



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

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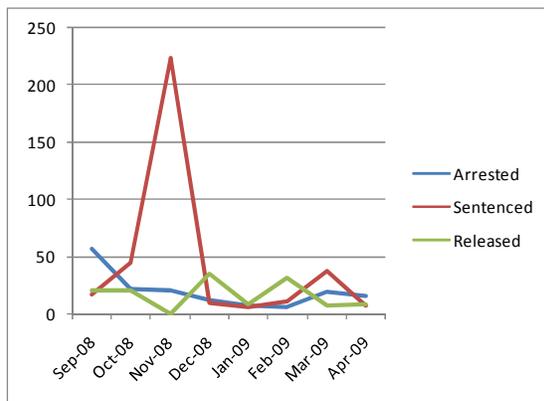
Summary of current situation

There are a total of **2,156** political prisoners in Burma. These include:

CATEGORY	NUMBER
Monks	220
Members of Parliament	15
Students	283 ¹
Women	187
NLD members	465
Members of the Human Rights Defenders and Promoters network	43
Ethnic nationalities	203
Cyclone Nargis volunteers	21
Teachers	27
Media activists	50
Lawyers	11
In poor health	127

Since the protests in August 2007 leading to last September's Saffron Revolution, a total of **1,081** activists have been arrested and are still in detention.

Monthly trend analysis



During the month of April 2009, at least **15** activists were arrested, **7** sentenced and **16** were transferred to prisons away from Rangoon. **8** activists were released. **13** political prisoners are reported to be in bad health this month.

88 Generation Students leader **Min Ko Naing** has been awarded the Gwangju Human Rights Prize by a South Korean foundation.

He is currently serving a 65 and a half year sentence in Kengtung Prison in Eastern Shan State.

Meanwhile, the EU extended its economic sanctions by an additional year, and the US indicated that it is not considering lifting sanctions against Burma.

¹ This figure includes 46 88 Generation Students group members.

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The Free Political Prisoners Now! global campaign - run by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) and Forum for Democracy in Burma - has secured over 250,000 signatures calling on UN Secretary General Ban ki-Moon to make it his personal priority to secure the release of all political prisoners in Burma.

In other news, more and more reports are emerging of political prisoners in poor health, exacerbated by the harsh conditions in prison and denial of proper medical care. **Zarganar** has been suffering from liver problems, spondylitis, hypertension and heart disease. After losing consciousness for several hours on 16 April, he was finally allowed hospital treatment eleven days later on 27 April.

Treatment of prisoners and their families

The regime's programme of prison transfers for political prisoners continued this month, with at least 16 moved to jails away from Rangoon. Due to the inadequate nutrition in prisons, and denial of proper medical treatment, political prisoners rely on their family members for supplementary food and medicines. However, the distances and costs involved make it very difficult for family members to visit their loved ones in remote prisons.

Political prisoners are frequently denied their rights. This month, recently released lawyer **Nyi Nyi Htway** described his experience in Insein Prison: "I was not very healthy before I went to prison, and during my time there I didn't get proper medical care and was suffering from weak heart," he said. "All they gave me was an ECG check up but they never let me know the result. I was allowed to do walking [as an exercise] with other inmates for the first week I arrived there," said **Nyi Nyi Htway**. "But after that, I was informed by my warden I had been suspended from walking as an order was received from senior authorities," he said, adding that he didn't walk again until he was released. ([DVB.30042009](#))

Prisoners Released

8 people were released from prison in April. Lawyer Nyi Nyi Htway, who was arrested in October 2008 and sentenced to six months imprisonment on contempt of court charges, was released after completing his sentence. Six labour activists were arrested on the first day of the month, and released ten days later, possibly thanks to international pressure. And cameraman and National League for Democracy member Thein Lwin was released. He had been in detention since 11 February 2009.

88 Generation Students

46 members of Generation Students group are currently imprisoned. **Min Ko Naing**, one of the leaders of the group, was awarded the Gwangju Prize for Human Rights by a South Korean foundation. Previous prize winners include Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in 2004. This month the group published an open letter to the SPDC military government on sanctions.

24 April 2009

Imprisoned student leader awarded human rights prize

The imprisoned leader of the student group that incited the 2007 monk-led protests in Burma has been awarded a prize by a South Korean foundation for promoting human rights and

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democracy. **Min Ko Naing**, of 88 Generation Students, was sentenced to 65 years and 6 months in prison in November 2008 for his role in organizing the 2007 demonstrations. The Gwangju Prize for Human Rights honors individuals and groups in Korea and abroad that have contributed to promoting and advancing human rights, democracy and peace in their work. It is awarded by the May 18 Memorial Foundation, a South Korean group set up to commemorate the popular uprising on 18 May, 1980 in Korea. ([DVB.24042009](#))

20 April 2009

88 Generation Students member in poor health

88 Generation member, **Aung Thu** is suffering from nerve problems, and is experiencing numbness in his legs and arms. The muscles in his legs are wasting away, and his tongue is retracted, reported his wife. He has not received proper medical treatment. ([DVB 20042009](#))

6 April 2009

The 88 Generation Students: Statement 3/2009 (88) Open Letter to the SPDC Government

Should the SPDC respect human rights and move towards changes in the interest of the country and all the people, the sanctions which have been in place in protest against the SPDC's violations of human rights, would be removed.

