



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

နိုင်ငံရေးအကျဉ်းသားများကူညီစောင့်ရှောက်ရေးအသင်း (မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ)

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



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## MONTHLY CHRONOLOGY – July 2010

### Summary of current situation

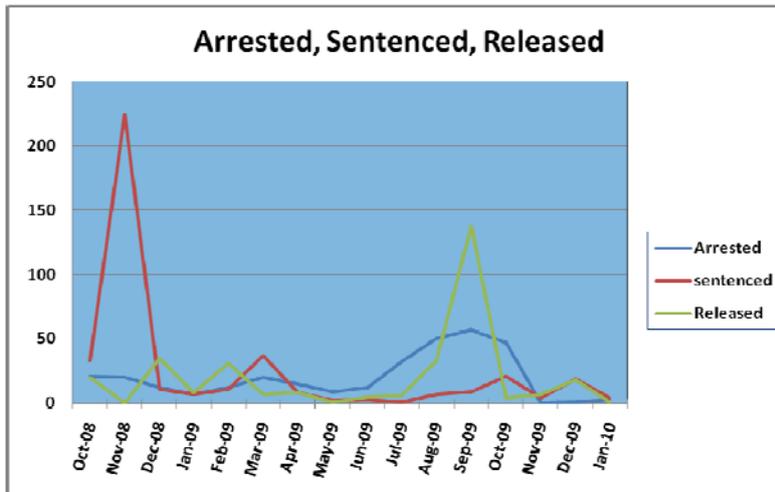
There are a total of **2,174** political prisoners in Burma. This is an overall increase of 3 in comparison to last month's figure of 2,171. In July, 2 political prisoners were arrested, and 4 were released. This retroactive information explains why there is actually an overall increase of 3 this month.

These include:

CATEGORY	NUMBER
Monks	257
Members of Parliament	12
Students	277
Women	174
NLD members	410
Members of the Human Rights Defenders and Promoters network	31
Ethnic nationalities	207
Cyclone Nargis volunteers	20
Teachers	26
Media activists	39
Lawyers	12
Labor activists	36
88 Generation Students	39
Doctors	11
Individual	624
In poor health	138
Total	2174

Since the protests in August 2007, leading to September's Saffron Revolution, a total of **1,169** activists have been arrested and are still in detention.

## Monthly Trend Analysis



During the month of July 2010, **2** activists were arrested and **4** were released. At least **138** political prisoners are in poor health due to the harsh prison conditions, transfers to remote prisons where there are no doctors, and denial of proper medical care.

Harsh prison conditions continued to impact on the health and well being of

political prisoners. Authorities continue to ignore medical problems and deny much needed medical care to political prisoners. Political prisoners are routinely subjected to torture in Burma's prisons and interrogation centres. This month, two political prisoners were beaten in Putao prison in Shan state by prison authorities and denied of proper medical treatment. Monks, NLD members and students are also targeted by the military regime, and have faced similar problems this month. Phyo Wei Aung has Hepatitis B and authorities have yet to respond to his family's request for medical assistance; meanwhile, NLD members Zaw Min Htun and Sandar are both unwell. Zaw Min Htun has stomach problems, and Sandar has liver and heart problems. This month, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was given an award as an honourable member in Markirtte city, Philippines, by the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats – CALD.

## Torture

In the month of July, cases of tortured political prisoners included that of female political prisoner Htet Htet Oo Wei, who was beaten up by prison guards in Putao prison. Kyaw Zin Nyunt, also in Putao prison, was severely tortured this month as well. Zaw Lwin Oo from Shwe Bosu village was subjected to particularly brutal torture in custody by local police during interrogation, including having his throat cut. Another documented case this month is of an official from the Burmese government regime's War Office who died while being interrogated by the junta's military intelligence service. Phyo Wei Aung charged with murder for the April water festival bombings said he was forced to confess under physical and mental torture (see section on 'Treatment of prisoners and their families' for more information). An interview with a former political prisoner reveals that the Regime uses torture against children in their custody, including brutally beating and interrogating a 13 and 14 year old. Torture in July is representative of the military regime's systematic use of violence to suppress dissent.

### 24 July 2010

#### Political prisoners beaten in Putao prison

A female political prisoner, Htet Htet Oo Wei, in Kachin state's Putao prison was beaten up by prison guards when she tried to stop them from beating up two other inmates. Kyaw Zin Nyunt, member of NLD, was also beaten by prison guards in Puato prison because he did

complain to prison authorities who discriminate among criminals and political prisoners. ([26 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **18 July 2010**

### **Extreme torture to unconcerned people**

Zaw Lwin Oo, from Shwe Bosu village, located in the eastern part of Khayan township, was extremely tortured while in custody by local police. "He was cut at his throat by police in interrogation and his face was bruised also. His parents came to see him but local police didn't allow them to meet their son." Zaw Lwin Oo was detained by police in connection to the murder of Hmwe Hmwe Khin, although no one has yet been charged. On 16 July, a relative of Zaw Lwin Oo said the police "overdid the interrogation" and cut his throat. "The kid was losing blood and was submitted to hospital where he had seven stitches in his neck. His face was basically black and blue and he was unconscious until 4pm or 5pm in the afternoon." Locals in Khayan township said the police have arrested and violently interrogated about 10 people in the past month, mostly former students of Hmwe Hmwe Khin, who was murdered on 22 June. Sources said that second-year university student, Aung Kyaw Soe, a resident of Khayan's ward 3, has been in police detention for more than 20 days and has been violently beaten. ([18 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **9 July 2010**

### **Officer Dies Under Interrogation**

An official from the Burmese government regime's War Office died recently while being interrogated by the junta's military intelligence service, according to sources in Naypyidaw. "He was arrested by military intelligence agents three weeks ago. Three days later, they informed his family that he had died during interrogation," the source said. "He was an army major in his early 30s who lived in Sein Pan Avenue in Naypyidaw," the source added, referring to a residential area that is home to many senior officials from the War Office. ([7 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

## **8 July 2010**

### **Where life begins at 14...**

Soe Lwin speaks about his experiences in prison. He says, "At the time I wasn't afraid of them...they asked me nothing at first. First they beat me, brutally, because I wasn't afraid of them. I thought I was too young, so I thought I wouldn't get put in prison... And so began what was to turn into six months of interrogation, a period when guards old enough to be his father would take turns at beating and interrogating him and his comrades, fellow teenagers...They beat me again and again, and I said no, I know nothing. Finally they kicked me in the ribs, breaking one of [them], and finally I passed out... They beat me till they got tired. My whole body was bruised... One of my friends died in the interrogation centre; an eighth grade student. He was just 13, one year younger than me. Min Zaw Oo was his name." Soe Lwin entered his adult years behind bars, seeing out his youth with the guidance of fellow prisoners of conscience. ([8 July 2010 DVB](#))

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

In July, atleast 138 political prisoners were suffering from poor health and at least 8 were denied medical treatment by the authorities. Phyo Wei Aung, detained in relation to the Water festival bombings in Rangoon, has contracted Hepatitis B, and authorities have yet to respond to his family's request to give him medical assistance. Additionally, he was tortured, put in solitary confinement and charged with murder; meanwhile, his family was denied entry to his court hearing by local authorities. NLD members Ko Zaw Min Tun and Ma Sander are also in bad condtion, as Zaw Min Tun has stomach problems and Ma Sandar has liver and heart problems. Other political prisoners suffering from poor health are labour activists Su Su New and Bo Bo Win Hlaing, monks Nyi Nyi San and Zaw Lat, 88 Generation member Mya Aye, ethnic leader General Say Htin, and student leader Di Nyein Lin.

