

Chronology of Political Prisoners in Burma for February 2009

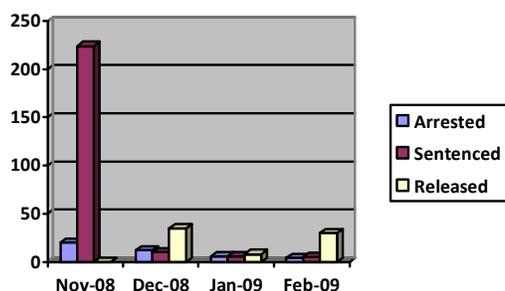
Summary of current situation

There are a total of 2,128 political prisoners in Burma.¹ These include:

CATEGORY	NUMBER
Monks	220
Members of Parliament	15
Students	229
88 Generation Students Group	47
Women	186
NLD members	456
Members of the Human Rights Defenders and Promoters network	42
Ethnic nationalities	203
Cyclone Nargis volunteers	20
Teachers	26
Media activists	43
Lawyers	15
In poor health	115

Since the protests in August 2007 leading to last September's Saffron Revolution, a total of 1,052 activists have been arrested and are still in detention.

Monthly trend analysis



In the month of February 2009, 4 activists were arrested, 5 were sentenced, and 30 were released. On 20 February the military regime announced an amnesty for 6,313 prisoners, beginning 21 February. To date AAPP has been able to confirm the release of just 30 political prisoners.

This month the UN Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari and the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar Tomas Ojea Quintana both visited Burma. At the time of the Special Rapporteur's visit, political prisoners **U Thura aka Zarganar**, **Zaw Thet Htway**, **Thant Sin Aung**, **Tin Maung Aye aka Gatone**, **Kay Thi Aung aka Ma Ei**, **Wai Myo Htoo aka Yan Naing**, **Su Su Nway** and **Nay Myo Kyaw aka Nay Phone Latt** all had their sentences reduced. However they all still face long prison terms of between 8 years and 6 months, and 35 years.² On 13 February 2009, the day before the Special Rapporteur arrived

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

² On 13 February 2009, U Thura aka Zarganar was granted a 24-year reduction in his original 59-year sentence. He still faces 35 years in prison. Zaw Thet Htway was granted an 8-year reduction in his original 19-year sentence, leaving him with an 11-year jail term to serve. Thant Sin Aung was granted an 8-year reduction in his original 18-year sentence. He still faces 10 years in prison. Tin Maung Aye was granted a 15-year reduction in his

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in Burma, the regime extended Vice-Chairman of the National League for Democracy (NLD) **U Tin Oo's** period of house arrest by one year. He has been under house arrest since May 2003, just like **Daw Aung San Suu Kyi**. On the same day, the regime's courts sentenced NLD Members of Parliament (MPs) **Dr Tin Min Htut** and **Nyi Pu** to 15 years' imprisonment. In separate developments, 19 year-old student activist **De Nyein Linn** was transferred to the remote Hkamti Prison, 1,200 miles from his family in Rangoon. And 13 members of the 88 Generation Students Group were also transferred to prisons all around Burma.

Prisoner Releases

On 20 February 2009 the regime announced that it would release 6,313 prisoners under a general amnesty "to enable them to serve the interests of the nation and to participate in the fair election to be held in 2010."³ AAPP has been able to confirm the release of just 30 political prisoners.

28 February 2009

AAPP has confirmed the list of 30 political prisoners released under the amnesty as follows:

1. Dr. Zaw Myint Maung, Member of Parliament from the NLD. (Myintkyina prison)
2. U Pe Sein, NLD Township organizer, Mohnyin, Kachin State. (Myintkyina prison)
3. U Naw Naw, cameraman (Myintkyina prison)
4. Arkar Soe (Myintkyina prison)
5. U Kaythara (a) U Kyaw Min Thet, monk (Insein)
6. U Ingura (a) U Aye Tun Thar, monk (Insein)
7. U Thireina (a) U Kyaw Moe, monk (Insein)
8. U Marlaina (a) U Min Zaw Aung, monk (Insein)
9. U Ardatesa (a) U Aung Ko, monk (Insein)
10. U Takekanateya (a) U Maung Zaw, monk (Insein)
11. U Damitika (a) U Tun Tun, monk (Insein)
12. U Tun Zaw Htay (a) Tun Tun, All Burma Federation of Student Unions (Insein)
13. U Khaing Ba Myint (Insein)
14. U Soe (Insein)
15. U Nandathiri (a) U Htay Ye Tun, monk (Insein)
16. U Sandima (a) U Zaw Min Htet, monk (Insein)
17. Ma Hmwe (a) Ma Kyin Haw, All Burma Federation of Student Unions (Insein)
18. Ma Khin Khin Leah, sentenced to life imprisonment, imprisoned since 1999 (Insein)
19. Tin Hlaing, member of the Islamic clergy (Insein)
20. U Thet Wai (a) Pauk Sa, sentenced for 2 years for making a complaint to the ILO (Insein)
21. Ma Htay, National League for Democracy (Insein)
22. Daw Ponena Mee (female) – 80 year old nun (Insein)

original 29-year sentence, leaving him with a 14-year jail term to serve. All were arrested in connection with Cyclone Nargis relief activities. On 17 February, students Kay Thi Aung and Wai Myo Htoo were each granted a 16-year reduction in their original 26-year sentences. They both still face 10 years in prison. On 19 February, NLD Youth members Su Su Nway and Nay Phone Latt both had their sentences reduced. Su Su Nway was granted a 4-year reduction from her original 12 years and 6 months sentence, leaving her with an 8 years and 6 months jail term. Nay Phone Latt's original sentence of 20 years and 6 months was reduced by 8 years and 6 months. He now faces 12 years in prison. Source: [AAPP](#)

³ Source: [New Light of Myanmar](#)

Please Note: All information contained in this report is correct to the best of AAPP's knowledge at the time of going to press. The situation inside Burma is changing very rapidly, and this should be considered a 'live' document. If you reproduce this report or sections of it, please retain all original links and attribute it to AAPP. Thanks.