1. Burma is currently facing severe political, social and economic crises. Due to the impacts of global economic recession, the people of Burma will soon certainly confront with even more severe ones.
2. To overcome such crises is a national task for all the people. Thus, the National League for Democracy (NLD) has responsively proposed to the SPDC government to tackle the national issues together through dialogue.
3. Consequently, the NLD and the Committee Representing People Parliament (CRPP), in the interest of all the people of Burma, has also called for the SPDC to take the following actions: the unconditional release of all political prisoners including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, to convene parliament, to commence political dialogue, and to review the constitution. The 88 Generation Students Group believes that these actions are urgently needed in order to overcome the crises in the country. These calls to action are reiterated by stakeholders inside and outside the country as well as the international community.
4. The SPDC has failed to realize these calls, and continues to implement repressive measures including placing restrictions on movements of and arresting activists struggling for democracy and human rights. For these reasons, the countries which respect democracy and human rights have taken political, social and economic sanctions against the SPDC military government.
5. Regarding the sanctions, when meeting Mr. Gambari, a special envoy of UN Secretary General, the SPDC Prime Minister Gen. Theing Sein asked that "the UN should first make efforts for lifting economic sanctions against Myanmar" and accused Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD of causing the sanctions. Making such accusations against Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD, democracy activists and western nations will not assist in having the sanctions lifted.
6. We believe and understand that these countries have put sanctions against the SPDC in place in protest against the severe violations of democratic and human rights the SPDC exercises.

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7. No other individual and/or organization than the SPDC military government can do what is necessary to end these sanctions. The 88 Generation Students Group firmly believes that should the SPDC immediately respect the above calls made by the NLD and the CRPP, the sanctions would be removed one after another.

8. In the current situation, it is the right time for the SPDC military government to move towards changes in the interest of the country and all the people.

9. The 88 Generation Students urges the SPDC military government to respect the calls made by all forces inside and outside as well as members of international communities. If the SPDC does not respect these calls, the responsibility for negative consequences that the country will suffer will rest solely with the SPDC.

“The responsibility for changes solely rests on the SPDC military government.”
([Burmanet.06042009](#))

3 April 2009

88 Generation Students member transferred

88 Generation Students member **Tun Tun Win** was transferred to Mergui Prison in Tenasserim Division, 545 miles from Rangoon. ([RFA 03042009](#))

88 Generation Students member Myo Thant transferred

Former political prisoner and 88 Generation Students member Myo Thant was transferred from Insein Prison to Thayet Prison in Magwe Division. ([RFA 03042009](#))

National League for Democracy members

465 National League for Democracy (NLD) members are currently in prison. The regime continued its crackdown on NLD members, by means of physical assaults, harassment, intimidation and arrests. Several NLD members were transferred to remote prisons this month.

28 April 2009

Two NLD members go on trial

U Chit Pe, NLD Vice-Chairman in Tontay Township in Rangoon, and NLD Township Organiser **Aung Soe Wai** went on trial in Tontay Township Court. Their defence lawyer is **U Kyin Toe**. They are facing charges under Section 295/a of the Penal Code, in connection with religious insult. Earlier in the month they had organized a prayer meeting calling for the release of Daw **Aung San Suu Kyi** and all political prisoners. They are due in court again on 5 May. Their lawyer submitted a request for bail, but this was denied by the judge. ([DVB 28042009](#))

27 April 2009

NLD sets pre-conditions for role in elections

Burma's main opposition party – the National League for Democracy – on Wednesday said it was willing to contest the forthcoming 2010 elections if the military regime releases political prisoners, and makes proper amendments to its Constitution. Nyan Win, the NLD spokesperson, said the party would decide on contesting the 2010 elections only if the

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government unconditionally released political prisoners, including **Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Tin Oo Khun Tun Oo, Sai Nyunt Lwin, Min Ko Naing** and **Ko Ko Gyi**, and reviewed and amended the 2008 Constitution. “We reiterate our call to the junta to amend the Constitution and for the release of political prisoners, and then we will decide on contesting the 2010 elections,” Nyan Win told Mizzima. The NLD voiced its stand in the “Shwegonedine Declaration” released on Wednesday, at the conclusion of a two-day plenary meeting between party leaders in Rangoon on April 28 and 29. The NLD, which won a landslide victory in the last general elections in 1990, said so far they had not prepared for the ensuing elections, but would do so once the government responded to their request of reviewing the Constitution and amending the contents that were undemocratic. ([Mizzima.27042009](#))

NLD meeting under surveillance by junta

A pre-meeting for NLD’s plenary meeting, scheduled for Tuesday was held today at the NLD Head Office in Bahan Township of Rangoon amidst close scrutiny by the authorities and security personnel deployed around the office. The security personnel were deployed today around the NLD HQ, as the pre-meeting was being held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The meeting was attended by Members of Parliament elected in 1990, Organizing Committee members of States and Divisions, Youth and Women wing leaders, totaling 148 all together. The delegates discussed politics, situation of organizational matters and the constitution in today’s pre-meeting.

It is the 4th All States and Divisions Units plenary meeting of the 1990 election winning party NLD. ([Mizzima.27042009](#))

24 April 2009

NLD member tortured and forced to confess

Nge Lay, NLD Youth member, was arrested and then interrogated in Insein Prison on suspicion of involvement in the 26 March 2009 bombing of Tawwinnan Guest House in N/Okkalapa. He was tortured by Kamaryut police officer Win Aung, who led the interrogation. He was kicked in the face and forced into confession, reported a fellow prisoner to a family member during a prison visit. ([DVB 24042009](#))

21 April 2009

Junta arrest two opposition members for praying

Burmese junta authorities in Rangoon’s Twante Township on Tuesday arrested two members of the opposition National League for Democracy for arranging a prayer meeting for the release of party leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