**30 July 2010**

### **Worried about monk political prisoner health**

Venerable Sandardika, aka Nyi Nyi San, from Khayan township eastern district of Rangon, seriously needs medical health care. He was given 2 years imprisonment in Insein prison because he went to see Daw Aung San Su Kyi's trial in 2009. He is suffering from a hernia. ([30 July 2919 DVB](#))

**21 July**

### **Worried for Su Su Nwe's health condition**

Su Su Nwe, a labor activist, needs proper medical treatment in Kani prison, Sagaing Division because she is suffering from Malaria. She also suffered from a heart attack and gout. ([21 July 2010 RFA](#))

**16 July 2010**

### **88 Generation member's daughter worried about her father**

Wai Hninn Pwint Thone, daughter of 88 Generation member Mya Aye, was worried about her father's serious heart attack that was not taken care of by prison authorities. "He is not well but they haven't taken him to hospital. He only received blood pressure check, not anymore," she said. Mya Aye was given a 65 and a half years of imprisonment and transferred to Tuanggyi prison in Shan state. ([16 July 2010 Mizzima](#))

**15 July 2010**

### **'Prison is the Hell of Human Society'**

Win Htein, who has spent most of the past two decades behind bars, ended his latest period of imprisonment on July 15, when he was released two months after completing a 14-year sentence. The 69-year-old former army captain once served as a personal assistant to Tin Oo, the vice-chairman of the National League for Democracy (NLD), when he was commander-in-chief of the Burmese military under Ne Win. He also worked as an aide to NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi when she made organizing trips around Burma in 1988-89. He said, "I was imprisoned twice—for five years from 1989 to 1995 and then for 14 years and two months from 1996 until my recent release. I was held in Myingyan, Mandalay, Meikhtila and

Kathar prisons. I was released from Kathar this time. There were many hardships in prison. At first, the most difficult thing was the lack of food, which was really depressing. But after a while, I got used to having little to eat. I was not ill-treated during these past few years, except for occasionally being subjected to lectures. I'm not sure why. Perhaps the prison authorities were ordered not to." When asked to describe his life in prison in only one word, he said, "Well, to quote U Nai Nai, 'Prison is the hell of human society.'"

[\(24 July 2010 Irrawaddy\)](#)

## **15 July 2010**

### **Court bars Rangoon bomber's family**

The family of a Rangoon man charged with murder for the April water festival bombings was denied entry to his court hearing. Phyo Wei Aung's lawyer, Kyaw Ho, said that despite the family being given permission by the judge to attend the session, a township-level Burmese intelligence official, Soe Soe Thein, blocked entry. Kyaw Ho said he was also preparing to demand an official investigation into allegations that his client was physically and mentally tortured during interrogation. "[ Phyo Wei Aung] said he was forced to confess under physical and mental torture. He wanted to file a complaint on that and we will seek permission from the prison authorities. He will request that senior government officials open an investigation." [\(22 July 2010 DVB\)](#) [\(15 July 2010 DVB\)](#)

## **13 July 2010**

### **Murder charge for 'Rangoon bomber**

The man accused of being behind a series of grenade attacks in Rangoon in April this year has been charged with murder. Phyo Wei Aung's wife, Htay Htay, said that the 31-year-old was being kept in solitary confinement for 23 hours a day in Rangoon's notorious Insein prison. Nine people died and nearly 200 were injured by the bombings on 15 April, which targeted crowds celebrating the annual water festival. "He's being kept alone in the prison and allowed only one hour walking time," said Htay Htay. "He wants to talk with other people and play chinlone [Burmese ball sport]. His brother is making an official request to allow him the same privileges as other inmates in the prison. This is bad for [Phyo Wei Aung's] mental health. [\(13 July 2010 DVB\)](#)

## **9 July 2010**

### **Rangoon bomb suspect put in solitary confinement**

The man suspected by police to be behind the Ragoon bombings that killed nine has been placed in solitary confinement in Insein prison. Phyo Wei Aung's lawyer, Kyaw Ho, told *DVB* that his client has been barred from communicating with other inmates and is being denied his rights as a prisoner. "[Phyo Wei Aung] said that he has been in the prison for more than two months already but is still being denied the rights granted to other inmates, such as playing football or chinlone [ball sport]," said Kyaw Ho.

A Rangoon-based graphic designer and his son were arrested after taking photos of the aftermath of the bombing, and are still being held. ([DVB 09072010](#)) [\(13 July 2010 DVB\)](#)

## **6 July 2010**

### **Thingyan Bomb Suspect Charged**

A special court in Rangoon's Insein Prison will try Phyo Wai Aung, an engineer who was arrested for his alleged involvement in a spate of bombings at the Thingyan water festival in Rangoon in April. Defending lawyer Kyaw Hoe said his client had been charged with different offenses under the Unlawful Association Act, the Immigration Act, the Demolition Act and other criminal acts although neither he nor his family had been notified. He said the first court hearing for Phyo Wai Aung will be held on July 14. Kyaw Hoe added that it was not the first time that he was unaware of the up-to-date situation concerning his client. He said when Phyo Wai Aung was first arrested it was only for his alleged involvement in the bomb explosions. He said he did not know that his client had been charged under the Unlawful Association Act until June 28. ([6 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

## **4 July 2010**

### **Venerable Oakkantha hospitalized**

Venerable Oakkantha, aka Zaw Latt, was hospitalized because he is suffering from kidney disease. The monk was arrested on 7 January 2010 because he painted words on the walls to boycott the 2010 election. ([4 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **3 July 2010**

### **NLD members didn't get medical treatment**

Tontae Township NLD organizing members Ko Zaw Min Tun and Ma Sander suffered from stomach disease, liver disease and heart attack but the prison authorities didn't give them medical treatment. They applied to get treatment but have not received a reply yet. ([3 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#)) ([4 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **1 July 2010**

### **Ethnic leader's health getting serious**

"74 years old General Say Htin, patron of SSA (Shan State Army ( North) ) who was given to 106 years imprisonment, is suffered from eyes' disease and other diseases. He got glaucoma that's because of not getting proper medical treatment for cataract on the right time." On 6 November 2008, doctor Daw Htay Htay Yi came to Hkanti prison for a medical check, as he needed to get his medical checkup once in six months but he has not got until now. General Say Htin was arrested with other 8 Shan leaders for organizing of Shan Consultant group. He was accused charged with high treason and other charges and sentenced to 106 years imprisonment. ([1 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **1 July 2010**

### **Jailed student union leader treated for eye condition**

A political prisoner and leader of the 2007 generation All Burma Federation of Student Unions, Di Nyein Lin, who is suffering from an eye disorder, is receiving medical treatment at Monywa Prison in Sagaing Division, a family member has said. Di Nyein Lin was transferred from Khantee prison to Monywa Prison on Monday and has been receiving

medical treatment for his eye disease at a private eye clinic since Wednesday, aunt Ni Lar Min told Mizzima. “The clinic gave him medicine and fitted him for glasses for him, yesterday,” she said. At the direction of the Prisons Department, Di Nyein Lin was transferred to receive medical treatment but it was unknown to which prison he will be sent afterward. The student union leader also suffered kidney disease while in Khantee prison for which he had received medical treatment at a private clinic, but he needed X-rays for a complete examination, she said. This led to his family seeking permission for the transfer to Monywa. Similarly, two other political prisoners have been suffering ill health under detention. Di Nyein Lin’s father, 88 Generation Students’ leader Zaw Zaw Min, experienced stomach and liver problems and received treatment at Taunggoo prison hospital in Pegu (Bago) Division on May 12 but he had since recovered, his wife Htay Htay Win told Mizzima. Shan State Army (North) General Say Htin, also at Khantee prison, had an unspecified eye disorder and needed urgent medical attention, according to family members who met him with permission of prison authorities. ([1 July 2010 Mizzima](#))

## **Prisoners Released**

In total, 4 political prisoners were released in July. One released prisoner, U Win Htein, is a former army captain and former personal aide to Aung San Suu Kyi. He vows to continue his struggle against the military rule in Burma. AAPP obtained information that Kyaw Kyaw Soe (aka Talky), 88 generation member, and Karen National Union member Than Myat Swe, were also released this month.