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23. U Tin Htay, imprisoned for distributing a DVD of General Than Shwe's daughter's wedding (Kale prison)
24. U Than Htay, imprisoned for distributing a DVD of General Than Shwe's daughter's wedding (Kale prison)
25. Zaw Naing Htwe (a) Kat Net, brother of 88 Generation Students Group member Kyaw Kyaw Htwe aka Marky (Labour camp)
26. Cherry Aung, student (Katha Prison)
27. Aung San Oo (aka) Kyauk Khe, artist and member of the NLD (Thayet Prison)
28. Sai Nook (Thayet Prison)
29. Min Han, poet and member of the 88 Generation Students Group (Thayet Prison)
30. Nyo Gyi (NLD) deputy-chair of Maddaya NLD (Khamti) ([aapp.28022009](#))

24 February 2009

24 political prisoners amongst those released

AAPP has confirmed that only 24 political prisoners are among the 6,313 reportedly released under the general amnesty. Those released included National League for Democracy (NLD) Member of Parliament Dr **Zaw Myint Maung**, who spent almost 19 years in prison. **Khin Khin Leah**, wife of Kyaw Wanna, who has been in prison since 1999, was also released. When the authorities were unable to locate and arrest her husband for his role in planning a peaceful demonstration, they instead arrested his wife and daughter. Although her daughter was later released, **Khin Khin Leah** was sentenced to life imprisonment. **Daw Ponena Mee**, the oldest nun in prison at the age of almost 80, was amongst those released. Others included **U Thet Wai**, who was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment for making a complaint to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) about labour rights violations, and **U Tin Htay** and **U Than Htay**, who were arrested for distributing DVDs of the lavish wedding of Senior General Than Shwe's daughter. And 9 monks, who have been detained since 2003, were also released. ([aapp.24022009](#))

20 February 2009

Junta announces 6,300 convicts to be freed

The Burmese military regime announced an amnesty for more than 6,000 prisoners but did not mention whether any political detainees will be among those released. State radio and television announced that the convicts from various prisons would be released starting Saturday. The brief announcement said that 6,313 prisoners were being freed in recognition of their good conduct and so that they would be able to participate in a general election planned for next year. ([Irrawaddy.21022009](#))

Unfair trials

Reports continue to emerge of political activists being denied the right to legal representation during their trials. This month two National League for Democracy Members of Parliament - **Dr Tin Min Htut** and **Nyi Pu** - were sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment. They were denied legal representation in court.

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Treatment of prisoners and their families

The regime continues to systematically transfer political prisoners to prisons all around the country, away from their families. In some cases their relatives are only being informed after the transfers have taken place. 15 political prisoners were transferred. They are 13 members of the 88 Generation Students Group, Kyaw Ko Ko leader of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU), was transferred to Taunggyi prison in Shan state and 19 year-old De Nyein Linn, leader of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU), was transferred to the remote Hkamti prison, 1,200 miles away from his family in Rangoon.

88 Generation Students Group

46 known members of the 88 Generation Students Group are currently in prison. No members of the group were released under the latest amnesty, although **Zaw Naing Htwe**, brother of 88 Generation member **Kyaw Kyaw Htwe aka Marky**, was released from labour camp. On December 15 2008 he was sentenced to 9 years in prison, charged under sections 41/b and 42 of the prisons procedural code, related to exchanging correspondence in prison. He received a letter from his elder brother on 2 February 2008 during a prison visit.

16 February 2009

Prison visit difficulties

88 Generation member and former political prisoner, **Thein Than Tun@Ko Ko Gyi's** wife recently visited him. She said, "I arrived at Thandwe prison at 6am on 16 February 2009. I was allowed to meet with him at 12:30 and I got 20 minutes. I am worried about his health because there are no medics or doctors in Thandwe prison in Arakan State. I came here with Hla Myo Naung's family and Maung Maung Latt's family. It's very difficult to get here because the roads are so bad." (rfa.19022009)

9 February 2009

More prison transfers

Thirteen 88 Generation Students Group members, who were being held in Insein prison in Rangoon, have been transferred to remote regions away from their families. **Zaw Htet Ko Ko** and **Sanchaung Ko Ko Gyi** were transferred to Thandwe and Kyaukpyu prisons in Arakan state respectively, while **Lay Lay Mon** (female) and **Hnin May Aung** were sent to Sagaing's Shwebo and Monywa prisons. **Chit Ko Lin** was sent to Pakokku Prison in Magwe division, **Myo Win Hlaing** to Thaton Prison in Mon State and **Tharaphy Theint Theint Tun** (female) to Prome Prison in Bago Division. **Aung Thaik Soe** was transferred to Mandalay Prison, while **Thaw Zin Tun** and **San San Tin** were sent to Yemethin and Meiktila prisons in Mandalay Division. **Kyi Than**, **Nant Hnin Yi** and **Aye Thida** were sent to Irrawaddy division's Pyapon, Maubin and Henzada prisons respectively. According to relatives of the prisoners, some families were only informed of the transfers after their relatives had been moved and so were unable to give them any essential supplies such as medicine, clothes and blankets. (dvh.09022009)

National League for Democracy members

456 National League for Democracy (NLD) members are currently in prison. There are 15 NLD Members of Parliament in prison. 6 NLD members were released under the recent amnesty, including one MP, **Zaw Myint Maung**. However, 2 MPs - **Dr Tin Min Htut** and

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Nyi Pu - were also sentenced this month, to 15 years' imprisonment. And NLD Vice-Chairman U Tin Oo had his period of house arrest extended by one year.

26 February 2009

National League for Democracy member released

National League for Democracy member **Nyo Gyi**, was released in the general amnesty after being sentenced to 8 years in prison for intimidation of Union Solidarity and Development Association officials. **Nyo Gyi**, deputy-chair of Mandalay's Maddaya National League for Democracy, had been imprisoned in Sagaing's Hkamti prison. "I was kept in a cell without receiving communication from the outside world," he said. "The food wasn't too bad but it was still bad, and water, too – it contained a lot of dirt and we often got sick after drinking that. I had an operation on my eyes while I was in prison and now my left eye cannot see anymore," he said after his release. In May 2007, Than Lwin – a relative of **Nyo Gyi** - was punched in the face with a knuckle-duster by an unknown assailant who fled into a USDA office after the attack. Than Lwin's attacker was never apprehended, but nine of his colleagues and family members, including **Nyo Gyi**, were sentenced to up to eight years in prison for intimidation of USDA officials. **Nyo Gyi** was also arrested, tortured and sentenced to nine years in prison during 2003's Depayin massacre but he was released after serving 11 months. ([dwb.26022009](#))

21 February 2009

NLD Chairperson released under amnesty

San Chaung township NLD chairperson **Thet Wai** was released from Insein prison as part of the general amnesty. He was arrested on 19 February 2008 after authorities tried to seize a memory stick from him containing information about the Burmese government's forced labour practices to be reported to the International Labour Organisation. **Thet Wai**, who had about 18 months of his sentence left to serve, said "I was arrested for 'obstructing officials on duty' while trying to work for the end of forced labour and providing information to the ILO about it. As I am now free, I will continue to work with the ILO to end forced labour and I will continue to act as chairman of Sanchaung township NLD and follow the rules of the party." Thet Wai also expressed his frustration at the limited number of political prisoners released. "They released more than 9000 prisoners before. Only 9 or 10 political prisoners were released," he said. "Now, around 6000 have been released and I think not more than 14 or 15 political prisoners are among them. It is a bad sign." Thet Wai said he expected the United Nations and the international community in general to share his frustrations. "The international community will be in despair like us because they are demanding the release of all political prisoners including Daw Suu, Khun Tun Oo, U Tin Oo, Min Ko Naing and the monks if we are to solve the political problems of Burma," he explained. "International leaders will see that the junta has no serious intention to release political prisoners."([dwb.23022009](#))

