental and should be seen by all as an attempt, on behalf of the regime, to offer distraction

from the choreographed and widely condemned elections. If the regime had been genuinely interested in taking the first steps towards a democratic transition, it would have released Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the more than 2,000 political prisoners, who to this day remain incarcerated for their efforts to bring democracy to Burma, prior to the elections and allowed them to take part in the political process.

Elections

More than 2,200 political activists spent the 7 November elections imprisoned, isolated from the political process and denied the right to vote. Of the current political prisoners at least 45 also spent the last election, more than 20 years ago, in prison. Of these, 30 have been in there for the entire 20 years.

“One ethnic political prisoner, Khin Maung Lin has spent the past 28 years in prison, since his arrest in 1982 for his membership in the Karen National Union. Some activists like U Ohn Than and Burma’s famous comedian, Zarganar, have been in and out of prison over the past twenty years, having spent the 1990 election behind bars they were later released but re-arrested and imprisoned again for their political activities.” SILENCING DISSENT (AAPP report).

Election related violations only amplified in the week leading to the elections, as well as on the day itself. As the threat of an election boycott grew stronger, in the weeks nearing the elections, state media warned that such action could prolong military rule if voter turn-out was seen to be inadequate. "If the election is aborted (by voters) there will not be a government that's elected by the vote of the people. The ruling government would have no choice but to remain in charge of state security until it holds another election. If so, this will take a long time," said the state-run New Light of Myanmar.

Among many witnessed violations in the week preceding the elections was the mass number of voters either persuaded, threatened or bribed into casting an advanced vote in support of the USDP, some even had their vote ballot paper completed for them by government personnel who inevitably marked it in support of USDP. The Union Election Commission (UEC) publicised that twelve additional village tracts, comprising of several villages each, in Karreni state, would be excluded from voting. The announcement declared that current conditions did not allow for free and fair elections to take place in those areas. On 16 September, the UEC had announced elections would not be held in certain parts of the country, largely ethnic areas where ethnic minorities make up the majority of the population. This exclusion disenfranchised an estimated 1.5 million voters from at least 3400 villages across Kachin, Karenni, Karen, Mon and Shan states and is a gross violation of their basic civil and political rights.

On the day of the election individuals who had, in the past, been involved in protests, in particular the Saffron Revolution, as well as some family members of political prisoners learnt, on their arrival at the polling stations, that they too had been excluded from casting a vote. Many of those who were granted the right to vote were intimidated by authorities and some were even subjected to voting verbally. In some parts of the country people were requested to declare who they planned to vote for, if their answer was anything but the USDP they were turned away from the polling station. Certain candidates, who contested and won in the elections, later had their victory overturned.

On election day the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army seized control of the friendship bridge between the Burmese border town of Myawaddy, in Karen state and Mae Sot in Thailand, they also took control of police, army and intelligence offices in Myawaddy. DKBA stipulated that the regime had announced that they would shoot anyone who chose not to vote, which triggered their decision to take control of the town. As a result of the conflict 20,000 refugees fled to the Thai border town of Mae Sot. Five civilians were killed in the fighting, a further twenty were injured. The regime shortly regained control of the region but fighting continued further south along the border in the Three Pagodas Pass region.

Rangoon based foreign diplomats were granted permission to observe selected polling stations on the day of the elections. British ambassador, Andrew Heyn, however, decided to reject the “choreographed tour” invitation. His decision was supported by officials from the German, French and Italian embassies. Those who took up the offer were predominately from Southeast Asian countries, and included the ambassador of North Korea, Kim Sok Chol. Whilst foreign journalists were banned from accessing the country selected domestic reporters were invited to selected stations but were not allowed within 50 meters of the polling booths.

Estimates suggest that of the 29 million eligible voters, voter turn out on election day averaged between 45 percent and 60 percent. In certain parts of the country this figure was even lower, Rangoon, for example, witnessed an estimated 30 percent turn out. Based on the fact that this was Burma’s first election in over 20 years the voter turnout was extremely low. Contributing factors included the widespread campaign to boycott the elections, lack of civic education and apathy and indifference. The election result was decided well before the election day and people knew this.

Eleven days after Burma’s election the supreme election authority, as predicted, delivered news of a USDP victory. Through extensive intimidation, vote buying and suppressive campaign restrictions they had managed to secure 76.5% of the seats. Trailing behind the winner was; the regime linked, National Unity Party who managed to secure a mere 63 seats. Four pro-democracy parties, deemed to be in opposition to the USDP, followed but between them only managed to collect 9% of the seats.