### **17 July 2010**

#### **Win Htein Vows to Keep Up Struggle**

A pro-democracy advocate freed after 14 years in prison says he will help political prisoners as he continues his struggle against the military rule in Burma. Win Htein, 68, told reporters that he would participate in social activities arranged by the National League for Democracy (NLD), especially to help political prisoners and their families. “I have no faith in the elections, and I was happy that the NLD had decided not to re-register,” said Win Htein. “I will continue to work for democracy and for the country. Democracy will one day prosper in the country. If I don't see democracy in my lifetime, I will be happy if the next generation can enjoy democracy,” he said. (See section on ‘Treatment of prisoners and their families’ for more information on his experiences in prison). ([30 July 2010 DVB](#)) ([16 July 2010 RFA](#)) ([17 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

### **16 July 2010**

#### **KNU( Karen National Union)'s member released**

Than Myat Swe, member of Karen National Union, was released from Thatyet prison today. He was arrested on 4 March 1984. He was given a death penalty and life imprisonment. ([16 July 2010 AAPP](#)) ([21 July 2010 DVB](#))

**15 July 2010**

**Junta releases former Suu Kyi aide after 14-year prison term**

A former army captain and personal aide to Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi was released today from Katha prison in Sagaing Division in northwestern Burma after spending more than 14 years in prison, according to a political prisoner aid group in exile. Burma's ruling military junta arrested Win Htein, now 68, in May 1996, charged him with sending "fabricated and concocted news" to foreign media and handed him the 14-years jail term. "Yes, he has been released. His release date is even overdue", Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners told Mizzima. Win Htein's wife refused to answer questions on his release as she was unaware of any further details. His term was almost continuous. When the regime pardoned 9,002 prisoners in a special amnesty on September 23, 2008, he was released briefly. He gave a radio interview to Norway-based Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) and was rearrested 17 hours later by the regime and would spend nearly two more years in prison. ([15 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))([15 July 2010 Mizzima](#))([15 July 2010 BBC](#))([15 July 2010 RFA](#))([15 July 2010 DVB](#))

**3 July 2010**

**Member of 88 Generation released**

Kyaw Soe, member of 88 Generation Group, was released from Thayet Prison today. He was arrested on 14 December 2007. He was given 3 years imprisonment and transferred to Thayet prison. ([3 July 2010 AAPP](#))

**National League for Democracy**

There are at least 410 members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) that are currently detained. This presents a decrease compared to the 411 that were detained in June. July brought one NLD member released; meanwhile, two NLD members were beaten by prison authorities in Putao prison. NLD organizing members Ko Zaw Min Tun and Ma Sander have serious health problems, but authorities have not given them medical treatment (see section on 'Treatment of prisoners and their families' for more information). Following the junta's confirmation that national elections will take place in 2010 and rumors of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release in November, NLD leaders discussed and decided to collaborate with the International Labor Organization (ILO) for Labor Rights. Throughout the month of July, executive members of the NLD continued to tour Burma to meet with regional party members and visit families of iconic imprisoned activists. The NLD also continued to protest against the use of a bamboo hat image it claims ownership of by a splinter group running for elections this year.

**30 July 2010**

**NLD executive members met NLD members of Bago division**

The National League for Democracy (NLD) executive members, U Nyunt Wai, U Soe Win and U Nyan Win, met with Bago division's NLD members in Bago town. The meeting was held at the house of U Myat Hla, member of parliament, and around 70 members attended. ([30 July DVB](#)) ([22 July 2010 DVB](#))

**29 July 2010**

**The International Labor Organization (ILO) collaborates with NLD**

ILO officer, Setve Marchel, said they will collaborate with the NLD to eliminate forced labor, child soldiers and forced relocation, during the meeting with NLD leaders, U Tin Oo, U Win Tin, U Than Tun, U Nyunt Wai and U Nyan Win. ([29 July 2010 RFA](#)) ([DVB 29072010](#))

**25 July 2010**

**U Win Tin urges the people to boycott election**

U Win Tin said that the people should boycott the election to avoid the country's coming disaster resulting because of the 2008 constitution. ([25 July 2010 RFA](#))

**22 July 2010**

**Demanded to release all members of parliament**

Some people who are trying to be elected as a Member of Parliament urged for the release all members of parliament who are currently in prisons, before the election. U Nyan Win, spoke person of the NLD, said all members of parliament should be release as soon as possible, in addition to the release of all political prisoners, because there shouldn't be any political prisoners if they hold the election. ([22 July 2010 DVB](#))

**19 July 2010**

**Martyr's day held at U Tin Oo House**

Politicians, old colleagues of independence leader General Aung San, pro-democracy groups and youth attended the celebration of the 63rd Martyr's day, which was held at the house of U Tin Oo, where free talking about Martyr's day was allowed. ([19 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#)) ([19 July 2010 DVB](#))

**18 July 2010**

**Giving assistance to political prisoners' families for pre- Martyr's day**

The National League for Democracy (NLD) gave financial assistance of 6 USD to each of 25 families of political prisoners for pre-Martyr's day in Hlaing Tharyar township, Rangon. ([18 July 2010 DVB](#))

**16 July 2010**

**NLD leaders visited families of 88 generation members**

The NLD group led by vice chairman U Tin Oo and CEC member U Win Tin visited families of 10 imprisoned members of the 88 Generation group. They visited the families of Ko Jimmy, Ma Nilar Thein, Ma Mar Mar Oo, Ko Aung Naing, Nay Phone Latt, Ko Sithu Maung, U Peter, Ko Hla Myo Naung, Ma Noble Aye and U Than Tin. ([16 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **16 July 2010**

### **Court extends prison sentence of NLD Liberated Area member**

A Rangoon court has extended the detention period for a National League for Democracy (Liberated Area – Malaysia Branch) member, Than Myint Aung, by 10 years. He is already serving a five-year sentence in Insein prison for violating the Electronics Act, according to a family friend. Rangoon West District Court judge Nu Nu Khin, in Kyauktada Township, sentenced to the 10-year term for violating the Electronics Act, section 33 (a) yesterday. He was already serving a combined five-year term ordered by Thingangyun Township Court for illegally entering the country and alleged contact with an illegal group. ([16 July 2010 Mizzima](#))

## **13 July 2010**

### **NLD leaders visit political prisoners' families**

The NLD group led by U Tin Oo and U Win Tin visited the families of political prisoners. They visited families of Pannate Htun, Kyi Thar Tun, Aye Thidar, Tun Tun Naing, Maung Maung Myint, U Thien Lwin Oo and U Ye Myint in North Dagon Township. Then, they visited the families of Dr Nay Win, Pyo Pyo Aung, Ko Zaw Zaw Aung, Ko De Nyein Lin, Ye Myat Hein and Tun Tun Naing in Insein Township. ([DVB 13072010](#)) ([RFA 06072010](#)) ([RFA 02072010](#)) ([DVB 02072010](#))

## **12 July 2010**

### **Second secretary, Ruth Bradley-Jones met with U Tin Oo**

Ruth Bradley-Jones, second secretary, met with NLD vice chairman U Tin Oo and discussed NLD's stand and situation. ([12 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **7 July 2010**

### **NLD Members Not Allowed Overnight in Naypyidaw**

Two representatives of the National League for Democracy (NLD) were not allowed to stay overnight in government hotels in Naypyidaw and were forced by Burmese police to leave the new capital, according to NLD sources. The NLD members, Khin Htay Kywe and May Win Myint, traveled to Naypyidaw on Monday to submit a letter of complaint to the Union Election Commission that protested the use of the traditional “bamboo hat,” which is displayed prominently on the NLD logo, by the breakaway National Democratic Front (NDF) on its logo. The two NLD representatives planned to sleep one night in Naypyidaw and return to Rangoon the following day. They were told by Burmese officials from the municipal department that they would not be allowed to stay overnight at government hotels in Naypyidaw, but could stay outside the capital. They were told that only government staff is allowed to stay in the government hotels in Naypyidaw, according to Win Tin, a leading member of the NLD. ([7 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

**7 July 2010**

**NLD transfers 2.55m Kyats for political prisoners**

The National League for Democracy party headquarters has transferred about 2.55 million Kyats to its state and division branches yesterday for distribution to families of 605 political prisoners. The funds donated by ordinary citizens were being distributed under the party's social aid programme for poor family members of some political prisoners, among the more than 2,100 serving sentences across the country, party vice-chairman and leader of the programme, Tin Oo, said. "There are more than 200 such families across the Burmese states and divisions and the rest are families in Rangoon Division," he said. "The money will be distributed to appropriate prisoners [via their families] from their townships of origin." Recipients would also comprise human rights activists, those who took part in protests over fuel-price increases in 2007, political activists, students and young people, without them necessarily being affiliated with the NLD, Tin Oo said. NLD central executive committee member Win Tin added that, "Previously headquarters managed this work but it has now been delegated to party branches in the states and divisions ... We give this money not only to our party members but to other prisoners as well." "In the new programme, the fund-raising and distribution of money will be carried out by each branch office," he said. ([7 July 2010 Mizzima](#))