18 February 2009

Win Tin affirms NLD commitment to ethnic unity

Senior National League for Democracy member and former political prisoner Win Tin emphasised the party's commitment to ethnic nationality issues in an interview with *DVB* this week. Win Tin spoke to *DVB* soon after Union Day, which commemorates the signing in 1947 of the Panglong agreement uniting Burmans and other ethnic nationalities in their struggle for independence. He also spoke about the NLD's recent statement calling for

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parliament to be convened, the release of political prisoners and the reopening of NLD offices. ([dvv.18022009](#))

17 February 2009

NLD members collect signatures for the release of political prisoners

Members of the National League for Democracy branch in Maddaya township, Mandalay, have decided to collect signatures of public support for the release of political prisoners. Maddaya NLD members agreed to join in the campaign started by youth members on 12 February at the party headquarters in Rangoon. The decision was taken at a monthly meeting held at the home of Maddaya MP-elect Than Lwin yesterday and the campaign will be carried out under the guidance of the party headquarters. "We decided to support the statement issued on the 62nd anniversary of the Union Day, the release of all political prisoners and the signature campaign," township organising committee member Nyo Lay said. Government officials watched the meeting but took no action to harass party members. ([dvv.17022009](#))

14 February 2009

NLD MP ill in prison

Zaw Myint Maung NLD MP has been suffering from a gastric condition for the last two months. He hasn't been able to eat properly during that time, and has only been able to eat rice soup. His wife, Dr Yu Yu May, said "It might be cancer, it could be dangerous for him." He is currently imprisoned in Myintkyina prison in Kachin state. **Zaw Myint Maung** was arrested in 1990 and charged with sedition under section 122/1 of the Penal Code and given a 25-year sentence. After 6 years, he was given another 12 years sentence. ([dvv.14022009](#)).

Detained NLD MPs allowed family visits

Elected NLD MPs **U Nyi Pu** and **Dr Tin Min Htut**, were able to meet with their families. They had been sentenced to 27 years but will only need to serve 15 years. They were sentenced in Insein prison court, without any defense lawyer. The two men were arrested in August 2008 after they wrote an open letter to the United Nations criticising the ruling military regime's seven-step roadmap toward democratic political reforms. ([dvv.14022009](#))

13 February 2009

U Tin Oo's house arrest extended

Tin Oo, the deputy leader of the NLD has had his detention orders extended for one year. Several policemen were seen visiting Tin Oo's house to inform him that the restrictions had been extended, according to a neighbor. **Tin Oo**, 82, the vice chairman of the National League for Democracy, was arrested with Suu Kyi in May 2003 after the Depayin massacre, when a pro-government mob attacked their motorcade as they were making a political tour of northern Burma. Both party leaders have been in either prison or under house arrest since then. ([Irrawaddy.13022009](#))

Elected members of parliament **Dr Tin Min Htut** and **Nyi Pu** were sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment today by Insein prison court, according to Dr Tin Min Htut's son. **Nyi Pu** is the elected representative for Gwa township and an Arakan National League for Democracy organising committee member, while **Dr Tin Min Htut** is an elected MP from Panatanaw township in Irrawaddy division. The two men were among five elected MPs who signed a letter to United Nations secretary-general Ban Ki-moon at the end of July last year, along

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with **Pu Cin Sian Thaug**, **Thein Pe** and **Dr Myint Naing**. In the letter, the five declared their opposition to the 2010 elections and called for the 1990 election result to be honoured and for tripartite dialogue. They were charged with disrupting the national convention, causing a public disturbance and offences under the electronic communication law. **Dr Tin Min Htut** and **Nyi Pu** were arrested by police special branch the early hours of 12 August 2007. Kyaw Hoe, the lawyer for the two MPs-elect, was barred from attending the court proceedings right up until the sentencing. However, **Dr. Tin Min Htut** and **Nyi Pu** were able to receive visits from their family after their sentencing. ([dvh.13022009](#))

12 February 2009

Political prisoner petition launched

On Union Day the NLD launched a petition campaign calling for the release of all political prisoners. Union Day commemorates the signing of the historic Panglong Agreement, which set the stage for Burma's independence, by independence leader Gen Aung San and leaders of various ethnic groups on February 12, 1947. "As many as 500 people signed the petition at the NLD's headquarters," said an opposition politician who attended the party's ceremony. The politician said that members of various ethnic groups signed the petition, which was launched as part of a new campaign to free more than 2,000 political prisoners, including NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi. People living near the NLD's headquarters reported seeing many plainclothes riot police and members of the junta's Swan Arr Shin militia deployed in the area from early morning. "There have been many Swan Arr Shin people on the streets and in trucks since early this morning," said a local resident, adding that some of the security forces could be seen filming and photographing people attending the NLD's ceremony. However, no arrests were reported. ([Irrawaddy.12022009](#))

6 February 2009

Lawyers denied access to hearings of NLD members

NLD members **Ma Cho** and **Theingi** were denied legal representation on 11 February, when their lawyer Myint Thaug was refused access to the court to defend them, according to party spokesman Nyan Win. The two women were arrested five months ago and charged with having contact with illegal organisations. ([dvh.11022009](#))

Nyi Pu and **Dr Tin Ming Htut**, elected NLD MPs appeared in court without legal representation. One of their lawyers Kyaw Hoe said it was police special branch who had barred him from attending. The lawyers wrote a letter to Tin Htut, the presiding judge at Western Rangoon district court, but he also rejected their appeal on the orders of special branch. National League for Democracy legal advisor Thein Nyunt insisted that action should be taken against those who interfere with court procedures. "If we are to maintain the right to a free trial, the court has a duty to prevent outside interference," he said. "It won't be a free trial if lawyers are not allowed to represent their clients; this should be reported to the court. Their relatives should also report it to the justice ministry." ([dvh 11022009](#))

Monks and nuns

There are currently 220 monks and 6 nuns in prison. AAPP has been able to confirm that nine monks and one nun were released under the latest amnesty.