At least 50 members of the NLD on Tuesday gathered in Twante Township to pray for the release of Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners. Following the prayer meeting, the Township NLD Vice-Chairman **Chit Pe**, 60 and Township Organizing Committee member **Maung Soe Wei**, 40, were both arrested by local authorities for organizing the meeting. **Chit Pe** before his arrest on Tuesday told Mizzima over telephone that the prayer meeting was being organized for the first time by the Twante Township NLD for the release of political prisoners. Khine Mar said people were enthusiastic about the meeting and joined bravely despite being watched by the authorities. “In times of difficulties

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people dare to take risks and initiate things despite knowing the consequences. Villagers and youths were not scared and shaky at the meeting. They said they will strike against the dictatorship in various ways," Khine Mar said. ([Mizzima.21042009](#))

20 April 2009

Police refuse to arrest attackers of opposition members

Police have told opposition party members who were attacked by a mob led by a government official that their assailants will not be arrested because government authorities have not given them permission to do so. Two members of the National League for Democracy's youth wing were attacked on 18 April whilst on their way to a religious New Year ceremony in Rangoon's Twente Township. The youth coordinator of Tontay NLD, Ye Htut Khaung, said that the two members, a male and a female, were set upon by about 30 local people led by a ward official named Pauk Pauk. "The mob trapped them in front of a nearby monastery and started throwing punches at them," said Ye Htut Khaung. This attack followed a separate incident on 12 April, also in Tontay, in which another NLD youth member was attacked by a group of seven men led by a local Union Solidarity and Development Association member. The USDA is a government-affiliated social organization. ([DVB.20042009](#))

17 April 2009

NLD to Hold Rare 'Special Meeting' this Month

Burma's main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), plans to hold a rare special meeting on April 28-29 to discuss what spokesman Han Thar Myint described as "several matters important for the country." These matters were likely to include the proposed 2010 general election, Western sanctions against Burma and a proposed review of the newly adopted constitution, Han That Myint told *The Irrawaddy* on Thursday. The meeting will be attended by the party executive, those NLD members who were successful in the 1990 election, senior members and representatives of the women's and youth sections of the party. "The meeting will be more like an open discussion on several matters important for the country," Han Thar Myint said. Invitations to the special meeting were sent out earlier this month by NLD chairman Aung Shwe, who said the executive committee would read "a paper" to participants. Han Thar Myint did not say what the paper would contain. ([Irrawaddy.16042009](#))

16 April 2009

Attack on NLD Leader Raises Questions

The recent attack against a National League for Democracy (NLD) leader has raised questions about whether the assault was politically motivated and could be part of a systematic campaign to strike fear into the opposition movement ahead of the 2010 general elections in Burma. On April 16, an unknown attacker reportedly entered the garden of **Thein Nyunt**, 65, an NLD spokesperson and elected Member of Parliament in the 1990 elections. His family members said that he was beaten with a baton and suffered injuries to his forehead, back and hands. Nyan Win, head spokesperson for the NLD, told *The Irrawaddy* on Tuesday that he doubts the assault against a veteran member of the party was a random attack. "We do not know who is behind this incident. But, when NLD leaders and members are attacked like this,

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it forces us to consider that there may be a systematic campaign to suppress us,” said Nyan Win. ([Irrawaddy.16042009](#))

7 April 2009

Khun Tun Oo's health deteriorating in prison

Khun Tun Oo, 66 years old, leader of the Shan National League for Democracy, currently held in Putao Prison and sentenced to 93 years on February 9 2005 for high treason and opposing the national convention, is suffering from hypertension and his diabetes is getting worse. He has not received proper treatment. ([DVB 07042009](#))

4 April 2009

NLD Youth member in poor health

NLD youth member **Tun Tun Oo**, currently held in Meiktila prison in Mandalay Divison, is experiencing pain all over his body due to muscular tension ([AAPP.04042009](#)).

NLD member released

Thein Lwin, cameraman and NLD member, was released. He was arrested on 11 February 2009 ([AAPP.04042009](#)).

3 April 2009

More prison transfers

NLD member **Soe Lwin** aka Toe Lwin was transferred to Sittwe prison in Arakan State from Insein prison. NLD member **Htet Htet Oo Wai** was transferred this week from Insein Prison, but it is not clear where she was transferred to. Khyan state NLD youth member **Win Myint Aung (Pe Pyoat, Htet Htet Oo Wai's husband)** was transferred to Mandalay prison from Insein Prison. **Kyaw Kyaw Naing**, NLD Township organizer in Pakokku Township Magwe Division, was transferred from Insein Prison, but it is not known which prison he was transferred to. ([RFA 03042009](#))

Monks

There are currently 220 monks in prison. Two relatives of monk leader U Gambira were transferred to remote prisons.

2 April 2009

Monk leader U Gambira's relatives transferred

Aung Ko Ko Lwin, the younger brother of U Gambira was transferred from Insein to Kyaukpyu prison, in Arakan state. ([DVB 02042009](#))

Moe Htet Hlyan, brother-in-law of U Gambira, was transferred from Insein to Moulmein prison. ([AAPP.02042009](#))

Cyclone Nargis volunteers

There are currently 21 Cyclone Nargis volunteers in prison. 6 people received sentences this month for gathering and burying dead bodies in the aftermath of the cyclone. Three are in poor health.

