



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

နိုင်ငံရေးအကျဉ်းသားများကူညီစောင့်ရှောက်ရေးအသင်း (မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ)

Monthly Chronology of Burma's Political Prisoners for June 2011



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P.O Box 93, Mae Sot, Tak Province 63110, Thailand

e.mail: info@aappb.org website: www.aappb.org

Monthly Chronology June 2011

Summary of current situation

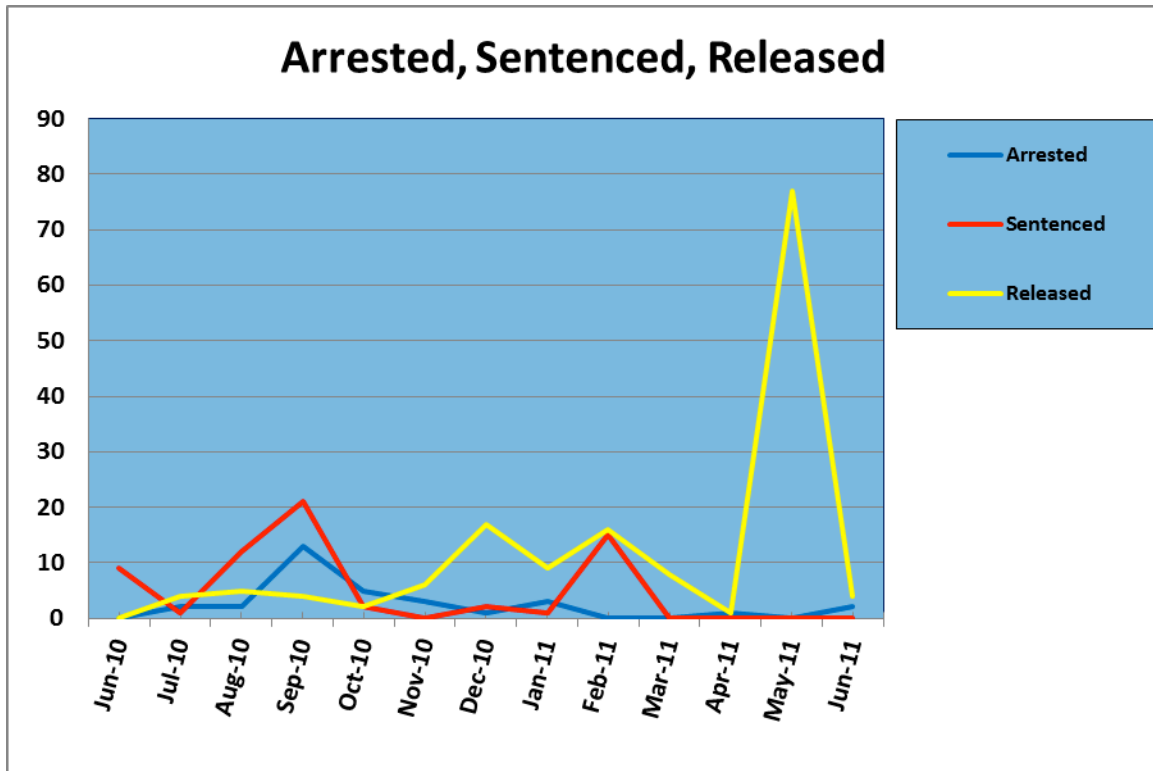
There are a **1,994** total of political prisoners in Burma. In June, **4** political prisoners were released.

The total number of political prisoners is 1,994

Monk	223
MP	10
Student	269
Female	145
NLD	345
HRDP	26
Bad Health	155
88 Generation Students	37
Ethnic nationalities	318
Media Activists	23
Labor Activists	46
Lawyers	12
Cyclone Nargis Volunteers	17

Since the protests in September 2007 leading to September's Saffron Revolution, a total of **847** activists have been arrested and are still in detention.

Monthly Trend Analysis



During the month of June, 4 political prisoners were released.