9 February 2009

Monk beaten in prison

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Buddhist monk **U Kelatha** from Mandalay, who is currently incarcerated in Irrawaddy division's Henzada prison, was beaten up by a fellow inmate on the orders of a prison official on 28 January as a punishment. According to a relative of the monk, Irrawaddy division prison director Tin Tun ordered a prisoner to beat up **U Kethala** when he discovered that the monk was wearing his prison uniform in the style of monks' robes. "He told a prisoner to beat him 20 times and he himself punched and kicked him," the relative said. **U Kelatha** was arrested and prosecuted along with monk leader **U Gambira** and is serving a 35-year jail term for his role in the September 2007 demonstrations. ([dvh.09022009](#))

Cyclone Nargis volunteers

There are currently 20 Cyclone Nargis volunteers still in detention. 6 of them are currently on trial, and at times during the proceedings have been denied legal representation in court. 5 Cyclone Nargis volunteers recently had their sentences reduced. However, they still face between 10 and 35 years in prison.⁴

25 February 2009

Cyclone Nargis helpers allowed legal representation

Six members of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU) who were arrested last year after helping victims of cyclone Nargis have been granted permission to have legal representation in their ongoing trial. At previous court appearances, they had been denied legal representation. The trial is being held in Insein prison special court, where Dr. **Ne Win and his daughter Phyto Phyto Aung, Aung Kyaw San, Phone Pyi Kywe, Shane Yazar Htun and Aung Thant Zin Oo (aka James)** are defending government allegations of sedition and unlawful association. They were arrested for collecting and burying rotting corpses in the aftermath of the cyclone. Central court lawyer Khin Maung Myint, who has been representing the six since they were arrested, said he was allowed to enter the courtroom during a hearing session on yesterday. "I was allowed to meet them at the trial and I had a talk with them – all of them seemed to be in good health," he said. "The next hearing is on 3 March and then I will have to present some necessary documents at the court to get permission to talk on behalf of them at the trial." ([dvh.25022009](#))

16 February 2009

Nargis volunteers' sentences reduced

Zarganar's and **Thent Zin Aung** and 2 others sentences have been reduced by Rangoon divisional court. The court upheld appeals by comedian **Zarganar**, journalist **Zaw Thet Htway** and two others last week and reduced their prison terms by up to 24 years, according to their families. Zarganar's sister-in-law Ma Nyein has said that the court had deducted three eight-year sentences on electronics charges from the comedian and activist's total of 59 years' imprisonment. **Zarganar's** co-defendants **Zaw Thet Htway, Tin Maung Aye and Thant Zin**

⁴ On 13 February 2009, U Thura aka Zarganar was granted a 24-year reduction in his original 59-year sentence. He still faces 35 years in prison. Zaw Thet Htway was granted an 8-year reduction in his original 19-year sentence, leaving him with an 11-year jail term to serve. Thant Sin Aung was granted an 8-year reduction in his original 18-year sentence. He still faces 10 years in prison. Tin Maung Aye was granted a 15-year reduction in his original 29-year sentence, leaving him with a 14-year jail term to serve. On 17 February, student Kay Thi Aung was granted a 16-year reduction in her original 26-year sentence. She still faces 10 years in prison. All were arrested in connection with Cyclone Nargis relief activities.

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Aung were also granted reductions of their prison terms under the electronics law. "**Zaw Thet Htway's** eight-year prison term under the electronics act was also revoked so he is to serve only 11 years now instead of 19 years," said Ma Nyein. "**Thent Zin Aung**, who was jailed for 18 years, will now serve only 10 years." She said **Tin Maung Aye** who is also known as **Gatone Lay**, was granted a 15-year reduction in total from his sentence of 29 years. "The court also cancelled a seven-year prison sentence under the immigration act for using a fake ID, so he only has 14 years left," she said. Ma Nyein said the family had visited **Zarganar** on 9 February in Myitkyina prison in Kachin state where he is being detained and were assured that he was in good health. ([dvh.16022009](#))

Zarganar's sentence reduced

Zarganar's mother has said that "I was not shocked when my son was meted out such a harsh prison sentence, thinking that they did it by exercising undue power in their hands. Now I am not happy when I hear of such commutation of his prison sentence", Kyi Oo said. "They (authority) might have commuted the prison sentence after realizing it is too harsh," his defence lawyer **Zaw Lin** said. He was handed out a total of 59 years. Now the court commuted 8 years in each case totaling 24 years. His family members said that they would appeal against the remaining 35 years sentence at the Supreme Court in the coming weeks. ([Mizzima.16022009](#))

12 February 2009

Nargis volunteers denied legal representation in court

Six members of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions and four others who were arrested after helping victims of Cyclone Nargis appeared in Insein prison court without their lawyers on 10 February. **Phyo Phyo Aung**, her father **Dr Nay Win**, **Shein Yarzar Tun**, **Aung Thant Zin Oo**, **Aung Kyaw San**, **Phone Pyeit Kywe**, **Yin Yin Wyne**, **Tin Tin Cho**, **Ni Mo Hlaing** and **Myat Thu** were arrested for collecting rotting corpses in the aftermath of the cyclone and burying them. **Kyaw Hoe**, **Khin Htay Kywe** and **Maung Maung Latt**, the lawyers representing the ten people, were not allowed to enter the court on the orders of special branch, a lawyer said. Lawyer **Kyaw Hoe** said it was special branch, not the prison authorities, who had barred him from attending. ([dvh.12022009](#))

Women

186 women are currently in detention.

Lawyers

15 lawyers are currently in detention. During trials of political activists this month, lawyers were frequently barred from the courtroom during proceedings.

2 February 2009

Arrest warrants issued for lawyers

Authorities have issued arrest warrants for six lawyers who have been involved in cases defending political activists, according to a source close to the lawyers. The six lawyers are **Kyaw Ho**, **Myint Thaug**, **Maung Maung Latt**, **Aung Than Myint**, **Khin Htay Kywe**, and **Nyi Nyi Hlaing**. A Rangoon resident, close to the lawyers said the authorities were trying to intimidate lawyers into not taking political cases. "The lawyers are from the National League for Democracy so they offer their legal services in political cases," the resident said. "When

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they do so, they openly express their legal arguments as permitted under the law," he said. "[Lawyers] U Aung Thein, U Khin Maung Shein, and Ko Pho Phyu were arrested for that. The authorities want to scare lawyers away from people who are involved in politics." The resident said the issuing of arrest warrants against the defense lawyers was also likely to hurt political activists now in detention. "Political activists who are currently being detained are bound to suffer from the authorities' action against lawyers," the resident said. "The issuing of arrest warrants against their lawyers is meant to weaken their resistance." ([dvh.02022009](#))

Human Rights Defenders & Promoters network

42 members of the Human Rights Defenders & Promoters network are currently in prison.