27 April 2009

Detained Burmese comedian allowed treatment

With the health of famous comedian and film director Thura a.k.a. **Zarganar**, serving 35 years in prison, deteriorating, he was finally allowed a medical check-up on Monday. **Zarganar** (48), suffering from a heart disease, was taken to Myitkyina People's Hospital in Northern Burma's Kachin state and allowed a check up by a cardiologist. "There is a prison ward at the hospital but **Thura** was not admitted. His liver function has improved and is ok now. A senior doctor at the hospital said that he might need oxygen," said **Zarganar's** sister-in-law Ma Nyein. **Zarganar** underwent ultrasound, X-Ray and ECG checks on Monday and doctors said his heart was swelling. "After the medical check-up, **Thura** told me that both Ultrasound and X-Ray results were good. But he underwent 2 ECG tests and the result said his heart was swelling. The doctor, who was not satisfied with the ECG result, said the heart is getting bigger when **Zarganar** asked him about the medical reports. He was disappointed with his heart condition," Ma Nyein said. Before the medical check-up, he was suffering from hepatitis and liver inflammation. Now he is suffering from heart disease, hypertension and spondylitis. [\(Mizzima.28042009\)](#)

24 April 2009

Zarganar and other imprisoned cyclone helpers in poor health

Renowned comedian **Zarganar**, who was sentenced last year to 59 years in prison (reduced to 35 in February 2009) for speaking to foreign media following cyclone Nargis, is in poor health, said a source close to his family. The comedian, who was arrested after giving reports of the post-cyclone humanitarian situation in Irrawaddy delta, is suffering from a swollen liver and jaundice. In December 2008 he was transferred to the remote Myitkyina prison in Kachin state, in the country's far north. On 16 April it is believed he lost consciousness for three hours. His family has requested the authorities the permission to allow him to receive proper medical treatments. [\(dvb.24042009\)](#)

The family of Weekly Eleven journal editor, **Kyaw Kyaw Thant**, who was sentenced last year to two years imprisonment with hard labor after collecting news and assisting victims of the cyclone, also report he is in poor health. Despite reporting chest pains, the authorities are still refusing to give his family permission to take him to a specialist. [\(dvb.24042009\)](#)

22 April 2009

Cyclone Nargis volunteers transferred to remote prisons

Three female members of opposition party National League for Democracy youth wing, sentenced after carrying out rescue efforts for cyclone victims, were transferred to remote prisons far from their families. **Yin Yin Waing** (also spelt Wine or Wyne), **Tin Tin Cho** and **Ni Mo Hlaing** were transferred from Rangoon Insein jail on 22 April. **Yin Yin Waing** was

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sent to Shwebo jail in Sagaing division, **Tin Tin Cho** to Lashio jail in northern Shan State and **Nemo Hlaing** (also spelt Ni Mo Hlaing) to Thayet jail in Magwe division. **Yin Yin Waing** has been suffering from gastric diseases and headache. Her family has been sending medicine every week, the relative said. ([dvv.24042009](#))

8 April 2009

Zarganar's family denied the right to visit him in prison

Ko **Zargana's** sister-in-law Ma Nyein returned from Myitkyina prison today without meeting him. She was denied permission to meet him in a prison interview by the prison authorities on the pretext that it was not yet time. "Myitkyina prison jailor U Hla Shwe had promised me that I could see Ko **Zargana** one day before my departure from Rangoon. But he didn't let me meet him when I arrived there. I requested them to let me meet him but they refused. So I did not leave the food parcels and other packages that I brought from Rangoon with the jailors as I was not certain it would reach Ko **Zargana**," Ma Nyein told Mizzima. ([mizzima.08042009](#))

10 April 2009

Cyclone Nargis Relief Workers Sentenced

A Special Court in the notorious Insein prison precincts in Rangoon on Friday, sentenced relief workers, who were helping victims of Cyclone Nargis, to prison terms ranging from two to four years. Former political prisoner, **Dr Nay Win**, along with his daughter **Phyo Phyo Aung** and four others were helping villagers in the cyclone-hit delta, to cremate corpses. Advocate Khin Maung Myint, who was in court, told Mizzima that **Aung Thant Zin Oo**, **Phyo Phyo Aung** and **Shein Yarza Tun** were sentenced to four years each, while **Nay Win**, **Aung Kyaw San** and **Phone Pye Kywe** were sentenced to two years each. The six people were arrested in June 2008, by Military Affairs Security (MAS), on their way back from Bogale Township in Irrawaddy Division, where they had been helping cremate victims of Cyclone Nargis. ([Mizzima.10042009](#))

3 April 2009

Legal expert says Nargis judges breached own laws

A researcher from a prominent exiled lawyers' organization has said that the charges handed down by judges to two journalists recently were in breach of Burmese law. The two journalists, **Eint Khin Oo** and **Kyat Kyat Thant**, from Ecovision and Weekly Eleven journal respectively, were arrested in June last year and sentenced to two years in prison with hard labor. They had been collecting news and assisting victims of cyclone Nargis. U Myo, from Burmese Lawyers Council, said that the charges they were sentenced under were not attributable to their circumstances. "Section 505(b) of the Penal Code, under which Ma **Eint Khaing Oo** and Ko **Kyaw Kyaw Thant** were charged, stated that the law is alleageable to 'whoever makes, publishes or circulates any statement, rumor or report' with an intent to cause public alarm," he said. "But the two were arrested while collecting news so they were definitely not alleageable for it." He also stated that **Kyaw Kyaw Thant's** charge under the Immigration Act was illegal given that the law is only attributable to foreigners. Furthermore, he said, use of section 505(b) can only be carried out with a court order. ([dvv.03042009](#))

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1 April 2009

Political prisoner Kay Thi Aung transferred to remote prison

On 31 March, Cyclone Nargis activist and ABFSU member **Kay Thi Aung** was transferred from Mandalay prison to Tavoy prison in Tenasserim Division. ([AAPP.01042009](#))

Women

There are currently 187 women in detention.

Students

There are currently 283 students in detention, including 46 members of the 88 Generation Students group.