Political prisoners continue to be held in inhumane and harsh conditions that fall well below internationally accepted standards. Interviews conducted by AAPP of those released under the so-called amnesty in May 2011 have renewed the sense of urgency in having outside monitors independently visit Burma's prisons and detention centers on a regular basis. Ko Sai Min Thein, one of those interviewed, explains how upon learning UN envoy Sergio Pinheiro would visit detention centers in the aftermath of the Saffron revolution, Burmese authorities secretly transferred him and countless others who were arbitrarily arrested to a police battalion. Pinheiro was then shown a detention center where no one was being held arbitrarily or unlawfully. This blatant cover-up not only reveals that authorities are knowingly using prohibited methods of detention, but is also in direct contravention of international standards as the right to be free from arbitrary detention is a fundamental value enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Moreover, those released spoke of trademark violations of the military regime that continue unabated under U Thein Sein, such as a denial of basic medical care, unsanitary prison conditions, the use of excessive force by state authorities, and sham trials that make no pretense of legality. Ye Min Oo, arrested on 9 October 2007, was arrested by 7 local authorities and arbitrarily detained under police custody. He was "forcefully beaten on [his] ears, punched in the face, and told to stand up long." While in prison, he contracted leprosy as he was made to stay in a cell that previously was reserved for lepers. Ko Kyi Phyu, arrested in August 2007, was told he could hire a defense lawyer, but the lawyer was not allowed to enter the court. Ko Kyi Phyu had been arbitrarily detained from August to

November 2007. These events show the unwillingness of the Burmese government to make improvements in its human rights record, and the lack of coherency in its announced transition towards a democratic government.

While the Thein Sein regime continues to deny the existence of political prisoners in the country, many international key figures this month have raised their concern for those 1,994 who remain in Burmese prisons. As Aung San Suu Kyi said in her conversation with former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown in the first week of June, it is important that the international community shows the same solidarity that liberated her in November and to pressure for the release of the silenced thousands who remain in detention today.

Torture and Treatment of prisoners and their families

The military-backed U Thein Sein administration has continued the use of punishment and unfair treatment of prisoners. On the 17th of June, more than 150 prisoners were transported from Insein prison to an unknown location by the authorities. Observers said that they were taken away empty-handed by two trucks and guarded by armed police guards, all elements that indicate that they could be used as porters in the offensive against the Kachin Independence Army (KIA). Prisoners who are used as porters find that the assignment amounts to a death sentence. Porters are routinely sent to the volatile frontier areas, and there have been reports of porters being used as human mine sweepers.

The practice of using criminal offenders to intimidate and threaten the political prisoner population continued in the month of June. AAPP received reports that U Yayvata, a monk political prisoner, was beaten by a prisoner charged with murder in plain view of prison authorities. (Please refer to Monk section for more information).

June 17

[Prisoners from Insein Prison are taken to unknown location](#)

Prisoners Released

National League for Democracy

At least **345** NLD members are still in prison.

The month of June began with the NLD holding its first gathering since leader Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest in November 2010. The meeting was held at the party's headquarters in Rangoon and more than 100 NLD youth members attended. Analysts say it was an opportunity for them to exchange stories, learn about what happens in other parts of the country and to discuss ways to work around limitations imposed by government restrictions.

The regime quickly changed its tone towards the end of the month, however, as official media warned against the NLD partaking in further political activities.

Official media claimed that the NLD were participating in activities that harmed the stability and security of Burma. The information comes as Daw Suu prepares for a regional tour. There has been deep concern over Daw Suu's safety during the tour, and the NLD's calls to provide Daw Suu with protection is falling upon deaf ears.

June 1

[NLD holds first youth conference since the release of Aung San Suu kyi \(Irrawady\)](#)

June 2

[NLD urges Burmese government to provide Suu Kyi with tight security during her trip \(Mizzima\)](#)

June 29

[Suu Kyi warned against political activity](#)

88 Generation Students

There are at least **37** members of 88 Generation Students group still remaining in prisons. There is no news to report in June.

Ethnic Nationalities

There are at least **318** ethnic people still remaining in prison. There is no news to report in June.

Monks

There are at least **223** monks still remain in prisons.

The practice of using criminal offenders to intimidate and threaten the political prisoner population continued in the month of June. AAPP has learned that U Yayvata (also known as Ye Min Naung), a monk political prisoner who participated in the recent hunger strike in Insein prison, was beaten by a criminal offender charged with murder in plain view of three prison guards. The prison guards did nothing to remedy the situation. U Yayvata has since complained to the prison officer who is responsible for the prison guards. U Yayvata has also requested to be transferred to a cell block where political prisoners are held. No action has been taken on U Yayvata's requests.