**5 July 2010**

**NLD Delivers Complaint Letter About NDF Use of Kha Mauk**

The National League for Democracy (NLD) hand-delivered a letter of complaint to Burma's Union Election Commission (EC) office in Naypyidaw in an attempt to prevent the breakaway National Democratic Force (NDF) party from using the kha mauk, a traditional Burmese farmer's hat, in its logo. Nyan Win, the NLD spokesman, told The Irrawaddy on Tuesday, "We have evidence that the kha mauk is the symbol of the NLD, which won the 1990 election. It is misleading and against the law for another party to use an imitation of our symbol." Dr. Than Nyein, an NDF leader and former executive member of the NLD, told The Irrawaddy on Tuesday that the EC will decide whether the NDF can use the symbol, adding that Khin Maung Shwe, also an NDF leader and former executive member of the NLD, was the person who chose the kha mauk as a symbol for the NLD in the 1990 election. ([6 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

**5 July 2010**

**Suu Kyi's party takes to the country**

Celebrated elders of the now-defunct National League for Democracy (NLD) are touring Burma to meet with regional party members and visit families of iconic imprisoned activists. Two of the group's senior members, Win Tin and Tin Oo, who have both spent lengthy periods in detention, last week met with the families of Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi. The two are sentenced to 65 years in prison each for their role in the September 2007 monk-led uprising. "[Tin Oo said] he had wanted to visit us since he was released from detention but didn't get a chance," said Min Ko Naing's aunt. "We were happy – the Burmese [have a tradition of] supporting and helping one another." Min Ko Naing, one of Burma's most renowned political activists, is being held in Keng Tung prison in northeastern Shan state, where weather conditions can be harsh. "He gets hypertension when he is stressed," said the

aunt. “[In a letter] a while ago, he said it was getting cold there.”The brother of Ko Ko Gyi, Aung Tun, said that his situation was similar in Mai Sat prison in Shan state, close to the border with China: “Now it is rainy season so it’s not easy to visit him. It’s really cold there – the temperature reaches to about two degrees Celsius in the winter.”Win Tin and Tin Oo, who led a 15-member delegation, also met with the family of imprisoned comedian, Zarganar, who is serving a 35-year sentence. The current ‘tour’ to more remote areas of Burma appears to be the first step in connecting with its countrywide support base after years of centralised power in Rangoon.“[We were told] that it’s not true that the NLD doesn’t exist anymore,” said Than Ngwe, NLD member in Shan state’s Taunggyi, who met with several Central Executive Committee (CEC) members. “However, instead of just focusing on social work, we will mix social work and politics.” ([5 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **2 July 2010**

### **NLD CEC met Moe Nyin NLD township members**

NLD CEC members, U Han Thar Myint and Aung Shin( Monyuor), met with Kachin state NLD members at U Phe Sein's house, who is a Moe Nyin township member. ([2 July 2010 DVB](#)) ([2 July 3010 DVB](#))

## **1 July 2010**

### **Suu Kyi’s party berates new opposition**

Burma’s now-defunct National League for Democracy (NLD) party is to officially protest against the use of an image it claims ownership of by a splinter group running for elections this year. The symbol of a bamboo hat, traditionally worn by farmers, became iconic among the Burmese pro-democracy movement after becoming the National League for Democracy’s campaign symbol during the 1990 elections. The deputy chair of the NLD, Tin Oo, said that the NDF has “no connection” to the party and should use images distinct from those used by the NLD. It will send an official letter of complaint to NDF leaders today. Tin Oo said that the seal “is very much impersonating ours... [the NDF] just added two stars to the top of the image,” adding that because the NLD exists as an organisation, whether or not a political party, then the symbol should not be mimicked. “[Today] we will prepare a formal complaint letter and make a strong objection at the Election Commission. Impersonating is not an ethical thing,” he said. ([1 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **1 July 2010**

### **NLD heads, youth wing visit student leaders’ families**

Two top leaders of the National League for Democracy and party youth-wing members visited the families of detained 88 Generation Students’ leaders on Tuesday to offer support and encouragement. Party vice-chairman Tin Oo, central executive committee member Win Tin and nine members of the NLD’s youth wing visited the families of 88 Generation Students Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi and Mar Ki in the morning. The student leaders are serving 65-year prison sentences. “They [the students’ leaders] have made great sacrifices in the interest of democracy so we are visiting their family members to encourage them and express our support,” Tin Oo told Mizzima. The families’ members warmly welcomed the NLD leaders and young people to the homes of Min Ko Naing and Mar Ki in Thingangyun

Township and Ko Ko Gyi's home in South Okkalapa Township, both towns in eastern Rangoon. Aung Aung Tun, a brother of Ko Ko Gyi, told Mizzima: "We are happy because of their visit to encourage us. We thank them. They asked me about my brother's health condition and whether we can meet him often or not because the prison where he is detained is very far away." ([1 July 2010 Mizzima](#))

## **88 Generation Students**

There are at least 39 members of the 88 Generation Students group currently in detention. Kyaw Soe, member of 88 Generation group, was released from Thayet Prison (see section on 'Prisoners released' for more information). This month, the All Arakan Students' & Youths' Congress demanded the release of the 88 Generation group members from prison. Also, Wai Hninn Pwint Thone, daughter of 88 Generation member Mya Aye, expressed worries of her father's serious heart attack (see section on 'Treatment of prisoners and their families' for more information).

**10 July 2010**

### **Demanded release of 88 generation group and all political prisoners**

AASYC(All Arakan Students' & Youths' Congress) demanded to military regime to release 88 Generation group and all political prisoners right away. ([10 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **Ethnic Nationalities**

There are at least 207 members of ethnic nationalities currently held in prison. Than Myat Swe, member of the Karen National Union, was released this month, (see section on 'Prisoners released' for more information). In July, a Mon youth group gave an offering to monks for two Mon political prisoners, Naing Yakha and Min Myo Thwe. Ethnic leader, General Say Htin, continued to suffer from eye disease and other diseases this month (see section on 'Treatment of prisoners and their families' for more information).

**17 July 2010**

### **Offering for two Mon political prisoners**

A Mon youth group gave an offering to monks for two Mon political prisoners, Naing Yakha and Min Myo Thwe, who are currently held in Insein prison and Tharrawaddy prison. They have been in prison for 7 years and received the death penalty sentence, but commuted to life sentence for high treason. ([17 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **Monks**

There are at least 257 monks currently held in prison. In July, AAPP received information that One monk was arrested and two monks are in very bad health. Meanwhile, Ashion Pyinya Sara, the Arakanese historian monk arrested this month, is refusing to eat. The monks in very poor condition are Sandardika, aka Nyi Nyi San, who seriously needs medical care, and Zaw Latt, who is suffering from kidney disease (see section on 'Treatment of

prisoners and their families' for more information). At the beginning of the month, Burma has clamped down on monks travel by refusing to extend nearly-expired passports and implementing restrictions on applications for new ones.

## **27 July 2010**

### **Arrested Monk Refuses to Eat**

Ashion Pyinya Sara, an Arakanese historian monk who was arrested by military authorities on allegations of impropriety, has refused to eat since 27 July, when authorities detained him in Sittwe, the capital of Arakan State, reported a town elder. He said, "I heard through an inside police source that Ashion Pyinya Sara has refused to take food since he was arrested by authorities. He is now in serious condition due to not eating for a long time." 57-year-old Ashion Pyinya Sara is being detained at Sittwe No. 1 police station for interrogation, without any formal remand from the court. ([2 August 2010 Narinjara](#))

## **27 July 2010**

### **Prominent Historian Monk Arrested in Sittwe**

Burmese military authorities on Tuesday arrested prominent Arakanese historian monk Ramar Waddy U Pyinya Sara in Sittwe, the capital of Arakan State, on accusations that he abused Buddhist religious principles, said another monk from Sittwe. Speaking to Narinjara over the phone, the monk who wished to remain anonymous said, "A combined force of police and officials from the religious department arrested him at his monastery in Sittwe on the morning of Tuesday on accusations of breaking religious principles." U Pyinya Sara is a well known Arakanese historian as well as a leading abbot of the Buddha Vihara Mahamuni orphanage, where more than 100 orphans live and receive an education. ([28 July 2010 Narinjara](#)) ([29 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **1 July 2010**

### **Burma Clamps Down on Travelling Monks**

Suspension of passports for monks in Burma has begun amid suggestions that the Burmese government is attempting to block the influential community from going abroad in the run-up to elections. Monks have also complained that the government's passport issuing board in Rangoon is also refusing to extend nearly-expired passports and implementing restrictions on applications for new ones. ([1 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **Cyclone Nargis Volunteers**

There are currently at least 20 Cyclone Nargis volunteers currently held in prison.