24 April 2009

Former AASYC member arrested

Aung Kyaw Soe, former member of AASYC (All Arakan Students and Youth and Congress) was arrested at Ann Gate with six other people, including **Zay Yar Min** and **Tin Aung Soe**, and two reporters from Narinjara Independent Arakan News Agency **Myat Tun** and **Ko Khin Maung**. They all are currently in custody in Ann Police Station and have been charged with 505/b, 420, 112, and 468 of the Penal Code. They are due to appear in court on Thursday 30 April 2009 ([aappb.24022009](#))

4 April 2009

Student leader in poor health

Pyae Phyio Hlaing, a student leader from Bassein University, currently held in Buthidaung Prison in Arakan State (over 700 miles from Rangoon) cannot eat because of stomach pain. ([aappb.04042009](#))

2 April 2009

Student transferred to remote prison

Student **Zayar Oo** was transferred from Insein to Kyaukpyu Prison, Arakan state, around 450 miles from Rangoon. ([DVB 02042009](#))

Lawyers

11 lawyers are currently in detention. Lawyer Nyi Nyi Htway, arrested in October 2008 and sentenced to 6 months imprisonment on charges of contempt of court, was released this month after completing his sentence.

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30 April 2009

Magwe District Court Accepts Appeal Letter for Lawyer Pho Phyu

Magwe District Court has accepted an appeal letter submitted on behalf of lawyer **Pho Phyu**. On 7 May his defence lawyer U Myint Thwin will go to court for the appeal. **Pho Phyu**, a human rights lawyer, was arrested in connection with his involvement in a forced land confiscation case reported to the International Labour Organisation (ILO). In March he was sentenced to 4 years imprisonment on charges relating to the Unlawful Association Act. At the end of the March, the ILO urged the military regime to release all political prisoners held in connection with having contact with the organization. ([DVB 30042009](#))

Released lawyer speaks of imprisonment

A human rights lawyer released earlier this week after a serving a sixth-month sentence for contempt of court has said that he was prevented from exercising and receiving medical care. **Nyi Nyi Htway** was sentenced to six months in Rangoon's Insein prison last October after representing activists detained for holding prayer meetings for the release of political prisoners. "I was not very healthy before I went to prison, and during my time there I didn't get proper medical care and was suffering from weak heart," he said. "All they gave me was an ECG check up but they never let me know the result." He said that authorities also issued an order to suspend his lawyer permit while he was in prison. He was met by the United Nations human rights envoy for Burma, Tomas Ojea Quintana, during his visit to Insein prison, and talked about the judicial system in Burma. "I was allowed to do walking [as an exercise] with other inmates for the first week I arrived there," said **Nyi Nyi Htway**. "But after that, I was informed by my warden I had been suspended from walking as an order was received from senior authorities," he said, adding that he didn't walk again until he was released. "The judicial system we have now is not a kind we believe in and have our respect in," he said. "In trials today, people are being sentenced with no proof or evidence." ([DVB.30042009](#))

Other organizations

24 April 2009

Generation Wave member in poor health

Generation Wave member **Saw Maung** cannot move the lower part of his body. ([DVB 24042009](#))

10 April 2009

Member of Best Manure arrested

Tin Htut Paing, a member of Best Manure (also known as Best Fertiliser) was arrested at his home on 10 April. His mother **Daw Nge**, a member of the NLD in North Okkalapa Township, is currently serving a seven-year sentence in Insein Prison. ([RFA 26042009](#))

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4 April 2009

HRDP member in poor health

Human Rights Defenders and Promoters member **Myint Naing**, currently held in Kale Prison in Sagaing Division, is suffering from a hernia and headaches. ([aappb.04042009](#))

Journalists Bloggers, and Writers

There are currently 50 media activists in detention.

24 April 2009

Media activists and others arrested

Myat Tun, **Ko Khin Maung**, reporters of Narinjara Independent Arakan News Agency, were arrested with their cameras. They were arrested with five others (including Aung Kyaw Soe, **Zay Yar Min** and **Tin Aung Soe** and are due to appear in court on Thursday 30 April 2009. ([aappb.24042009](#))

8 April 2009

RSF demands release of two bloggers

'Reporters Sans Frontieres' (RSF), an international media freedom group, today demanded the release of two Burmese bloggers **Ko Thura a.k.a. Ko Zargana** and **Nay Phone Latt** because they were punished unfairly. RSF based in France demanded that the junta release the two bloggers because the long term jail sentences awarded to them was unfair. They were arrested for possession of video CDs allegedly attacking the junta and wrote their views and opinions on their blogs. Appeals have been filed at the Rangoon Supreme Court again for their acquittal.

At present, the junta is holding **Ko Zargana** in Myitkyina prison and **Nay Phone Latt** is being held in Pa-An prison in Karen State. ([mizzima.08042009](#))

Poet Saw Wai in poor health

Poet **Saw Wai**, who is serving a two-year prison term in Yemethin prison, is now suffering from severe gastric ailments. He was arrested in February 2008 after his poem appeared in the Rangoon based 'Love' Journal. The poem allegedly ridiculed the junta leader. ([mizzima.08042009](#))

Labour activists

There are currently at least 28 labour activists in detention.

10 April 2009

Unlawfully detained trade union members released

The five members of the Federation Trade Unions Burma (FTUB), and one other who were arrested unlawfully on April 1, 2009, are back in their homes in Rangoon. The charges on which they were arrested were never announced, and the FTUB strongly condemned these unlawful arrests.

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The following five FTUB members were released on 10 April 2009.