Through the New Light of Myanmar, on 17 November, the junta warned the general public that individuals who filed a complaint against the elections risked a three-year prison sentence. The paper stated that accusations of fraud made through foreign radio stations and print media about the elections went against Article 64 of the respective Election Laws, and may consequently lead to punishment. If a complaint was to be put forward to the courts a payment of 1,000,000 kyat would be required and if the case was lost imprisonment would be inevitable. This announcement came after several election fraud related allegations, predominantly directed at the USDP, were ignored by the Election Commission.

27 November, 2010

[New Rules Restrict Free Speech in Burmese Parliament \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

18 November, 2010

[Final election results announced \(DVB\)](#)

[Election complainants risk jail term \(DVB\)](#)

8 November, 2010

[Fighting erupts in border town \(DVB\)](#)

[Thousands flee Burma border clash, as votes are counted \(BBC\)](#)

[Up to 5000 refugees flee into Thailand \(DVB\)](#)

7 November, 2010

[N Korean diplomats observe polling \(DVB\)](#)

[DKBA renegades seize border town \(DVB\)](#)

6 November, 2010

[Fraud allegations ignored by election body \(DVB\)](#)

[Polls close with '45 to 60%' voter turnout \(DVB\)](#)

[Insein detainees cast advance vote \(DVB\)](#)

5 November, 2010

[Opposition says PM's party 'cheating' \(DVB\)](#)

4 November, 2010

[PM's Opponent Injured in Suspicious Incident \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

3 November, 2010

[SILENCING DISSENT: The ongoing imprisonment of Burma's political activists in the lead up to the 2010 elections \(AAPP report\)](#)

[Q&A on Elections in Burma \(HRW\)](#)

2 November, 2010

[Burma Cancels Voting in More Minority Areas \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

1 November, 2010

[Burma warns against poll boycott \(BBC\)](#)

Torture

Torture remains a widespread practice in Burma's prisons and has a serious impact on the health and well-being of political prisoners. On November 25, Ko Tun Nu, a solo protester, staged a protest in Kyauk Pru in Arakan State during Thein Sein's visit to the town. He called for the release of all political prisoners in Burma. Ko Tun Nu was arrested by police later in the day and severely tortured with a solid bamboo rod by officer U Hla Aung during interrogation. He was, however, later released based on the understanding that he had initiated the protest as a result of his mental instability; "U Tun Nu's father was forced by authorities to sign a paper stating that his son carried out the protest because he is mentally ill, and promised he would not do such activism in the future."

29 November, 2010

[Solo Protester Demanding Release of Political Prisoners is Tortured by Police \(Narinijara\)](#)

Treatment of prisoners and their families

November brought the continued mistreatment of numerous political prisoners across Burma. Ko Shwe Maung, who is currently detained in Pyapon prison, was attacked by prison guards on the evening of 12 November while reading in his cell. The guards threw powder into his eyes causing him excruciating pain throughout the night until he was finally granted permission to see the prison doctor at 10am the following morning. The doctor swiftly transferred him to an eye specialist at Pyapon General Hospital stating that "it was already a little late for the treatment he needed". Ma Than Than Win, the wife of Ko Shwe Maung, visited him at the hospital where a specialist informed her that Ko Shwe Maung's eyes were swollen and bruised and his cornea was damaged. Thanks to treatment received by the eye specialist Ko Shwe Maung did not need to undergo surgery, however, prompt medical care after the attack would have reduced the severity of his current condition. On 26 November he received further treatment from an eye specialist doctor at Pyapon General Hospital.

Ye Htut Khaung, who is currently serving a three year sentence for his involvement in the Tuesday prayer group, and News Editor, Nyi Nyi Tun, who in 2009 was arbitrarily arrested and falsely accused of having connections to a series of bomb blasts, are reportedly partially paralyzed; it is believed that their condition has come about as a result of severe torture and dire prison conditions. An Arakan Youth is believed to be suffering from a similar problem.

Prisoners Released

October brought the release of **6** political prisoners. This included Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her two house companions Khin Khin Win and Win Ma Ma. Ko Aye Thwin was also released as were Ko Tun Nu and Japanese journalist, Toru Yamaji, following a short detention during the election period.

National League for Democracy

There are at least **408** members of the National League for Democracy party currently in prison. During the early morning of 7 November NLD township organizer, Ko Kyaw Kyaw Naing, who is currently serving a 14 year sentence in Pa-an prison following his involvement in the 2007 Saffron Revolution, went on hunger strike to protest against the November 7 elections on behalf of all his fellow political prisoners.