Nan Nyunt Swe passed away this month; and his son, Zarganar, a prominent activist in jail due to his role in supporting Cyclone Nargis victims, and was not able to attend the funeral of his father.

**17 July 2010**

### **Zarganar Remains Behind Bars During Father's Funeral**

Zarganar, a popular comedian who is serving a 35-year prison sentence for his high-profile role in efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to victims of Cyclone Nargis, had no hope of being allowed to attend the funeral of his father, who died on Wednesday, according to relatives. It is the second time since his arrest on June 4, 2008, that Zarganar has missed the funeral of a parent. His father, well-known writer Nan Nyunt Swe, appealed unsuccessfully to the Burmese regime to temporarily release his son when his wife, Yuwadee Kyi Oo, died suddenly last March. ([17 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

**15 July 2010**

### **Nan Nyunt Swe Dies**

Nan Nyunt Swe, aka Aung Thein, a well-known Burmese writer and the father of imprisoned comedian Zarganar, passed away in Rangoon on Wednesday at the age of 87. Speaking to *The Irrawaddy* on Thursday, Zarganar's sister-in-law Ma Nyein said that before Nan Nyunt Swe died, he left a letter for his son Zarganar. She could not comment on the details of the letter, saying that it had not yet been opened. ([15 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))([15 July 2010 Mizzima](#))

## **Journalists, Bloggers and Writers**

There are currently at least 39 media activists held in prison, which includes journalists, bloggers and writers. Poet and artist Saw Wai was interviewed this month about his experiences in prison as a political writer.

**July 2010**

### **Flying a Flag of Truth**

Poet and artist Saw Wai was interviewed this month. He was released from prison in May after spending more than two years behind bars for publishing a poem in "The Love Journal" that contained the hidden words: "Power-hungry, insane Gen Than Shwe." When asked if he was able to read and write while you were in prison, he said, " Yes, I got a chance to read and write. Normally, political prisoners like us are denied this right. But as soon as I was put in prison, I started demanding to be allowed to read and write. And I told the prison authorities that I wanted to open a library. I was allowed to do that, and I set up a library with about 1,000 books in Insein Prison hospital. When I was transferred to Yamethin Prison, I made the same demand. The prison authorities allowed me to set up a library with about 1,000 books there. We had more readers in Insein Prison than Yamethin Prison. So I had to persuade my fellow prisoners to read. After 18 months, more prisoners were reading books. In Yamethin Prison, there are about 400 political prisoners and about 120 are regular readers. That's one of the things I did in prison." He also said, "Political prisoners around me were allowed to read and write. When I was in Insein Prison, we were allowed to read, but not everything. If we wanted to write, we had to ask for permission from prison authorities and then they gave us some paper and pens." ([July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

## **Women**

There are at least 174 women currently held in prison.

In July, a female political prisoner, Htet Htet Oo Wei, was beaten up by prison guards when she tried to stop them from beating up two other inmates (see section on 'Torture' for more information).

## **Human Rights Defenders & Promoters Network**

There are at least 31 members of the Human Rights Defenders & Promoters Network currently held in prison. There is no news to report in July.

## **Labour Activists**

There are currently 36 labor activists held in prison. Su Su Nwe, another labor activist, needs proper medical treatment in Kani Prison (see section on 'Treatment of prisoners and their families' for more information).

## **Students**

There are currently at least 277 students held in prison. The April bombings in Rangoon led Burmese authorities to crackdown on student groups. University students in western Burma are being monitored and investigated after recent protests in early July. Since 21 July, student leader Ko Ni Min Aung has been missing, since Burmese military intelligence raided the hotel he was staying at in Rangoon. Additionally, student leader Di Nyein Lin is receiving medical treatment for eye disease this month (see section on 'Treatment of prisoners and their families' for more information).

### **28 July 2010**

#### **Student Leader Missing After Hotel Raid**

Ko Ni Min Aung, a student leader from Sittwe University, has been missing since 21 July when Burmese military intelligence raided the hotel he was staying at in Rangoon's Hlaing Township, said a friend of his. "He has been missing since then. We are looking for him but we have not yet received any information on the whereabouts of Ko Ni Min Aung. So we are worried about him," he said. Ko Ni Min Aung was wanted by authorities for his role in leading several student protests in Sittwe against the government in the past few years. "He was staying at a hotel in Hlaing Township in Rangoon. On the day of 21 July, three plainclothes intelligence officers and a group of police raided the hotel, but he managed to escape from arrest at the time because he was not at the hotel," the source said. Ko Ni Min Aung was once arrested by police in Sittwe when he led student protests against the increase in school bus fares in 2008, but he was later released after interrogation. ([28 July 2010 Narinjara](#))

## **8 July 2010**

### **University students fear surveillance**

Burma's technology minister has visited a university in western Burma where around 400 students recently ended a protest against poor transport facilities, prompting participants to question whether they are now being monitored. U Thaung met with staff yesterday at the Government Technological College in Sittwe, Arakan state, but details of what was discussed remain unclear. Students were told not to leave the campus until after 4pm. The student told *DVB* that it was unusual to hold people at the university throughout the day. He said that authorities had been investigating the students since they marched the 12 miles from the university to downtown Sittwe on 5 July. "They were collecting information on those who led the protest and details of where they live," he said. ([8 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **Lawyers**

There are currently at least 12 detained in prison. The Burmese junta has also imposed tighter restrictions on meetings between Aung San Suu Kyi and her lawyers.

## **16 July 2010**

### **Authorities impose tighter controls on lawyers visiting Suu Kyi**

The Burmese junta has imposed tighter restrictions on meetings between opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and her lawyers, one of which will in effect extend to a week the lag between a request to consult her and their actual visit to her house in Rangoon. Suu Kyi's lawyers had needed to submit an application to Special Branch police in Bahan Township for permission to meet their client, the National League for Democracy leader. But from 10 July, police told them to submit a request letter to Suu Kyi seeking her consent ahead of any future meetings with her, on top of the usual application. This new directive meant it would take up to a week, from a previous waiting time of three days, to meet their client, party spokesman and lawyer Nyan Win said. The lawyers are representing Suu Kyi in a special appeal against her current sentence, and two other cases are lawsuits against the junta. ([16 July 2010 Mizzima](#))

## **Individual Activists**

There are currently at least 624 detained in prison. In the month of July, a 14-year-old boy in Rangoon was arrested with banned books. The boy remains in detention in an undisclosed location.

## **20 July 2010**

### **Boy Arrested With Banned Books**

Police arrested a 14-year-old boy in Rangoon on Monday after he was caught in possession of books written by Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and her colleague, Win Tin, a National League for Democracy executive member. A Rangoon resident who requested anonymity said the boy was caught in a bus station in South Okkalapa township in Rangoon

with six copies of Suu Kyi's famous "*Freedom From Fear*" and five copies of Win Tin's recently-released "*What's that? Human hell?*" The boy remains in detention in an undisclosed location, according to Bo Kyi, the joint-secretary of the Association of Assistance of Political Prisoners in Burma (AAPP), a Thailand-based advocacy group for Burma's political prisoners. "We still don't know if the boy has been freed. But, we are concerned that he might be tortured for information on how he obtained the books." ([20 July 2010 DVB](#)) ([20 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

## **Daw Aung San Suu Kyi**

In the month of July, there were rumors that Daw Aung San Su Kyi will be released in November, even though the authorities have put more restrictions on visits with her lawyer, U Nyan Win (see section of 'Lawyers' for more details). Her lawyer has passed on that she states that the election is absolutely unlikely to be free and fair, because the election date has not been set. A former CIA trained Burmese intelligence officer suggested that General Than Shwe will only release Aung San Suu Kyi and some political prisoners as a last tactic before the election if international pressure continues. In mid July, authorities didn't allow her to attend Martyrs' Day.