1. **U Zaw Myint Aung** (49 years old, Teacher, South Okkalapa, Rangoon)
2. **U Soe Oo** (37 years old, Textile Factory Worker, Shwe Pyi Thar, Rangoon)
3. **Maung Tun Nyein** (22 years old, Worker, Shwe Hninsi Textile factory, Hlaing Thayar, Rangoon)
4. **Ms. Khine Lin Myat** (22 years old, Worker, UMH Textile factory)
5. **Ms. Shwe Yi Nyunt** (25 years old, Nurses Aide and Law Student, University of Western Rangoon, and Member, FTUB Women's Committee)

Yee Mon was also released. ([ABITSU.10042009](#))

4 April 2009

Labour activists in poor health

Thu Rein Aung, currently held in Kyaukpyu Prison in Arakan State (around 450 miles from Rangoon) is suffering from an eye condition and has recently lost a lot of weight to a gastric problem. Labour activist **Wai Lin** is in Myitkyina prison, Kachin State. The prison is 900 miles from Rangoon and has no prison doctor. He is suffering from tuberculosis and his health is deteriorating. ([aappb.04042009](#))

1 April 2009

Six Burmese Labour Activists Arrested

Six labor activists were arrested recently in Rangoon after attending a labor conference held on the Thai-Burma border, an exiled labor group, the Federation Trade Unions Burma (FTUB), said on Wednesday. The FTUB said in a press release that five members, who are peaceful advocates and campaigners for labor rights, were arrested on April 1. The detainees are **Zaw Myint Aung**, a 49-year-old teacher; three textile factory workers, **Soe Oo**, 37, **Tun Nyein**, 22, and **Khine Lin Myat**, 22 ; and **Shwe Yi Nyunt**, a 25-year-old nurses aid and law student , and **Yee Mon**. "The six members are likely being held in interrogation centers in the Rangoon area where it is believed they are being tortured," the press release said. The exile labor group also claimed that family members of the six activists were arrested or threatened to compel cooperation from those detained. ([Irrawaddy.01042009](#))

Individual activists

29 April 2009

Solo demonstrator sentenced to one year

A tutor who was arrested on Burmese Independence Day in January 2009 for staging a solo demonstration calling for the release of political prisoners has been sentenced to a year in prison. **Aung Pe** was arrested on National Armed Forces day (also known as Resistance Day) on 4 January this year after protesting near to opposition party National League for Democracy's office in Twante township, Rangoon. "He was given a year's imprisonment by judge Win Ko for violations against his movement restriction order," said a colleague. "The place where he did the protest is still in the range of his movement limits and he clearly didn't violate the restriction order." As well as calling for the release of political prisoners, **Aung Pe**

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demanded the right to reopen NLD branches across the country. According to NLD spokesperson Nyan Win, he had tied his hands together and saluted the Independence monument. This is the second time he had been arrested for this act. ([DVB.29042009](#))

3 April 2009

Ye Nyunt was transferred to Mergui prison from Insein prison. **Kyaw Myo Set** aka **Kyaw Myo Thet** was transferred to Tangyan prison in Eastern Shan State from Insein. **Hlaing Myo**, was transferred to Mandalay prison, from Insein. ([RFA 03042009](#))

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

27 April 2009

Suu Kyi's lawyer to make direct appeal

The lawyer of the detained opposition leader **Aung San Suu Kyi** will file an appeal for her release directly to Burma's junta leader following the government's failure to respond to previous appeals. Three appeals have been filed by lawyer U Kyi Win since last October but no response has been given. "The government is not acting on the appeals," said Kyi Win. "For that reason, we will be appealing to a higher authority or the chairman of the [State Peace and Development Council]. "We will state that the government has failed to act on our appeals and we will request him to take necessary action." The lawyer decided to file the appeal to the highest authority after being given the power of attorney by **Suu Kyi**. The current order on her detention expires on 27 May this year. "Of course, we could wait for that period to end without taking any action," he said. "But, what will the consequence of that action be?" "The government has completely ignored the appeals of **Daw Aung San Suu Kyi**, which is a right granted under Section 19. "If we do not appeal, that lawful right will come to nothing." ([DVB.27042009](#))

14 April 2009

UN chief shares US concern about Aung San Suu Kyi

UN chief Ban Ki-moon said Wednesday he shared the concern expressed by 10 US senators about the continued detention of Myanmar's democracy icon and Nobel peace prize laureate **Aung San Suu Kyi**. In a letter released Tuesday, 10 women US senators urged the UN secretary general to step up pressure on Myanmar's ruling junta to scrap elections plans and free **Aung San Suu Kyi**. A UN statement Wednesday said Ban and his special adviser Ibrahim Gambari "share their (US senators') concern about the continued detention of **Aung San Suu Kyi**" and "have repeatedly called for her release and that of other political prisoners and will continue to do so." In their letter, the US lawmakers also appealed to Ban to publicly urge the military regime to end human rights abuses, "eliminate rape as an instrument of war" and bring violators to justice. They also pressed him to ask the military to "abandon plans" to hold elections in 2010 under a much-criticized new constitution approved in May 2008, after Cyclone Nargis devastated southern parts of the country and left 138,000 people dead or missing. The letter was signed by Senators Dianne Feinstein, Kay Bailey Hutchison, Patty Murray, Olympia Snowe, Blanche Lincoln, Maria Cantwell, Susan Collins, Barbara Boxer, Amy Klobuchar, Barbara Mikulski, and Lisa Murkowski. ([AFP.14042009](#))

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8 April 2009

Opposition leader's lawyer resorts to pleading

The lawyer of imprisoned opposition leader **Aung San Suu Kyi** has said that only pleading with the government will allow him access to his client, as her stated release date draws closer. Kyi Win is planning to send another letter to the Burmese prime minister this Friday requesting permission to see his detained client and urging authorities to consider previous appeals. He said, however, that a request alone will achieve very little. "As he is the prime minister, you have to plead with him," he said. "We have to discuss among ourselves whether the plea is responded to in time or not." **Aung San Suu Kyi** was first placed under house arrest after the 1990 elections in which her National League for Democracy party won a resounding victory. She has spent 13 of the last 19 years in detention. Her latest stint will reach its six-year mark on 27 May. She was imprisoned in 2003 following the Depayin massacre, when soldiers opened fire on a convoy she was traveling in, killing 70 NLD supporters. Her detention has been continuously extended since. On 27 May, Kyi Win will also request her release. "There are only 48 days left of her detention. The authorities should try to be nice and release her," he said. "The earlier she is released, the better." After the Depayin massacre, Kyi Win was allowed to meet with **Aung San Suu Kyi** five times. Restrictions on his access to her have since gradually tightened. ([dvh.08042009](#))

Key international developments

This month the EU decided to extend sanctions against Burma for a further year, and the US indicated that it is not considering lifting sanctions against the country.