Towards the end of Ko Min Aung's sentence, relating to his involvement in the Saffron Revolution, he was taken to Monywa court and arbitrarily sentenced to 15 years imprisonment under new charges. His defense lawyer appealed against the courts decision but news reached him in November revealing that his appeal had been rejected. He remains detained in Kale prison. Since his initial arrest, on several occasions, his sentences have been altered.

NLD member, Mya Than Htike, who was arrested in 2007 during the Saffron Revolution, is reportedly in very bad health, at the time of his arrest he had a gun-shot wound and was never offered essential medical treatment to allow him to fully recover. On a recent prison visit his sister arrived to find him unconscious.

The NLD's lawsuit against the regime, initiated by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, has been rejected by the Supreme Court. The appeal had challenged the regime's decision to dissolve the National League for democracy claiming the junta illegally disbanded the party. Despite this disappointing news Tin Oo said; "In the mind of the public and all NLD members, the party still exists, many youths are more interested in joining the NLD after Suu Kyi's release".

23 November, 2010

[Supreme Court Rejects NLD Appeal to be Reinstated \(DVB\)](#)

88 Generation Students

There are at least **39** members of the 88 Generation Student group currently detained. Htay Kywe, who is currently serving a 65 years prison term in Buthidaung prison, is reportedly suffering from recurring stomach pains.

Ethnic Nationalities

There are at least **225** ethnic nationalities held in prison. Shortly after the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi ethnic leaders met with senior NLD leaders including Daw Suu with the aim of once again pushing for ethnic autonomy. Daw Suu has made the establishment of a second Panglong Conference a top priority which will reinstate the aims of the original conference, proposed by Daw Suu's father, Aung San, in 1947.

Just three days prior to the election seven supporters of the National Democratic Party for Development (NDPD) were reportedly arrested. The detained have since been identified as Aman Ullah, 40, Ibrahim, 40, Mohamed Ali, 50, and Rafique, 28, all from Aley Than Kyaw village, two from Myint Hlut and one from Du Nyaungpin gyi in Maungdaw Township, and are reportedly being held at Nasaka Camp 7 in Aley Than Kyaw. At present the reason for their arrest is unclear.

On the 14 November, just hours after polling stations closed, eight Rohingya leaders were reportedly arrested. The timing strongly suggested that their arrests were a form of punishment for supporting the National Democratic Party for Development in the election. The arrested, who all come from the Thanganet village tract, have been identified as Jamir Hussain, 50, Ahmed Hussain, 45, Jamir Hussain, 40, Amin, 25, Basa Meah, 45, Sayedur Rahaman, 45, Moulvi Mohamed, 60, and Moulvi Abu Sofian, 50. Information from family members revealed that two of the men, Moulvi Mohamed and Moulvi Abu Sofian, were severely tortured. All remain in custody and as yet have not been charged.

A further 38 Rohingyas were reportedly arrested on election day and as many as 100 villagers in Buthidaung, were arrested and subjected to forced labour during the immediate election period, for their support of the NPDP.

19 November, 2010

[Army arrests eight Rohingyas in Buthidaung](#)

17 November, 2010

[Suu Kyi reignites push for ethnic autonomy](#)

14 November, 2010

[Army arrests eight Rohingyas in Buthidaung \(BNI\)](#)

10 November, 2010

[Report of intimidation and arrests in ethnic areas during Burma's elections \(Shan Herald\)](#)

6 November, 2010

[Nasaka arrest seven NDPD supporters in south Maungdaw \(Kaladan Press Network\)](#)

Monks

There are at least **256** monks currently held in prison. The widely recognized leader of the Saffron Revolution, U Gambira, who is currently serving a 63 year

sentence managed to smuggle a letter out of Burma's remote Kale prison, through this letter he welcomes the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, though stresses that the over 2,000 political prisoner who remain in detention also need to be released. "I will forgive and forget the slander, the brutal torture on me and the harassment of my family, committed by the generals and the clerks. I want you all to concentrate on national reconciliation." He touched upon his current health condition stating that the torture he had been subjected to was less severe since his transfer to Kale prison. Although he has noticed some improvements to his health his sight is deteriorating.