### **29 July 2010**

#### **Election 'Absolutely Unlikely' to be Fair: Suu Kyi**

Detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi said that the Burmese election is "absolutely unlikely" to be free and fair because the election date has not been set and political parties will not have enough time to campaign, according to a spokesperson who met with her on Wednesday. Nyan Win, who was a senior official in the disbanded National League for Democracy (NLD), met with Suu Kyi on Tuesday. He told The Irrawaddy that she is in good health, and that they also discussed the appeal of the 18-month extension of her house arrest and renovation work that was needed on her home. ([Irrawaddy 29072010](#))

### **26 July 2010**

#### **Than Shwe May Free Suu Kyi Before Election: Former Spy**

A former CIA-trained Burmese intelligence officer suggests that Burmese junta supremo Snr-Gen Than Shwe will only release pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and some political prisoners as a last tactic before the election if he faces strong international pressure. "If the US and other countries exert strong pressure, he [Than Shwe] may change in mind and release some political prisoners," wrote Maj Aung Lynn Htut, a former Charge d'Affairs at the Burmese embassy in Washington D.C. "He often told us [military officials] that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is the last card he can play in Burmese politics," he said, adding that if the international community fails to exert more pressure, Than Shwe will hold the election without Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy (NLD). He said Than Shwe is worried about calls by democracy activists for him to be tried by the International Criminal Court and reportedly consulted his attorney general on the matter. ([26 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

## **16 July 2010**

### **Parties invited for Martyrs' Day, Aung San's daughter snubbed**

The military regime invited seven persons from each political party in Rangoon to the 63<sup>rd</sup> Martyrs' Day ceremony on Monday, which commemorates the deaths of nine independence heroes including Aung San, but has failed to invite his daughter, opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, a member of her National League for Democracy party said yesterday. The Junta's electoral watchdog, the Union Election Commission (UEC), invited at least 20 parties from Rangoon Division whose registration it had approved to a meeting on Wednesday night and presented invitations to seven members from each party to attend the ceremony at the Matyrs' Mausoleum near Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon. NLD party central executive committee member, Ohn Kyaning, and Suu Kyi's lawyer, Kyi Win, told Mizzima the commission had failed to invite Suu Kyi to the ceremony. "The executive order issued by [junta leader] Senior General Than Shwe, which commuted her prison term by half, says the prison term was reduced as she is the daughter of national leader Bogyoke Aung San," Ohn Kyaing said, using the title of "General" for Burma's independence leader. "On this Martyrs' Day, she too should be invited to give her the chance of paying homage to her fallen father. It's unfair." ([16 July 2010 Mizzima](#))

## **2 July 2010**

### **Aung San Suu Kyi receives award**

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received an award by Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats-CALD as a private honorable member in Markirtte city, Philippines. ([Irrawaddy 02 July 2010](#))

## **Key International Developments**

This month, the US renewed economic sanctions on Burma, which bans US companies from having ties with the military junta. A group of 32 US senators have also urged the Obama administration to support a UN investigation into war crimes in Burma. At the ASEAN meeting, in the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi, Southeast Asian foreign ministers urged Burma's military-run government to hold free and fair elections—a rare stand by the cautious group often accused of overlooking rights abuses in member nations. Meanwhile, the US, EU and Japan played a part as the region's key dialogue partners, and encouraged countries to put pressure on Burma. In the month of July, Gen Than Shwe visited India. Both protesters and the international community stepped up pressure for free and fair elections. Even though pressure on the Burmese military regime resulted from the ASEAN meeting and Gen Than Shwe's visit to India, it fell short of freeing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the rest of the political prisoners in Burma.

## **31 July 2010**

### **US Senators Want UN Investigation of Burma**

A group of 32 US senators is urging the Obama administration to support a United Nations investigation into possible war crimes in Burma. The republican and democratic senators said, in a letter sent on Friday to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, that the creation of such a UN commission would help convince Burma "that we are serious about our commitment to

democracy, human rights and the rule of law” in the country. Burma has been accused of using child soldiers, destroying minority villages and using rape as a weapon of war. ([31 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

### **30 July 2010**

#### **Burma Campaign urges Cameron to press India on Burmese issues**

Burma Campaign UK has called on British Prime Minister David Cameron and Foreign Secretary William Hague to raise Burmese issues in meetings with their Indian counterparts during their three-day visit to India, according to the rights group. Among those travelling with Cameron are finance minister George Osborne, Business Secretary Vince Cable and senior British business leaders, who arrived in India on Tuesday as the Burmese junta's entourage of more than 80 ministers and their wives led by Senior General Than Swe concluded its five-day tour of the country. Zoya Phan, international co-ordinator at Burma Campaign UK, told Mizzima, “We have asked the British Prime Minister David Cameron and Foreign Secretary William Hague to raise Burma issues with the Indian Government to urge ... [it] to promote human rights and democracy in Burma.” ([30 July 2010 Mizzima 30072010](#))

### **30 July 2010**

#### **Burma parties wary of US sanctions**

A number of political parties running in Burma's elections this year have said that extended US sanctions will do little to affect the polls. Observers, including US and EU governments, have decried the country's first elections in two decades as a sham aimed at cementing military rule in Burma. Among the signatories was Jim Webb, the Virginia senator who has made two trips to Burma in the past year where he met with opposition icon Aung San Suu Kyi. He, however, has said in the past that US sanctions on Burma were ineffective, a stance that drew the ire of members of Suu Kyi's party. ([30 July 2010 DVB](#))

### **29 July 2010**

#### **Iceandfire Theatre raises awareness and funds for political prisoners**

Iceandfire Theatre, based in London, raises support for the pro-democracy movement through their work to bring international awareness, and performance on the experiences of former Burmese political prisoners. Their financial support will be used to help AAPP provide food and medicine to political prisoners in Burmese prisons. ([29 July 2010 AAPP](#))

### **27 July 2010**

#### **Obama Renews Sanctions on Burma**

US President Barack Obama signed into law a Congressional resolution renewing economic sanctions against the Burmese military junta one more year, the White House said. ([28 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

**26 July 2010**

**Protests Dog Than Shwe in India**

Pro-democracy activists will follow Snr-Gen Than Shwe around in India, by distributing protest pamphlets wherever he goes, according to Burmese protesters in India. On Monday, a group of 300 Burmese held a demonstration at Jantar Mantar park in New Delhi near India's Congress building in protest against Than Shwe and the Indian government hosting his second visit to the country. Members of the Indian parliament who support the cause for democracy in Burma have also sent letters to both India's President and Prime Minister, denouncing their invitation of Than Shwe and calling for a review of Burma's controversial 2008 Constitution, the release of political prisoners and a free and fair election in Burma. ([26 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

**24 July 2010**

**US Wants India to Urge Burma to Change**

While Snr-Gen Than Shwe prepares for a five-day visit to India beginning on Sunday, the Obama administration is calling on New Delhi to tell the Burmese junta leader that it is time for Burma to change. Speaking to reporters at his daily news briefing on Friday, US State Department spokesperson Philip Crowley said, however, that the administration is not worried about the relationship between Burma and India. Meanwhile, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell also told reporters that the US is seeking New Delhi's help to achieve its goal of democracy and protection of human rights in Burma. "We've asked them to encourage interlocutors inside the country to embrace reform, to free political prisoners and to engage more responsibly with the international community," said Campbell, who met with Indian officials in New Delhi earlier this year to discuss India's "Look East" policy, which includes Burma. ([24 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

**24 July 2010**

**Than Shwe Visit Condemned in Letter to Indian PM**

Civil society groups based in India sent a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Friday to protest an upcoming state visit to the country by the head of Burma's ruling junta, Snr-Gen Than Shwe. The letter, submitted by the Burma Center Delhi (BCD) and signed by 38 civil society organizations and 71 individuals, says, "Than Shwe does not represent the people of Burma but only the military regime. India should not work freely with the military regime." Dr. Alana Golmei, the coordinator of BCD, said, "India is the world's largest democracy and also stands against violations of human rights. [This visit] is not acceptable because Than Shwe is one of the worst dictators in the world."