30 April 2009

US Will Not Lift Sanctions on Burma

The United States is not considering lifting sanctions against Burma as part of a review of policy toward the military government, *Agence France Presse (AFP)* reported on Wednesday, quoting a letter by a State Department official. Richard Verma, the assistant secretary for legislative affairs who handles relations between the State Department and Congress, wrote a letter to Republican Congressman Peter King saying reports that the US would lift sanctions were "incorrect." According to the *AFP*, Verma said: "The sanctions that the United States and other countries maintain against the regime are an important part of our efforts to support change in Burma." "While we are currently reviewing our Burma policy, we can assure you that we remain committed to delivering a firm message on the need for real reform, including the initiation of a credible and inclusive dialogue with the democratic opposition and the release of political prisoners," Verma said. ([Irrawaddy 30042009](#))

Burma Named Worst Online Oppressor

Burma is the worst violator of Internet freedom of speech rights in the world, says a leading media watchdog group. World Press Freedom Day this year is Monday, the day the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) officially names the world's worst Internet oppressor, which is recognized as an emerging threat to freedom of speech and the press worldwide. "Burma leads the dishonor roll," said the CPJ in its report. "Booming online cultures in many Asian and Middle East nations have led to aggressive government repression." With a military

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government that severely restricts Internet access and imprisons people for years for posting critical material on the Internet, Burma is the worst place in the world to be a blogger, the CPJ said in the report "10 Worst Countries to be a Blogger." ([Irrawaddy.30042009](#))

27 April 2009

EU extends sanctions on Burma for another year

The European Union (EU) on Monday renewed its sanctions imposed on Burma's military rulers for another year during its foreign ministers meet in Luxembourg. The European Council, on Monday called on the Burmese junta to release detained opposition leader **Aung San Suu Kyi** and also said the junta needs to take steps necessary to make its 2010 election credible, transparent, and an inclusive process based on international standards. "In these circumstances, the Council deems it necessary to extend the current EU Common Position by another year, including the restrictive measures," said the EC's press statement released on Monday. The EC, however said, it is ready to revise, amend or reinforce the measures it has already adopted in the light of developments on the ground. The Council reiterates that the EU stands ready to respond positively to genuine progress in Burma. ([Mizzima.27042009](#))

24 April 2009

Release of Political Prisoners Still Key Issue: UK Ambassador

The release of political prisoners is still the key to progress in Burma, Britain's ambassador to the country, Mark Canning, told an audience during a panel discussion hosted by the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand in Bangkok on Wednesday. Citing the ruling junta's intensifying crackdown on dissent over the past two years, Canning described Burma as "one of the most repressive places in the world," with more than 2,100 political prisoners, including Nobel Peace Prize winner **Aung San Suu Kyi**. At the panel discussion to discuss developments in Burma since Cyclone Nargis hit the country almost exactly one year ago, Canning said that the international response to the deadly cyclone has done little to change the regime's attitude, but there is still hope that it could have some positive effect in the long run. However, the ambassador said that the signs are not encouraging as the junta prepares for national elections to be held sometime next year. Critics say that polling is unlikely to be free and fair because the junta is intent on eliminating any genuine opposition ahead of the vote, which will be based on a constitution approved last year in a referendum widely dismissed as a sham. ([Irrawaddy.24042009](#))

21 April 2009

Myanmar activists get 253,524 to free political prisoners

A global petition campaign to free Myanmar's political prisoners has secured 253,524 signatures to date, pro-democracy groups announced Tuesday. The signature campaign, launched on March 13 marking Myanmar's Human Rights Day, aims to collect 888,888 signatures before May 24, 2009, the date that opposition leader **Aung San Suu Kyi** should be released from house arrest, according to the country's laws. Thousands of other political prisoners have endured long jail terms in Myanmar and many face life imprisonment. "We must show them they have not been forgotten," Nobel laureate Jody Williams said in a statement released by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma), one of the

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groups behind the signature petition. "Please embrace our fellow laureate Daw (Mrs) **Aung San Suu Kyi** and her colleagues as heroes for freedom, peace, and democracy, and sign the petition," Williams said. The petition, which can be read on www.fbppn.net, calls on the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to make it his personal priority to secure the release of all political prisoners in Myanmar, also called Burma, as the essential first step towards national reconciliation and democratization in the country. The target of 888,888 signatures symbolizes the date August 8, 1988 (8.8.88), when the country's junta cracked down on pro-democracy demonstrators in Myanmar, killing an estimated 3,000 people. ([Burmanet.21042009](#))