U Yayvata intervened when the criminal offender charged with murder struck another criminal. U Yayvata pleaded with him to stop beating the criminal so much. In response, the criminal charged with murder started beating U Yayvata.

U Yayvata's mother visited him on 5 June 2011. It is unclear when exactly the altercation between U Yayvata and the criminal offender took place.

Prison authorities routinely use criminal offenders to threaten, intimidate, and degrade political prisoners. In February 2011, AAPP received reports that Ko Khaing Kyaw Moe, a member of the All Arakan Student Youth Congress (AASYC), fears for his life after a criminal prisoner violently attacked a prisoner he is friends with. The

attack left the prisoner hospitalized. The violent prisoner routinely harasses and bullies Khaing Kyaw Moe, a source reveals, though Khaing Kyaw Moe does nothing to provoke him and never fights back.

Cyclone Nargis Volunteers

There are at least **17** Cyclone Nargis volunteers still remain in prisons. There is no news to report in June.

Journalists, Bloggers and Writers (media activists)

There are at least **23** media activists still remaining in prisons.

There are improvements on restrictions of media censorship this month. Beginning on June 10th, publishers have been allowed to post stories on sports, entertainment, technology, health and children's literature without the usual required approval from the PSRD (Press Scrutiny and Registration Division). However, despite this change, they will still be expected to follow the rules of the "three national causes", avoiding any writing material that could cause state instability. Some say that this will increase tensions for Burmese journalists and publishers.

June 9

[Burmese journalists cautious on new censorship policy \(Irrawady\)](#)

Women

There are at least **145** women political prisoners still remaining in prisons. There is no news to report in June.

Human Rights Defenders & Promoters Network

There are at least **26** HRDP members still remaining in prisons. There is no news report in June.

Labor Activists

There are at least **46** labor activists still remaining in prisons. There is no news to report in June.

Students

There are at least **269** students still remaining in prisons. There is no news to report in June.

Lawyers

There are at least **12** lawyers still remaining in prisons. There is no news to report in June.

Individual Activists

There are at least individual activists still remaining in prisons. There is no news to report in June.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

As democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi prepares to start her trip to Rangoon and to other parts of the country, the youth members of the National League for Democracy announced that they will be responsible for her protection. In addition, the NLD youth members have also called on the general public to get involved. Some have suggested that it would be safer if members of foreign embassies in Rangoon joined her during the trips.

The leader was visited by Senator John McCain at the end of May, who told the media to be honored to meet with his "hero". They discussed the situation of political prisoners, raising their concern for those who had recently gone on a hunger strike.

On the 21st of June, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi addressed her first ever remarks on the abuse of human rights in Burma to the US Congress. She stressed on the importance for the call of a commission of inquiry to be established in Burma, and on the need for the new government to free the political prisoners in order to act coherently with its intent to become a democracy.

On the 28th of June, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will give two lectures on the BBC radio on the themes of former dissent and liberty. According to the BBC, the lectures will be part of the 2011 Reith Lectures, an annual broadcast on issues discussing global events happening in the past year.

On the 1st of July, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will be honored with a human rights plaque in a Canadian city for her struggle for democracy and human rights in Burma.

June 2

[Suu Kyi concerned for political prisoners' hunger strikes \(Newser\)](#)

June 6

[NLD Youth to provide security for Suu Kyi \(Irrawady\)](#)

June 7

[Canadian city honours Aung San Suu Kyi \(Mizzima\)](#)

June 10

[Suu Kyi to lecture on dissent and liberty on BBC \(Mizzima\)](#)

June 19

[Aung San Suu Kyi steps back into the firing line](#)

June 21

[Suu Kyi sends a message to US congressional committee](#)

Key International Developments

Several international key figures raised their concerns regarding the situation of political prisoners in Burma this month. John McCain travelled to the region, where he met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other important government authorities, including vice president, Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo. In addition, he said he expects the Red Cross to return to the country and to regain permission to visit the prisons in the coming weeks. He described the ICRC's access to prisons as the first step in re-establishing the US-Burma relations.

Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the UK had the chance to speak to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi this month, and advocated for the freedom of political prisoners. He was asked by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to press on the international community to show the same solidarity that helped her to be liberated, for those who remain in silence in prison.