The letter also urged the Indian prime minister to push the Burmese regime to release detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners, begin a dialogue with ethnic leaders, review the 2008 Constitution, and ensure a free and fair election. ([24 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

**24 July 2010**

**Burma's FM Gets an 'Earful' from Asean and Partners**

Burma dominated this week's regional meetings in Vietnam, at least behind the scenes. The Burmese foreign minister was taken to task by all the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) ministers and several of the region's key dialogue partners—especially the US, EU and Japan. Southeast Asia's foreign ministers gave Nyan Win an “earful” from the opening dinner onwards, the Asean Secretary General Surin Pitsuwan told *The Irrawaddy* on the sidelines of the meeting. And the criticism got tougher as the week went on. “We were all nine in agreement, the elections should be free, fair and inclusive, and that the political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi should be released and allowed to participate in the electoral process,” Malaysia's foreign minister, Anifah Aman, told the *Irrawaddy*. ([24 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#)) ([20 July 2010 DVB](#))

**22 July 2010**

**US Senate Renews Burma Sanctions Act**

The US Senate on Thursday extended the ban on imports from Burma by another year, a week after the House of Representatives passed the bill. Passed by a 99-1 vote, the bill, sponsored by a record 68 senators, bans US companies from having ties with the military junta. It now goes to the White House for President Barack Obama to sign into law. Saying renewed sanctions against the military regime in Burma is as timely and important as ever, Sen. Mitch McConnell said the bipartisan support reflects the view of more than two-thirds of the Senate that the Burmese junta should be denied the legitimacy it pursues through this year's sham elections. ([22 July 1020 Irrawaddy](#))

**22 July 2010**

**Suu Kyi 'can run if freed': Burma FM**

Aung San Suu Kyi will be free to run in elections this year once she is released from house arrest, Burma's foreign minister has reportedly said. Nyan Win is at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in Hanoi this week, where he has been the focus of criticism from Southeast Asia leaders over planned elections later this year. Burma's constitution does not bar Suu Kyi from competing in the polls, Nyan Win said. The comments appear to be at odds with recently unveiled election laws that bar former or serving prisoners and Burmese citizens who have been married to foreigners from running for office, as Suu Kyi falls into both categories. ([22 July 2010 DVB](#))

**21 July 2010**

**Asean Ministers Issue Mild Statement on Burma**

Foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) reportedly laid into their Burmese counterpart Nyan Win in Hanoi, signaling the bloc's frustration and embarrassment at the junta's election plans. However, the specifics of the criticism were not spelled out by Asean Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan. The criticism also failed to find its way into the mild official Asean statement issued after the ministerial meeting, which contained a single paragraph on Burma with no mention of Aung San Suu Kyi or the rest of the 2,200-plus political prisoners currently incarcerated inside the country. The expectation

is that more pressure will come once foreign ministers from the US, Australia and elsewhere join the meeting before the weekend. ([21 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

## **19 July 2010**

### **ASEAN credibility 'rests on Burma vote'**

ASEAN's credibility is at stake unless it defends freedom of expression and other rights ahead of elections planned in its military-ruled member Burma, Amnesty International said Sunday. Burma has said it will hold its first election in two decades this year, but has not yet announced a date. Critics say the poll is a sham designed to legitimise the junta's half-century grip on power. In a draft communiqué obtained by AFP, ASEAN's foreign ministers reiterate the bloc's call for free, fair and inclusive elections in Burma. But such calls do not go far enough to highlight rights at risk during the election period, Amnesty said. It said the ministers must unequivocally call for the immediate and unconditional release of all "prisoners of conscience". "Failure to address these urgent challenges will damage ASEAN's international credibility," Amnesty said. ([19 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **19 July 2010**

### **Asean Urges Burma to Hold Free, Fair Election**

Southeast Asian foreign ministers urged Burma's military-run government to hold free and fair elections—a rare stand by the cautious group often accused of overlooking rights abuses in member nations. Foreign ministers from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations began their annual meeting Tuesday in the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi to tackle a diverse agenda—from setting up a European-style economic community by 2015 to bolstering ties with the West and regional powerhouses China, Japan and India. But at a dinner on the eve of the conference, Burma took center stage as diplomats vented their concerns about planned elections, which the junta has said will be held this year, without giving a date. Many ministers told their counterpart from Rangoon that the junta should hold "free, fair and inclusive" elections. Such straight talk is unusual given Asean members' bedrock policy of not interfering in one another's domestic affairs. ([19 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

## **16 July 2010**

### **Canada asked to probe driver's disappearance**

Canadian mining giant Ivanhoe Mines should be investigated by the Canadian government over the mysterious disappearance of a driver who chauffeured a senior Ivanhoe employee to Aung San Suu Kyi's house in 2003. The call came from Khun Myin Tun, MP-elect and labour minister of the now-defunct National League for Democracy (NLD), who sent a letter to Ottawa yesterday. In it he says that "we are very concerned about Ko Thet Lwin", who hasn't been heard from since 2008. Ko Thet Lwin was sentenced to seven years and accused of 'kidnapping'. When approached by Burmese activists in Canada, Ivanhoe categorically denied that Ko Thet Lwin had ever worked for the company, despite the Burmese state-run New Light of Myanmar newspaper confirming in a 28 July 2004 edition that he did. According to the Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners-Burma (AAPP), Ko Thet Lwin was first sent to a labour camp in eastern Mon state before being transferred to the notorious Insein prison in Rangoon. He was last heard of in 2008, and his current whereabouts are not known. The Canadian Friends of Burma (CFOB) campaigning

group and AAPP suspect that he could have died during cyclone Nargis that year, as the cyclone battered the prison and panicked guards into opening fire on inmates, killing 36. ([16 July 2010 DVB](#))

## **16 July 2010**

### **Freedom of Association in Burma: Sunlight or False Dawn**

With elections scheduled for later this year, a fierce debate has emerged among those who see it as an opportunity to open up some democratic space in a military-ruled country, and those who view the process as a sham aimed at legitimizing continued military rule. A relatively light-handed reaction to a series of strikes in late 2009 and early 2010 has some thinking that with an election looming, the ruling junta does not want to be seen clamping down on public gatherings. According to Steve Marshall, the liaison officer for the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Burma, "The fact that the country is moving toward general elections and a parliamentary system of government is opening some windows of opportunity for positive change. It is important that these opportunities be recognized and constructively taken." ([16 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

## **16 July 2010**

### **Burma, North Korea Top Clinton's Agenda in Vietnam**

The growing relationship between Burma and North Korea will top the agenda of US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton next week when she will attend an Asean meeting in Vietnam. The issues of human rights violations by the Burmese military regime and North Korea's sinking of a South Korean navy ship will come up prominently during Clinton's bilateral meeting with Asean leaders and those from other Asian countries, said Kurt Campbell, the assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific affairs. "The secretary will not shy away from raising either, both in the multilateral context in the larger Asean session but also in a bilateral context. And she will have very specific words about the tragic sinking of the Cheonan and will talk about our concerns about a variety of issues, including the upcoming steps leading up to the [Burmese] elections, we think, later this year in Burma," he told reporters at a news briefing." ([16 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

## **15 July 2010**

### **US House Renews Sanctions against Burma**

The US House of Representative on Wednesday renewed sanctions on Burma for another year as the military junta continued to violate the human rights of its own people and has not moved towards the restoration of democracy. The "Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003," which imposed a ban on Burmese imports, was passed by the US House of Representatives by a voice vote. "The US Congress is sending a clear message to the junta. Sanctions will not be lifted until and unless there are real changes in Burma including the immediate and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners, and the establishment of a meaningful political dialogue," said Aung Din, a former political prisoner. ([15 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#)) ([15 July 2010 DVB](#))

**13 July 2010**

**Spaniard works to keep Burma high on EU agenda**

Ahead of the forthcoming elections in Burma, Raul Romeva i Rueda, a Spanish Member of the European Parliament, spoke to Mizzima in the Brussels seat of the European chamber. He is vice-president of the Greens/European Free Alliance Group, the fourth largest bloc in the European Parliament. In response to a question, he said, "I am not very positive that the forthcoming elections will change much in the country. To begin with, the constitutional framework over which the poll is to be held could not be more flawed. Does the junta expect us to buy its alleged commitment to reform if it keeps imprisoning anyone who dares to criticise its rulings? If the Burmese military is serious about opening up, it should first release all of the country's political prisoners; any discourse of political liberalisation falls sort of credibility otherwise." ([13 July 2010 Mizzima](#))

**12 July 2010**

**Thai PM to explain domestic crisis to Burma**

Thai prime minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said Friday he would pay his first official visit to Burma next month, ahead of rare elections in the military-run country. "Arrangements are being made for a one or two-day visit," Abhisit told reporters. Abhisit did not disclose who he would meet during the early August trip but said it would kick off a round of overseas engagements aimed at explaining the political situation in Thailand in the wake of deadly opposition protests. The Thai premier had planned to travel to Burma last July, but the visit was postponed because it would have coincided with the trial of democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi over an incident in which a US man swam to her lakeside home. Suu Kyi has been locked up for almost 15 of the past 20 years and the authorities used the case to extend her detention. "Instead of criticising each other, I have always supported the idea that we might undertake different tracks that lead to the same destination," he added. ([12 July 2010 DVB](#))