7 February 2009

Political prisoners denied basic rights

In Mandalay's Nyaung-U prison, political inmates have been denied basic rights, according to a relative of a prisoner. Thi Thi Soe, sister of Human Rights Defenders and Promoters network member **Myo Thant**, said her brother had told her about prison conditions when she went to see him on 24 January. "He said prisoners are not allowed to see one another freely and the conditions in Insein are about the level of a dog kennel at the moment," she said. Thi Thi Soe said prisoner wardens had monitored her conversation with her brother. Political prisoners are also barred from watching television and listening to radio, unlike other inmates, and are kept awake during the night, Thi Thi Soe said. "They keep on beating tom-toms at night and they have to listen to them and can't sleep," she said. Thi Thi Soe said a prison official had also refused to accept medicines for her brother, who has been suffering from high blood pressure, claiming they were unnecessary. ([dvh.7022009](#))

Other organizations

23 February 2009

Prison authorities neglect political prisoner's health

Nyaung U prison authorities have denied healthcare for Generation Wave member **Thiha Win Tin**, even though he has had a serious heart attack, according to Generation Wave. Denying prisoner's rights is a violation of basic international human rights, said Generation Wave. Generation Wave called for prisoner's rights to be respected, and for the release of all political prisoners. **Thiha Win Tin** was arrested on 12 March 2008. At the time he was a 2nd year law student. He was given 5 years imprisonment under Article 6 of the law relating to forming of organizations. ([gw.23022009](#))

14 February 2009

Three activists arrested for rose campaign

Three members of the Best Fertiliser (also known as the Best Manure group) underground activist group were arrested by local authorities in Rangoon on Valentine's Day after distributing leaflets as part of their rose campaign. A spokesperson for the group said the three activists were detained after they were seen sticking posters up in North Okkalapa on 14 February. "Our group members **Aung Htet Min, Soe Min Htike and Kyaw Zin Naing** were sticking posters and leaflets on the wall in front of North Okkalapa High School (5) early on Valentine's Day, at around 4am," he said. The group spokesperson claimed the three had been beaten and mistreated during their interrogation at the township Peace and Development

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Council office. The Best Fertiliser group launched the rose campaign last week along with activists from Generation Wave and the All Burma Federation of Student Unions. The groups called on people to offer roses at pagodas and wear or carry roses or rose ornaments on Valentine's Day to show support for a peaceful resolution to Burma's political divisions. ([dvh.17022009](#))

Journalists, bloggers and writers

There are currently 43 media activists in detention.

21 February 2009

Journalism award for Eint Khaing Oo

Rangoon-based 'Ecovision' reporter **Eint Khaing Oo**, who was arrested and sentenced to two years of imprisonment for reporting on victims of Cyclone Nargis, was honoured with the first 'Kenji Nagai Award' on February 21. The award was named after a Japanese journalist, who was killed while covering on the September 2007 protests in Rangoon. The Award, which is co-sponsored by the APF, which Nagai worked for, and the Burma Media Association (BMA), will be given every year to outstanding Burmese journalists, who prove their courage in reporting from Burma under the strict surveillance of its military rulers, organisers said. ([Mizzima 25022009](#))

20 February 2009

Nay Phone Latt's sentence reduced

Rangoon divisional court upheld an appeal by blogger **Nay Phone Latt** and reduced his sentence by eight and a half years, according to his mother Aye Aye Than. **Nay Phone Latt** was sentenced to 20 years and six months in prison under the Electronics Act in November last year. Aye Aye Than said she was unhappy that her son's conviction was not overturned. "The court decided to reduce his prison terms under the electronic and the video acts but I'm not satisfied with his yet as my son never did anything wrong to go to prison," she said. "I called Pha-an prison after hearing the court's decision and asked officials there to pass on the good news to my son – hopefully they will do that." **Nay Phone Latt**, a blogger and internet café owner, came to prominence during the public demonstrations in September 2007 when his blog became an important source of information on the protests. He was arrested in January 2008 and is currently being held in Pha-an prison in Karen state. ([dvh.20022009](#))

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

2 February 2009

Gambari meets Daw Suu and NLD leaders

United Nations special envoy Ibrahim Gambari met detained National League for Democracy leader **Aung San Suu Kyi** and senior party leaders at a government guesthouse in Rangoon. **Aung San Suu Kyi** and top party leaders Aung Shwe, Nyunt Wai, Than Tun, Hla Pe and Soe Myint spent an hour and a half with the UN envoy, according to NLD spokesperson Nyan Win. "The main thing we discussed was the five points from his previous trip," Nyan Win said. "We told him the NLD had nothing to say about the 2010 elections," he said. "The five points the NLD leaders discussed with Gambari were the release of all political prisoners including **Aung San Suu Kyi** and **Tin Oo**, a direct meeting between the junta and **Aung San Suu Kyi**, a forum to improve the country's economy, the appointment of a liaison officer for

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the special envoy in Burma and a visit to the country by the UN secretary-general. **Aung San Suu Kyi** also raised the lack of legal freedom with Gambari, Nyan Win said. "She said that [political activists] are being given heavy sentences, lawyers are not allowed to represent them and they are facing obstructions," he said. "These things are happening because of the lack of the rule of law." ([dvh.02022009](#))

Labour activists

High-profile labour activist **Su Su Nway** had her sentenced reduced, but she still faces 8 and a half years in prison.

20 February 2009

Activist Su Su Nway's sentence reduced

The prison sentence of labour rights activist **Su Su Nway**, who was jailed for 12 and a half years in November 2008, has been reduced by four years by Rangoon division court, according to her lawyer. **Su Su Nway**, 36, who rose to prominence after reporting forced labour practices to the International Labour Organisation, was arrested in November 2007 and was sentenced to 12 and a half years in prison last November. Her lawyers Kyi Win and Khin Htay Kywe lodged a number of appeals on her behalf, arguing that she had been jailed unfairly as she had done nothing illegal. Legal expert and National League for Democracy spokesperson Nyan Win said he welcomed the decision to shorten the jail terms but said the sentences had been unjust in the first place. "They have not reduced the sentences. They have just said the sentences should be served concurrently so it looks like the sentences have been reduced," Nyan Win said. "As the sentences were extreme, it is good that they have shortened them but they have still not released the people," he said. "They are doing it for political gain, not for legal reasons. If they had followed the law, there would have been no reason for them to give such heavy sentences." ([dvh.20022009](#))

6 February 2009

Labour activist forced into hiding

Grassroots activist **Than Soe**, who helped local farmers in Magwe's Aung Lan township report land seizures, has gone into hiding after being threatened with arrest by the police. **Than Soe**, a resident of San Kalay village in Aung Lan provided legal support to local farmers seeking justice after their farms were seized by local authorities who were seeking a monopoly on sugar cane production. A resident of Aung Lan said **Than Soe** had recently been harassed by township police special information branch officers, who came to his home and threatened to arrest him for having connections with political activists. "Aung Lan special police officer Nyi Nyi Aung kept going to his house constantly and told family members the authorities wanted to question him as they believed that he had given refuge to 88 Generation Students members hiding from government arrest," said the Aung Lan resident. "He said the authorities would try to catch him if he didn't turn himself in soon." ([dvh.06022009](#))

Students

There are currently 233 students in prison. 19 year-old leader of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions **De Nyein Linn**, received an additional 5-year sentence, making a total of 15 and a half years. He was also transferred to the remote Hkamti Prison in Sagaing Division, 1,200 miles away from Rangoon.

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21 February 2009

Political prisoner transferred

Kyaw Ko Ko was transferred from Insein Prison to Taunggyi Prison in Shan State. "We came to Insein Prison on Saturday because we thought our son might be among those released," said Soe Soe Thaw, mother of **Kyaw Ko Ko**, a student activist who is serving a three-year sentence for his leading role in the outlawed All Burma Federation of Student Unions. "Unfortunately, **Kyaw Ko Ko** was transferred from Insein Prison to Taunggyi Prison while we were waiting for his release," she said. ([Irrawaddy.23022009](#))

18 February 2009

Prison terms commuted for two political prisoners

Two political prisoners put in prison for having contact with a Thai based opposition organization had their sentences commuted by 16 years each by a divisional court.