In October news emerged that monk U Yammarwadi Pyinnyarsara had been transferred from Sittwe prison. His defence lawyer, Daw Aye Nu Sein, has since confirmed that he is now situated in Thayet prison in Pegu Division. U Yammarwadi Pyinnyarsara is currently serving an eight year and three month sentence accused of possessing obscene reading material and insulting religion. A relative recently attempted to visit him but was denied access because he was unable to provide sufficient documents confirming his relationship to U Yammarwadi Pyinnyarsara.

25 November, 2010

[Jailed monk hails Suu Kyi's release \(DVB\)](#)

Cyclone Nargis Volunteers

There are at least **20** Cyclone Nargis volunteers held in prison. There is no news to announce in November.

Journalists, Bloggers and Writers

There are currently at least **40** media activists held in prison. On the day of Burma's election, Toru Yamaji, a reporter with the Tokyo-based APF news agency, sneaked into Burma, crossing the border from Thailand, to attempt to cover the elections. While taking photographs of voters inside a polling station he was approached by secret police and taken to Myawaddy police station where he was held for two days. "I was put in a single occupancy room that was like a pigsty, covered in a cage," said Tor Yamaji. "A political prisoner who was in a cage next to me said, 'Thank you for working for us'. That made me happy and tearful." The prisoner explained to Yamaji that he had been detained since 1995, and during this time had been tortured. Toru Yamaji was threatened with a 7 year sentence, however, this was dismissed shortly afterwards; officials explained that this was due to the "deep friendship" between Japan and Burma. At the time of arrest he was carrying a pen camera, a passport, an APF press card, a Thai cell phone and an international cell phone, all of which were confiscated by authorities. Toru Yamaji works for the same agency as Japanese video journalist

Kenji Nagai, who was shot and killed while covering the Saffron Revolution in Burma in 2007.

Two female reporters for the Burmese weekly True News, were arrested and detained near Rangoon the day after the elections, however, they were released a few hours later. The details and reason for their arrests are yet to be confirmed.

In the face of the regime's tight media restrictions, two Australian documentary film makers, Hugh Piper and Helen Barrow, successfully spent a month working inside Burma in the lead up to the elections, after they were granted long term visas. The pair were producing a documentary about independent media in Southeast Asian countries; their time in Burma had focused on the Rangoon based Myanmar Times. However, when suspicions suggesting they were reporting on the elections reached the regime, they were promptly arrested and deported.

In the aftermath of the elections the regime suspended the publication of nine domestic journals after they broadcasted news relating to the activities of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The Press Scrutiny Board published a notice which excluded, The Voice, 7 Day News, Venus, Myanmar Post, Snapshot, Myanmar Newsweek and People's Era journals from publishing for one week while First Eleven sports Journal and Hot News were banned for two weeks.

22 November, 2010

[No Change as Junta Clamps Down on Suu Kyi News \(DVB\)](#)

12 November, 2010

[Junta Expels Documentary Film Makers \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

10 November, 2010

[Japanese reporter speaks of 'pigsty' ordeal \(DVB\)](#)

[Japanese journalist and two Burmese journalists freed \(RSF\)](#)

Women

There are at least **175** women currently detained. Ma Sanda, who is currently serving a 1 year and 6 month sentence, was transferred from Insein prison. She was originally arrested in May 2010 after she raised concerns with Twante Township hospital after witnessing a car accident where a woman did not receive necessary medical treatment due to the absence of medical staff, she was later charged under Article 353 in relation to her complaint. Her transfer came after she complained to prison authorities about the condition of her cell which was, at the time, having a negative impact on her heart condition. The authorities threatened to beat her with a baton if she did not refrain from complaining. Ma Sanda's family had also written to Than Shwe and the Minister of Home Affairs about their concerns for her living conditions. When her family recently attempted to visit her they were informed that Ma Sanda had been transferred; they indicated that she was situated in Mandalay prison, but authorities at the

prison were unable to confirm this. They have since learnt that she has been transferred to Putao prison, in Kachin State, over 1150 miles from her home.

Human Rights Defenders & Promoters Network

There are at least **31** Human Rights Defenders and Promoters Network currently detained. The family of detained human rights activist, Pauk Taw, was reportedly unable to visit him for four months following his transfer, in July of this year, from Buthidaung prison in Arakan state, where his family currently live, to Myung Mya prison in Irrawaddy Division, due to financial restrictions. At the time of his arrest he was working with Arakan Human Rights Defenders, he was sentenced to five years under several charges including supposedly crossing the border to Bangladesh illegally. Since Pauk Taw was detained, his family have been struggling to survive financially. For this reason one of his daughters has been forced to drop out of University.