**3 July 2010**

**Clinton Criticizes Burma at Democracy Conference**

At a high-level conference on democracy, US Secretary Of State Clinton said on Saturday that intolerant governments across the globe are "slowly crushing" activist and advocacy groups that play an essential role in the development of democracy. On Burma, Clinton spoke out about activists and civil society groups that helped cyclone victims in 2008. Burmese activists also attended the conference. Zoya Phan, a Karen activist who also attended the conference, said she was disappointed that Khin Zaw Win did not speak about Burma's worsening human rights violations in ethnic regions, its flawed Constitution, lack of press freedom and more than 2,000 political prisoners. ([5 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

**July 2010**

**Erik Solheim: 'Junta is wary of Norway'**

Erik Solheim, Norway's minister for environment and international development, visited Burma last month where he met with government officials, civil society groups and National League for Democracy (NLD) members. He tells *DVB* that engagement with the ruling junta must be stepped up, as well as increasing dialogue with all political actors in the country. He

asked them to release Aung San Suu Kyi and political prisoners, and on such issues we do not agree. And when he asked about releasing Aung San Suu Kyi, their answer was that according to their definitions, there are no political prisoners in Burma, since those who are in prison have broken the law.

[\(July 2010 DVB\)](#)

## **Other News**

In July, the National Democratic Force, the new party formed by renegade members of detained opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's disbanded party, has received a permit to participate in Burma's first elections. The party has been told though, that four of its leaders must seek a pardon for past acts of treason before they will be allowed to run in the upcoming elections.

### **31 July 2010**

#### **NDF Leaders Told to Appeal Past Treason Charges**

Four leaders of the National Democratic Force (NDF), a party formed by former members of the recently disbanded National League for Democracy (NLD), have been told they must seek a pardon for past acts of treason before they will be allowed to run in this year's election. Thein Soe, the head of Burma's Election Commission (EC), informed the four at a meeting in Naypyidaw on Friday that if they want to run in the election, they will have to submit letters of appeal to the Burmese regime for attempting to form a parallel government in late 1990. The party's founder, Khin Maung Swe, and three other leading members—Tin Aung, Tha Saing and Sein Hla Oo—have all served long prison sentences on charges of treason for their role in efforts to form a government after winning a landslide victory in Burma's last election in 1990. The regime has never acknowledged the outcome of that election. The four men were all elected in 1990.

Dr Sein Win, the cousin of NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi, fled the country to avoid prosecution in connection with the case. He later went on to form the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, the Washington-based democratic opposition government in exile. [\(31 July 2010 Irrawaddy\)](#)

### **28 July 2010**

#### **Who Will Represent Shan State if not Us?**

Burma's Union Election Commission (EC) approved the registration of the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) on May 26. Irrawaddy reporter Ko Htwe interviewed the SNDP Chairman, Sai Aik Pao, about his party's activities and political objectives and the reason to contest the election. Born in Nam Kham in northern Shan State, Sai Aik Pao was the General Secretary of the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) led by Hkun Htun Oo, who is currently in Putao prison in Kachin State serving a 93-year prison term. He resigned from the SNLD about ten years ago. When asked about his party's position on political prisoners, he said, "I think the new government will grant a general amnesty to political prisoners after the election. We have to do this. Putting political prisoners in jails is wasting our work force. If these people are free, we can listen to their thoughts, and that can be useful. By working together, we can build friendship and trust between different ethnic nationalities." [\(28 July 2010 Irrawaddy\)](#)

**14 July 2010**

**'National Reconciliation is Essential'**

Dr. Than Nyein graduated from medical school in 1963 and worked as a civil servant until 1988, when he was forced to resign due to his involvement in the popular uprising of that year. He joined the National League for Democracy (NLD) in January 1989 and was elected as the member of parliament for Rangoon's Kyauktan Township the following year. He was arrested for the first time in 1997. In 2004, he was arrested again and incarcerated until September 2008. In May, he co-founded the National Democratic Force (NDF) after the the NLD was forcibly dissolved for refusing to take part in this year's election. He is now the chairman of the NDF, which registered on June 24 to compete in the election. The party's application was approved by the Election Commission (EC) on July 9. In a recent interview, when asked what the NDF's position is on political prisoners, he said, "Our demand for political prisoners is the same as before. We were also political prisoners. Our call for their immediate release is something we can never change. The authorities have pledged many times for the inclusiveness of the election, so we'd like to urge them to act accordingly as soon as possible so that all stakeholders will be able to participate in the election. The release of all political prisoners would indicate the credibility of the election to a certain extent. If it doesn't happen, once our party candidates have the chance to sit in the parliament after the election, our first proposal will be for their release and for amnesty." ([14 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

**10 July 2010**

**NLD Renegades Register for Elections**

A new party formed by renegade members of detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's disbanded party has received a permit to participate in Burma's first elections in two decades, state media reported Saturday. The National Democratic Force will join 37 other new political parties and five existing groups in contesting the elections later this year, the state-run *Myanma Ahlin* newspaper reported. ([10 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

**9 July 2010**

**Burma Gives NLD Splinter Party Permit to Participate in Election**

Burma was granted a permit to participate in upcoming elections to an opposition party that split from Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy. The state-run *New Light of Myanmar* newspaper said Saturday that the National Democratic Force will join 37 other new political parties and five existing groups in contesting elections later this year. The military government has not yet set a date for the polls. Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD will not participate in the elections. ([10 July 2010 VOA](#))

## Opinion Section

8 July 2010

### **Burma's Nuclear Ambitions Could Divert International Focus**

Rumors about a secret nuclear program in Burma have been circulating for years. They were so persistent it seemed likely there was something behind them, but there was no evidence to back the claims. Some individuals published exaggerated and unsubstantiated claims, which had the opposite effect they had intended, making observers more sceptical, believing the claims were politically motivated. However, in recent months there have been a series of reports from defectors claiming Burma does have nuclear ambitions. The latest, in a documentary made by the *Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB)*, and broadcast on *Al Jazeera*, have gained international attention. The reports even led American Senator Jim Webb to cancel a visit which he had planned to use as a launchpad for persuading the US to adopt a policy of appeasement towards the war criminals ruling Burma. Burma's generals are brutal, but they are not stupid. A nuclear program could be their ticket to relaxing international pressure for democratic reform and normalising international relations. The exact opposite of what so many have been hoping will come out of recent revelations. ([8 July 2010 Irrawaddy](#))

## Conclusion

In the month of July, poor treatment of political prisoners was a recurring problem. The military regime maintained its negligent policy towards political prisoners, by denying many political prisoners the necessary medical care. If prison authorities continue to deny doctor visits and medical treatment then the lives of the 138 sick political prisoners are at stake. Prisoners depend on visits from their families, to attain essential food and medicine, however, they are at times denied visits to see their family.

Executive members of the NLD continued to tour Burma to meet with regional party members and visit families of iconic imprisoned activists. Their visits to family members has provided financial support, so they can continue to bring food and medical supplies to those imprisoned. The NLD's continued efforts to visit the families of political prisoners is vital during these difficult times, and is showing of their continue existence even after the party was dissolved in May.

Alarming cases of torture were evident this month, Phyto Wei Aung, who was detained because of the Water festival bombings in Rangoon, is a prime example. Phyto Wai Aung, a construction worker associated with the Vigorous Burmese Student Warrior, was wrongly accused of involvement in the April 15 bombing. In previous months he was denied access to his lawyer. He was tortured, put in solitary confinement and charged with murder and was forced to confess under severe torture. His family was denied entry to his court hearing by local authorities. As for his health condition, he has contracted Hepatitis B, and authorities have yet to respond to his family's request to give him medical assistance. Many political prisoners in Burma have faced similar problems in the month of July, and the regime has not made changes to ameliorate the situation, despite the efforts of the international community.

The international community has stepped up the pressure on Burma during both the ASEAN meeting and Gen Than Shwe's visit to India. It is evident though, that the pressure has not been sufficient to ensure the release of political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi. It is necessary that the international community uses the elections as leverage to increase multilateral pressure on the Burmese government to overturn its strict policy on political prisoners. If pressure does not amount in the upcoming months, than the military regime will not feel the need to free political prisoners, especially Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.