The authorities accused Kaythi Aung and Wei Myo Htoo of attending a training conducted by 'Forum for Democracy in Burma' (FDB) in April last year and they were sentenced and are now serving their terms in O-bo prison, Mandalay. Now they have to serve the remaining 10 years each. "The divisional court commuted their prison terms in keeping with the law. Moreover these two pleaded guilty at the trial court and it was difficult to acquit them. They had no access to legal counsel during the court proceedings and we could not get chance to re-examine the prosecution witnesses. So we are trying to get their current prison terms commuted to lenient ones", their legal counsel Myint Thwin told Mizzima. These two were arrested from their homes in Mandalay in September 2008. First they were held in O-bo prison and then sentenced to 26 years each on 24 November last year. They were handed out 16 years prison term each in two cases under Unlawful Associations Act and another 10 years each in two cases charged under the Immigration (Emergency Provisions) Act. ([Mizzima.18022009](#))

17 February 2009

Prison visit difficulties

Ye Myat Hein is a member of the All Burma Federation Of Student Unions (ABFSU) and was given 16 years imprisonment. He is currently held in Kale prison in Sagaing Division. **Ye Myat Hein's** mother Daw San Aye recently visited him there and said, "There are many political prisoners' families who can't visit their loved ones because their families can't afford the costs for the visits. It will cost 200,000 kyats for just one visit. Kale prison is 8 miles away from the town." ([rfa.18022009](#))

9 February 2009

Student activists sentenced

sentenced to three years' imprisonment each by Rangoon's Mingalar Taung Nyunt township court yesterday. Judge Tin Latt sentenced the two to the maximum term under the Video Act. Kyaw Aye, **Kyaw Ko Ko's** father, said the sentence was politically motivated. "Under the law my son should be released because when they caught him, they only seized a mobile phone from him and the special police had already testified that all the exhibits presented belonged to Nyan Linn Aung," Kyaw Aye said. "They could have just let him pay the 100,000 kyat fine instead of giving him the maximum three-year punishment, but I can't really complain now as there were political motives behind the sentence." Kyaw Aye said **Kyaw Ko Ko** was suffering from jaundice and he was worried his son might be transferred to another prison

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before he gets better. **Kyaw Ko Ko**, who is studying for a Master's degree in economics, played a significant role in the September 2007 demonstrations. He and **Nyan Linn Aung**, a final-year year economics student, were arrested together on 16 March 2008. ([dvb.10022009](#))

5 February 2009

Student leader given extra sentence

De Nyein Linn, leader of the 2007 All Burmese Federation of Student Unions, has been given an additional five-year jail term, bringing his total sentence to 15 and a half years. South Dagon township court imposed the additional sentence for charges under the Unlawful Association Act, according to family members. **De Nyein Linn** was first sentenced to six and half years in prison on 19 November 2008 by San Chaung township court on four charges, including sedition. Nine days later he was sentenced to four more years by Htantabin township court on further sedition charges and for inciting public disorder. **De Nyein Linn's** father, 88 Generation Students group member **Zaw Zaw Min**, was sentenced to 65 years' imprisonment in November last year. **De Nyein Linn**, 20, was a final-year geology student at Western Rangoon University before he was arrested in 2007 following the monk-led mass protests in September of that year. ([dvb.05022009](#))

Individual activists

13 February 2009

Political prisoner punished in Insein Prison

In Insein prison in Rangoon, **Myo Nyunt** was locked in a dark cell and mistreated for staging a hunger strike. **Myo Nyunt**, also known as John Nawtha, is a private English tutor and was arrested at the end of September 2007 in connection with the public demonstrations that took place that month. ([dvb.9022009](#))

Ethnic nationalities

9 February 2009

Lawyer calls for release of political prisoners

Lawyer U Aye Myint, the leader of Guiding Star organization has called on the Burmese military regime to release Mon ethnic nationality political prisoners **Naing Yakha** and **Chin Gakung**. They were both given life imprisonment for sedition. They were initially sentenced to death, with 9 others including U Aye Myint, Shwe Man, Zar Naing Tun, Zaw Myo Htat, Min Kyi, Zaw That Htwe and Aung Lun on November 28 2003. One year later in 2004 they all were released in an amnesty, in which up to 2,000 prisoners were released. However, **Naing Yakha** and **Chin Gakung** were not released but had their sentenced reduced to life imprisonment and are still detained. ([dvb.9022009](#))

Key international developments

This month, UN Special Envoy Gambari and UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar Tomas Ojea Quintana both visited Burma. Quintana called the human rights situation 'challenging'. Meanwhile civil society representatives challenged ASEAN leaders on Burma at the 14th ASEAN summit in Thailand; the US slammed Burma's human rights record; and the Presidency of the EU called for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners.

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28 February 2009

Civil society representatives challenge Asean leaders on Burma

Burmese issues were raised once again at the 14th Asean Summit in Cha-am, Thailand, this time at Saturday's midday meeting between representatives of Southeast Asian civil society and the 10 heads of state of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean). The meeting—termed “historic” by Asean Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan because it was the first time Asean leaders had scheduled a face-to-face meeting with civil society groups—was threatened with a boycott by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen and Burmese premier Gen Thein Sein because they did not agree with the participation of certain members of the civil society grouping. The matter was resolved at the 11th hour when two civil society representatives—including Burma's Khin Ohmar of the Network for Democracy and Development—were barred from attending the meeting. “This afternoon's interface meeting between the 10 Asean leaders and civil society groups spread doubt whether the Asean is ready to make Article 1 of the Asean Charter on civil society participation come into reality,” said a press release by three civil society activists, including Khin Ohmar. Speaking after the meeting, Wathshlah G. Naidu of Malaysia-based International Women's Rights Action Watch—Asia Pacific said, “We raised the issue of political participation [in Burma]. We raised the issue of the political [opposition] leadership in Burma being detained and we raised the issue of the illegal constitution.” She said that the civic group had called for the release of all political prisoners in the country, including pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, and had urged Asean members not to recognize the 2010 elections in Burma. ([Irrawaddy.28022009](#))

27 February 2009

Thai PM calls for all sides to participate in Burmese elections

Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said he has asked Burmese Premier Gen Thein Sein to encourage the opposition to compete in the forthcoming general election in Burma and expressed optimism that the military junta was making progress in its steps toward democracy. Speaking to reporters at the 14th Summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) on Friday, the Thai premier said he had asked his Burmese counterpart “to encourage all sides to participate in the 2010 Burmese elections” and said that he could see “clear progress” in the military junta's steps toward holding democratic elections next year. Abhisit said he had held bilateral talks with the heads of state of Burma, Cambodia and Malaysia that day. “We hope to see progress [in Burma]. We hope to see involvement, particularly from the UN. I also said that the process should be as inclusive as possible,” he told assembled reporters. ([Irrawaddy.27022009](#))