12 November, 2010

[Family Members Unable to Meet with Arakanese Rights Activist for Four Months \(Narinjara\)](#)

Labour Activists

There are at least **45** labour activists currently detained. There is no news to announce in November.

Students

There are at least **285** students held in prison. There is no news to announce in November.

Lawyers

There are at least **12** lawyers detained in prison. There is no news to announce in November.

Individual Activists

There are at least **607** activists detained in prison. U Ohn Than, renowned for his solo peaceful protests, released a statement from Kale prison, shortly after the election results were announced, stating that he did not support the results. As a punishment, he was transferred to Putato prison, in Kachin State.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

On Saturday 13 November, after 7 years of house arrest, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest. More than 40,000 people came to greet 'the Lady' at the gates of her home, where she attempted to calm an ecstatic crowd and highlighted the importance of working together "people must work in unison. Only then can we achieve our goals".

During her first meeting with her National League for Democracy members, Daw Suu stated that she wanted to form a strong "people's network" and respond to the peoples needs "I want to listen to the people of Burma's voices. I want to obey the people's wishes. So I want to engage in activities that put me in touch with the people." At the meeting emphasis was placed on prioritizing the release of all political prisoners, pressing for national reconciliation and initiating positive interactions with the military. Daw Suu stressed that she did not want the military to fail but to rise instead "to dignified heights of professionalism and true patriotism". The possibility of lifting sanctions and ending the foreign travel boycott appear to be up for discussion. After the meeting Daw Suu called for direct talks with the military leaders in the interests of national reconciliation.

Following the party meeting Daw Suu spoke publicly to her supporters outside the gates of the NLD office about the need for public engagement to move towards democracy. "I think we all have to work together. I wish to work in unison with the people of Burma," she said. Adding that, after 50 years of military rule, she alone could not lead the country through a democratic transition. "I don't believe in one person's influence and authority to move a country forward," she said. "One person alone cannot do something as important as bringing democracy to a country." In her speech she also requested that the people of Burma pray for the release of all political prisoners still detained inside the countries prisons.

On 23 November, 10 days after Daw Suu's release her youngest son Kim Aris was granted a visa to Burma and was reunited with his mother. The pair last saw each other over a decade ago. On 28 November, they met with more than 70 family members of Burma's political prisoners at a ceremony offering alms to monks. Comments from family members of those detained indicate that the reunion sparked personal encouragement amongst them.

Earlier in the month the result of Daw Suu's third and final appeal, relating to her 18 month sentence for breaching the terms of her house arrest following an uninvited visit by US citizen, John Yettaw, was decided. The court posted a public notice stating that the appeal had been turned down, providing no explanation for the decision.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the title of “Queen of Burma's Democracy and Human Rights” by Manav Ekta Parishad, an Indian human rights organization. T D Singh, the national secretary of Manav Ekta Parishad, said, “By honoring her as a hero for her perseverance, bravery and sacrifice, we want Indians to know more about the democracy and human rights struggle in Burma. We want Aung San Suu Kyi to know we stand with her.”

29 November, 2010

[Suu Kyi Encourages Families of Political Prisoners \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

23 November, 2010

[Aung San Suu Kyi reunited with her son after 10 years \(Guardian\)](#)

[Queen of Burma' Title Bestowed on Suu Kyi \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

21 November, 2010

[John Simpson on Burma's democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi \(The Telegraph\)](#)

15 November, 2010

[Aung San Suu Kyi returns to work \(Guardian\)](#)

[Aung San Suu Kyi: Undiminished by years of house arrest \(BBC\)](#)

14 November, 2010

[Suu Kyi to 'First Listen to the People' \(DVB\)](#)

[Aung San Suu Kyi challenges Burma junta to begin journey towards reform \(Guardian\)](#)

[Suu Kyi calls for opposition unity \(DVB\)](#)

[Aung San Suu Kyi calls for unity and reconciliation in Burma after release \(Guardian\)](#)

13 November, 2010

[Daw Aung San Suu Kyi: 22 years of peaceful resistance in the face of a brutal military regime \(AAPP\)](#)

[Daw Aung San Suu Kyo 'free' but for how long? \(AAPP\)](#)

10 November, 2010

[Burma's Suu Kyi 'refuses release with conditions' \(BBC\)](#)

Key International Developments

At an international level, in the pre-election period, UN representatives, international organizations, Heads of State and experts repeatedly voiced their dissatisfaction with the pre-election conditions and the likelihood of them meeting internationally accepted standards for free and fair elections. Just days before the elections commenced, the international community appeared to lose hope. Contributing factors included the continued incarceration of over 2,000 political prisoners including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other leading politicians as well as extensive reports from both opposition groups and the general public of widespread electoral fraud. Confirming that, fundamental elements essential to inclusive, free and fair elections did not exist. The election day only reaffirmed this and, if anything, went further to tell the world that the elections were indeed designed solely to bring the constitution into play and, in doing so, cement military rule. On 8 November, UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, referred to

Burma's elections as insufficient and transparent. He once again called on the regime to release all political prisoners.