17 April 2009

Arroyo offers Philippines as a model for Burma

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has held up her country's democratic experience as a guiding light for Burma's military regime, urging Burma's generals to adopt a similar approach to that of her administration in matters related to political reform and the strengthening of national unity and reconciliation. In a statement released today by the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs, Arroyo is quoted as saying, "Like Myanmar, the Philippines has over a hundred ethnic groups and a variety of political persuasions, but rather than impair the vibrancy of our country's democracy these have only served to strengthen it." According to Burma's military government, the country is home to 135 distinct ethnic groups. Arroyo, speaking of her administration's actions directed at bringing all Filipino citizens into the national political fold, added, "I have reached out to them [ethnic groups] in the spirit of reconciliation and national unity, which has enabled our society and political system to move forward without giving undue importance to their political mystique." Further, the Philippine President called on the Burmese regime to release opposition leader **Aung San Suu Kyi** upon the expiration, this May, of her most recent term of house arrest. ([Mizzima.17042009](#))

9 April 2009

A group of women US Senators urge UN pressure on Myanmar

A group of women US Senators urged UN chief Ban Ki-moon in a letter released Tuesday to step up pressure on Myanmar's ruling junta to scrap elections plans and free democracy icon **Aung San Suu Kyi**. The lawmakers, 10 of the chamber's 17 women, urged the secretary general to publicly urge the military regime to end human rights abuses, "eliminate rape as an instrument of war" and bring violators to justice. "We must not allow this regime to continue to commit such dire crimes unabated while the people of Burma continue to suffer," they wrote in the letter, which was dated April 9. The senators urged Ban to call on the junta in Myanmar, which Washington refers to as Burma, to "release **Aung San Suu Kyi** and all political prisoners immediately and unconditionally." ([AFP.14042009](#))

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Call for appointment of US Special Envoy to Burma

Seventeen members of the US Congress have written to Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, asking for the appointment of a special envoy for military-ruled Burma, a state department spokesperson said. Robert Wood, Acting Spokesperson of the State department on Tuesday said, "The Department has recently received a letter, signed by 17 members of the Congress on Burma." The letter, addressed to Hillary Clinton, urged the state department to appoint a special envoy for Burma. Clinton had stated earlier that the US was reviewing its policy towards Burma. She admitted that the US policy of economic sanctions had failed to bring about a change in the regime's behavior, but also added the engagement policy of the neighboring countries, also had not yielded any positive result. "She [Clinton] is always interested in hearing from members of the Congress about, you know, important issues of the day. Certainly, Burma is one that she cares very deeply about," Wood told reporters during a daily press briefing in Washington. The United States had earlier said, it was reviewing its Burma policy, but did not make public a timeline for completing the policy review. ([mizzima.09042009](#))

8 April 2009

Hasten Asean rights body, Romulo urges regional counterparts

The Philippines urged its counterparts in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Wednesday to hasten the creation of an Asean rights body to protect freedoms in the region. Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo emphasized the need to make human freedoms the centerpiece of regional growth and civilization. Romulo said the Asean spadework to create the AHRB is "remarkable" for being the first human rights institution for a regional community. But he stressed human rights must have a single norm, a universal standard "applicable to one and all without exception." But he also called on Myanmar to carry out its own "Roadmap for Democracy," its avowed program of releasing political detainees, including the opposition leader **Aung San Suu Kyi**. ([GMA.08042009](#))

6 April 2009

US officials urge Obama to stick with sanctions

A number of prominent US congressmen have urged the White House to maintain sanctions on Burma amid signs that the Obama administration may review policy to on Burma in light of their failure. In February Secretary of State Hillary Clinton spoke of the need to review sanctions on Burma, claiming they had failed to influence the military regime. Last month a senior US official, Steven Blake, made a rare visit to the country to meet with members of the ruling State Peace and Development Council in a further sign that relations between the two countries may be thawing. In a letter sent to Clinton last week, however, 17 members of congress said they were "greatly concerned" by indications that the sanctions, which have been in place since 1990, may soon be lifted. "Than Shwe's regime continues to perpetuate crimes against humanity and war crimes so severe that Burma has been called 'Southeast Asia's Darfur,'" AFP quoted the letter as saying. Critics of sanctions have claimed that they have forced no change in the government's treatment of opposition politicians, activists and journalists, who continue to be imprisoned in large numbers. The junta has also strengthened economic and political ties with neighboring China, who in 2007 vetoed a UN Security Council

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resolution to pressure Burma into easing repression and freeing political prisoners. ([dwb.06042009](#))

2 April 2009

US wants common Burma strategy with Asia

The United States wants to forge a common strategy with Asia to coax military-run Burma out of isolation, a senior official said Wednesday, suggesting six-way talks with North Korea could be a model. President Barack Obama's administration has launched a review of policy on Burma, where a US official last week paid the first visit by a senior envoy in more than seven years. Deputy Secretary of State Jim Steinberg said the United States wanted a "collaborative and constructive" approach on Burma, saying nations with sway over the junta should avoid "recreating a mini version of the Great Game. Steinberg said the US "core objectives" would remain the same after the review -- to seek a "more open" Burma that respects the rights of its people and integrates into the global economy. He said Burma was an issue on which the United States was open to setting up new "flexible" frameworks similar to the six-nation talks on ending North Korea's nuclear program. "The solution to many global problems will not always be in creating new formal institutions or new bureaucracies," he said. ([dwb.02042009](#))

Philippines urges Burma to Protect Human Rights

Burma should free all political detainees and fulfill a long-standing pledge to democratize, the Philippine foreign secretary said on Thursday. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations plans to launch a landmark human rights body in October during its annual summit. But diplomats have acknowledged it will have no power to investigate and punish violators. Constrained by the 10-member bloc's policy of noninterference in each other's domestic affairs, the body cannot force compliance. Still, its creation has been hailed as a milestone for a region with a long history of human rights abuses. Romulo singled out military-ruled Burma for its dismal rights record and said Asean must recognize that it has human rights problems and think about how it can protect "basic freedoms" to give the regional rights body "an auspicious beginning." ([Irrawaddy.02042009](#))