26 February 2009

Rights groups call on Asean to focus on human rights

International human rights advocacy groups have called on leaders attending the 14th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit in Thailand to put human rights issues, including widespread abuses in Burma, at the top of their agenda. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch urged the regional grouping to improve treatment of refugees and asylum seekers and strengthen protection for migrants through its new Asean human rights body, which is to be discussed at the summit taking place from February 27 to March 1 in Hua Hin, Thailand. Burma was singled out as an area of special concern to rights groups, who accuse the country's ruling military regime of committing some of the most

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egregious abuses in the region. “One of the challenges facing a future Asean human rights body is the dire human rights situation in Myanmar [Burma],” said Donna Guest, Amnesty International’s Asia Pacific Deputy Director. “Violations in this Asean member state have been going on for decades, and include crimes against humanity. To be worthy of its name, the body must be empowered to effectively address human rights in Myanmar.” ([Irrawaddy.26022009](#))

Human rights in Burma appalling: US

The human rights situation in Burma remains grim as the military government continues to ignore basic rights and continues to jail political opponents using draconian laws, according to the annual human rights report of the US State Department. Responding to media queries, spokesperson Karen Stewart said the human rights situation has deteriorated. The Burmese military junta in 2008 sentenced a large number of democracy activists to “draconian” prison terms. “And so, yes, there’s quite a significant increase in the number of prisoners and generally the government continues to control all the governmental organs,” Stewart said. The Burma section of the report charges that the military regime brutally suppressed dissent using extrajudicial killings, disappearances and torture. “Human rights and prodemocracy activists were harassed, arbitrarily detained in large numbers, and sentenced up to 65 years of imprisonment. The regime held detainees and prisoners in life-threatening conditions,” according to the report. ([Irrawaddy.26022009](#))

24 February 2009

EU calls for political reform in Burma

In a statement on Monday, the European Union (EU)’s current presidency called for dialogue between the Burmese junta and the opposition, the release of political prisoners and the lifting of restrictions on political parties. “The Presidency of the EU strongly calls for an immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and detainees, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, lifting all restrictions on political parties, and all-inclusive dialogue between the authorities and the democratic forces, including ethnic groups,” the statement said. The EU Presidency recalled the United Nations General Assembly’s resolution which said the political process in Burma is “not transparent, inclusive, [or] free and fair; and that the procedures established for the drafting of the constitution resulted in the de facto exclusion of the opposition from the process.” ([Irrawaddy.24022009](#))

Burmese Prisoner Release a ‘Positive Step’: Japan

Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs described the release of 6,313 prisoners in Burma over the weekend as “a positive step,” although it added that it would “take some time to get the whole picture of the release.” In a brief statement in English, the ministry said that Tokyo expects the Burmese junta “to further promote its movement of releasing political prisoners in the future and promote the democratization process in a way that involves all parties concerned.” According to the latest figures from the Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma), so far 24 of the released detainees have been identified as political prisoners. Last week, Burma’s main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), reacted angrily to a joint statement by Japanese Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone and UN Special Envoy to Burma Ibrahim Gambari that appeared to endorse the Burmese junta’s plans for an election in 2010. ([Irrawaddy.24022009](#))

US demands release of Burma’s political prisoners

Please Note: All information contained in this report is correct to the best of AAPP’s knowledge at the time of going to press. The situation inside Burma is changing very rapidly, and this should be considered a ‘live’ document. If you reproduce this report or sections of it, please retain all original links and attribute it to AAPP. Thanks.

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The US State Department on Monday welcomed the Burmese regime's release of some political prisoners in Saturday's amnesty but added: "A lot more needs to be done." "The release of any political prisoners is something we would welcome, but a lot more needs to be done," said State Department Acting Spokesman Robert Wood. "We call on the Burmese to release all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi. We'll have to see if indeed this leads to more releases." Wood confirmed that Washington is reviewing its Burma policy in order to assess the best approach to achieve its goals. "We're trying to figure out a way to better influence the behavior of the regime, particularly with regard to political prisoners," he said. ([Irrawaddy.24022008](#))

Activists demand intensified global pressure on Burma

Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma (AAPP-B), urged the international community on Tuesday, to assert more pressure on Burma's ruling junta to release all political prisoners. The AAPP-B, formed with Burmese activists and former political prisoners, on Tuesday said, the international community should not be full of praise and be satisfied with the Burmese junta's release of a few political prisoners, but should intensify pressure on the junta. Tate Naing, Secretary of the AAPP-B said, "The international community should intensify the pressure on the junta for the release of more political prisoners." In a statement, the group said, releasing a few political prisoners could not be termed as development, because the junta was using the release as a tool to ease-off mounting pressure. "We cannot expect the political situation in Burma to improve just because a few political prisoners have been released. This is just a ploy to try and ease international pressure," Tate Naing said in the statement. ([mizzima.25022009](#))

21 February 2009

No tangible result from visit: Gambari

The UN special envoy on Burma, Ibrahim Gambari, on Friday acknowledged that his recent visit to the country failed to yield any tangible results with regard to the goals set by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Security Council. "I informed the (Security) Council that, so far, we have not seen tangible outcomes of my visit," Gambari told reporters outside the Security Council at the UN headquarters in New York. "But there seems to be some movement in that direction," Gambari said, after he briefed the 15 members of the Security Council in a closed-door meeting. He was in Burma from January 31 to February 3, during which he met officials of the Burmese military junta and the leaders of the pro-democracy movement and ethnic groups. He also met Aung San Suu Kyi, but could not meet Snr-Gen Than Shwe, head of the ruling junta, during his four-day stay in the country. "I told the government, now is the time to demonstrate Myanmar's commitment to addressing concretely the issues of concern to the international community, particularly the release of political prisoners and the resumption of dialogue between the government and Aung San Suu Kyi," Gambari said. ([Irrawaddy.21022009](#))

19 February 2009

NLD disagrees with Gambari and Japanese Foreign Minister

The National League for Democracy (NLD) said it disagreed with a joint-statement by UN Special Envoy to Burma Ibrahim Gambari and Japan's foreign minister. Nyan Win, an NLD spokesperson, said "The party issued two statements yesterday because we want to response to The United Nations Special Envoy to Burma Ibrahim Gambari's co-statement with Japan's

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foreign minister in Tokyo on February 12.” “As well, as we want to make a clarification on our stand on unconditional dialogue as well as NLD willingness for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s trip to the country,” he said. The joint-statement issued by Gambari and Japanese Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone said they agreed to encourage the Burmese junta to hold general elections in 2010 in a form that could be accepted by the international community. The NLD said it was concerned that the joint statement was not consistent with NLD demands as well as resolutions by the UN General Assembly which honor the 1990 election results. In the joint-statement, Hirofumi Nakasone said, “Even though there are few positive moves by the Myanmar [Burma] government, it’s a huge step for them to have announced that they would hold a general election in 2010, compared with two past decades of silence about its democratization process. (Irrawaddy.20022009)