Following the 7 November elections the UN General Assembly condemned the "ongoing systematic violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms" of Burmese in a draft resolution that was endorsed on 21 November. The resolution, sponsored by Belgium, was approved by 96 votes of the General Assembly's Third Committee. "It was a matter of deep regret that, despite calls from the international community, steps had not been taken by the Government to ensure free, fair and inclusive elections on 7 November," the Belgian delegate said. The resolution did not include the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry into crimes against humanity, in line with the UN Special Rapporteur's report to the UNGA in October.

Towards the latter part of November Vijay Nambiar, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's chief of staff, spent two days in Burma. He called for the release of the more than 2,000 political prisoners currently detained and requested that the regime address the many concerns highlighted by parties with regards to the recent elections, emphasizing that it was "important for laying the foundation of a credible transition". During his visit he met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who felt that the meeting was a success but hoped it would be the first of many to come in order to resolve the problems in Burma.

Throughout the world the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received a mixed response, the Asian regional news tended to act with caution when it came to welcoming the decision, while others like China and, disappointingly, India guarded the policy of non-interference in countries internal affairs. Europe and the US addressed the news with joy but highlighted that it should not mask the continued oppression in Burma. British Prime Minister David Cameron described Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's detention as a "travesty" and stated that her release was "long overdue".

29 November, 2010

[Suu Kyi hopes for UN dialogue \(DVB\)](#)

[Suu Kyi 'saddened with India' \(DVB\)](#)

25 November, 2010

[West Waits for Suu Kyi Sanctions Signal \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

22 November, 2010

[UN slams Burma and other rights abusers \(DVB\)](#)

17 November, 2010

[China Silent on Suu Kyi Release \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

16 November, 2010

[Asian press cautiously optimistic on Burma changes \(BBC\)](#)

15 November, 2010

[E Timor urges end to sanctions \(DVB\)](#)

14 November, 2010

[Celebrations as Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi released \(BBC\)](#)

8 November, 2010

[Burma election condemned by international observers \(Guardian\)](#)

1 November, 2010

[Burmese people's dream of accountable government remains distant \(Guardian\)](#)

Conclusion

The excitement of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release has, to a degree, veiled the regime's cleverly orchestrated elections, the fifth step on their 'roadmap to democracy'. Although her release must be celebrated it should not conceal the consequences of the recent elections for the people of Burma; a continuation of military power by a regime guilty of widespread human rights violations, including unlawful detention and systematic torture of political activists.

"The elections may be over and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi released, but for more than 2,000 political prisoners still in prison nothing has changed. We must not let the spotlight on Burma fade", said Bo Kyi, AAPP Joint Secretary. The number of political prisoners remains at 2203. There was no general amnesty of prisoners in the lead up to the elections as the regime unofficially alluded.

Although to some the regime may appear immune to international pressure when persistent calls for the release of all political prisoners are ignored, extensive efforts to secure an election victory solely designed to legitimize Burma's ruling elite, along with further threats of imprisonment for those who attempt to speak out against the flawed system, are surely signs of a weak regime and deep fear from within.

The regime is notorious for its use of the law to muzzle any opposition voices and a recent announcement restricting the speech of elected members of parliament, which came just days after the widely condemned elections, only reiterates this. These laws allow for freedom of expression in parliament only if it does not jeopardize national security and the unity of the country, nor must these voiced opinions be against the Constitution. This limits the capacity of parliamentarians to carry out their duties, further restricts those who may pose a challenge to the military, and will prohibit a parliamentary review of the Constitution. The new laws also provide a two-year prison term for those who stage protests in the parliament compound. In addition, anyone other than a parliamentarian who enters the parliament hall when the body is in session faces a one year prison term and a fine. These laws violate the fundamental freedoms of assembly and expression and illustrate how the regime has learnt to never start a game before first firmly laying down the rules in its favor.