Germany is among the countries that have raised concerns about Burma becoming the chair of the ASEAN in 2014. The German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that the present leadership has not showed serious progress towards becoming a democracy, and should not be considered to chair the ASEAN in 2014.

On the 23rd of June, an EU delegation visited the country for the first time after the new government was elected. The delegation said it saw encouraging signs from the new government, but emphasized that promises of reform must be matched by actions. It also said that the EU agrees to step up its dialogue initiative at the same time as renewing economic sanctions.

The office of the UN General-Secretary Ban Ki-moon announced that a new full-time envoy to Burma could be appointed in 'due time' as a result of what they describe as a willingness to start an open co-operation between the new Burmese government and the UN. At the same time, Mizzima News Agency has criticized the re-election of Ban Ki-Moon in an article it published on the 22nd, saying that throughout Ban's first term, Burma has remained an unresolved topic.

June 2

[Senator McCain Meets Burmese Government and Opposition Leaders \(Irrawaddy\)](#)
[Germany pushes Burma on ASEAN\(DVB\)](#)

June 3

[Red Cross to return to Burma? \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

June 9

[Release the political prisoners of Burma \(Huffingtonpost World\)](#)

June 10

[UNHRC urges establishment of "Commission of Inquiry" in Burma](#)

June 13

[New UN Burma envoy to be appointed in due time \(Mizzima\)](#)

June 16

[US calls on UN to hold Burma accountable for human rights abuses](#)

June 17

[Burma's Political Prisoners](#)

[US vows to continue pressing for Burma Col](#)

June 22

[Ban earns second UN term, as Burma issue remains unresolved.](#)

[EU fact-finding mission to Myanmar encouraged by visit, but seeks action matching words](#)

June 23rd

[EU delegation conclude fact-finding mission to Burma](#)

Conclusion

The blatant insincerity and unwillingness of the current regime to address grave human rights violations was underscored in the concluding session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Throughout the dialogue, the regime made false claims as to progress made in the field of human rights while continuing to deny serious broad patterns of abuse. Burma accepts to improve relations with Special Rapporteur Quintana, but has denied him entry into the country since March 2010. If there are no widespread occurrences of human rights violations committed with impunity, as Burma claimed during the first round of the UPR in January 2011, then it should open its doors to not only the Special Rapporteur, but also to other INGOs such as the International Committee of the Red Cross. Burma also accepted to end torture, but refuses to investigate allegations into torture, providing further evidence that they are only interested in providing the bare minimum so as to gain political legitimacy.

Zaw Win, Director General of the Prisons Department, shamelessly lied to the international community in saying there are no political prisoners in Burma, and that there have been no deaths in prison arising from conditions of detention. AAPP has documented 146 deaths as a result of ill-treatment and conditions in prison. Given the wall of secrecy surrounding prisons, the number of cases is most likely much higher.

The case of U Yayvata, a monk political prisoner who was beaten by a criminal offender in plain view of prison authorities, stands in stark contrast to UN international standards for treatment of prisoners, which the regime purported to comply with during the first UPR. The case of U Yayvata is not an isolated one, as AAPP has documented a pattern of abuse whereby prison authorities use criminal offenders to intimidate and threaten political prisoners, often with violence. These cases reinforce the need for regular prison visits conducted by outside inspectors, a call AAPP has long supported.

The first step in combatting widespread human rights violations is through greater exposure and transparency. The cases this month of a mass transfer of Insein prisoners to an unknown location, most likely to work as porters, the fatal torture of a Kachin soldier at the hands of the Burmese army, and the beatings of a monk political prisoner while prison authorities stand idly by reflect that state authorities continue to operate in a culture of impunity without fear of consequence for criminal behavior. This entrenched immunity coupled with continued absolute denial of serious human rights abuses underscore the urgent need for a Commission of Inquiry into possible war crimes and crimes against humanity. In its immediate rejection of vital recommendations for ensuring basic human

rights, and its failure to concretely plan for achieving recommendations it did adopt, Burma has shown that the UPR was simply another ploy to appease the international community and was an exercise “divorced from reality¹.” In light of this, AAPP renews its strong support of an independent investigation into the widespread human rights violations taking place under state control. Those who commit these crimes must be held accountable.

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¹ Michael Anthony, Asian Legal Resource Center