Envoy says Myanmar rights grim

A U.N. envoy said on Thursday human rights in military-ruled Myanmar had not improved since his last visit seven months ago, but he hoped the regime would listen to his recommendations this time. Human rights rapporteur Tomas Ojea Quintana met a handful of political prisoners in Yangon's Insein Prison, and senior government officials in the junta's remote capital Nay Pyi Taw during his five-day mission. But the Argentine lawyer failed to meet junta leader Senior General Than Shwe or opposition leader **Aung San Suu Kyi**, whose latest detention began in May 2003. Nobel laureate Suu Kyi is among 2,162 people believed to be in detention in Myanmar for their political or religious beliefs. "The human rights situation in Myanmar is still challenging. It's difficult to affirm that the human rights situation has improved," he told reporters before leaving Yangon. However, he said some "positive signs" emerged from his meetings in Nay Pyi Taw, where he called for the progressive release of prisoners of conscience. (heraldtribune.19022009)

18 February 2009

NLD wants dialogue without preconditions

The National League for Democracy has issued a special statement supporting the United Nations’ call for dialogue without preconditions and urging the military regime to accept the proposal. The statement, which was issued on 18 February, addressed the ruling State Peace and Development Council’s claims that the party’s calls for sanctions against the regime were harmful to the country. "Section 7 of the SPDC statement No. 1/2007 says that confrontation, utter devastation, severing of economic ties and total blockades are not useful to the nation and the people," the statement said. “Therefore, to prevent these, **Daw Aung San Suu Kyi** notified the authorities through liaison minister U Aung Kyi that [the NLD] is ready to issue statements regarding bilateral cooperation and agreements,” it continued. “Therefore, the NLD seriously urges again with good intentions that the two people who could decide these matters should meet for discussions." “On 5 February 2009, the UN secretary-general issued a statement which says that the SPDC, the NLD and pro-democracy groups should hold dialogues without preconditions, with the aim of attaining national reconciliation and meaningful dialogue,” the statement said. “The NLD welcomes that statement. On this subject, the NLD has always tried to walk a path to reconcile both sides by means of negotiations, while the SPDC has never made an effort to make dialogue happen." The NLD’s Thein Nyunt, who read out the statement, said the party had wanted to clarify its position on preconditions to dialogue. (dvb.18022009)

18 February 2009

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UN rights envoy Quintana meets political prisoners

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma, Tomas Ojea Quintana, met five political prisoners including two elected representatives in Insein prison on 16 February. Elected MPs **Dr Tin Min Htut** and **Nyi Pu** were recently sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment for signing a letter to the UN, along with three other representatives, stating that they did not accept the military regime's election plan. Quintana also met were All Burma Federation of Student Unions leader **Kyaw Ko Ko, Punami** (also known as **Mya Nyunt**) and young rights lawyer **Nyi Nyi Htway**, according to Aye Win, spokesperson for the UN Development Programme office in Rangoon. "On Sunday he went to Karen state [by] helicopter. He met with the [Karen National Union peace council [a splinter group of the KNU] and went to the Payagon region," Aye Win said. "In the evening, he went to Pa-an prison, and the following morning he went to Myainggyingyung and met with the [Democratic Karen Buddhist Army] and local authorities," he said. "Then he returned to Rangoon for meetings with diplomats and went to Insein prison where he met five people." When asked if Quintana planned to meet detained National League for Democracy leaders **Aung San Suu Kyi** and **Tin Oo** or other prominent political prisoners, Aye Win said the special rapporteur had asked to see many people but it was not yet clear if he would be allowed. Quintana was appointed to his post as special rapporteur on human rights in Burma in May 2008 by the Human Rights Council. He has been in the country since 14 February for a six-day mission to assess human rights developments since his last visit in August 2008. ([dvh.18022009](#))

16 February 2009

UN rights envoy Quintana visits Pa-an prison

The United Nations special rapporteur on human rights in Burma, Tomas Ojea Quintana, visited Pa-an prison in Karen state yesterday during his second trip to the country. A resident of Pa-an said prison conditions had been improved in advance of the special rapporteur's visit. "There are no special security measures, the traffic police have just cleared the roads," the resident said. "I don't know the details of who he is meeting. They issued new uniforms to prisoners as he was coming and allowed them to eat with spoons and forks," he said. "**Nay Phone Latt, Nandar Sit Aung, Ko Nay Kyaw, Ko Thiha Soe, Thant Sin Aung and Ko Latt** are there."([dvh.16022009](#))

6 February 2009

Opposition slams junta's refusal to free prisoners

Pro-democracy groups have criticized the ruling State Peace and Development Council's refusal to release political prisoners and accused them of stalling national reconciliation. During the recent visit of United Nations special envoy Ibrahim Gambari to the country, Burmese government ministers said prisoners already had access to an appeal process. Regime leaders also called for sanctions to be lifted to allow Burma to develop. Tate Naing of the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners said the release of political prisoners was vital for progress in Burma. "With what is happening now in Burma, the essential thing is the release of political prisoners," he said. Military and political analyst Htay Aung of the Network for Democracy and Development said "We can say that the SPDC's refusal to take basic steps shows that it has no desire for national reconciliation," he said. "They might also be worried that the release of political prisoners might ruin their election plans." Nyo Ohn Myint of the National League for Democracy (Liberated Area) said the regime's insistence that sanctions be lifted and refusal to release political prisoner meant there could be no compromise with the opposition. "There would be no economic sanctions if all political

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prisoners were released; the blockade arose from their human rights violations,” Nyo Ohn Myint said. “Therefore the SPDC needs to release all political prisoners,” he said. ([dwb.06022009](#))

5 February 2009

Gambari’s visit sees no progress in Burma

The National League for Democracy has expressed disappointment that the visit of United Nations special envoy Ibrahim Gambari to Burma did not bring about any progress. The government account of the meetings between Gambari and senior regime leaders was published in the state-run *New Light of Myanmar*. The special envoy met prime minister general Thein Sein and several other ministers during his trip, which ran from 31 January to 4 February. Gambari also met detained NLD leader **Aung San Suu Kyi** and senior party members during his visit. Reporting on the meetings between the special envoy and junta officials, the *New Light* article said Gambari had called for the release of political prisoners, tried to encourage dialogue between the government and the NLD and discussed a visit to the country by UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon. Prime minister Thein Sein called on the special envoy to recognise the government’s roadmap as the best way forward for the country, and said the regime would respect the desire of the majority of people in the country who had approved the 2008 constitution. The prime minister said that opposition parties should work in unity with the government, and encouraged Gambari to urge them to do so. Thein Sein also made a particular point of requesting that the UN lift economic sanctions against Burma to allow the country to develop. ([dwb.05022009](#))