



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

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Chronology for July 2013

Month in Review

July saw the release of 73 prisoners. While the release of political prisoners raises hope in the national and the former political prisoners community, these releases should be regarded with caution. This month has seen the arrest of far too many political demonstrators advocating for their basic Human Rights, with **115** activists remaining behind bars. In addition despite the number of political prisoners released, legislation such as section 18 of Peaceful Protesting and Procession Law and section 505 (b) is being broadly utilized to arrest and imprison human rights activists undertaking peaceful protests.

Summary of the current situation

43 are facing trial, **10** were sentenced, and **54** political prisoners were released this month.

Incarcerations

In early July, U Aung Soe, an activist from the Rangoon Civil Assistance Network was sentenced by Shwebo City Court, to 10 years imprisonment under 8 different counts, including personally committing or inducing others to commit an offense against the State or against public tranquility, Article 144, section 505(b) of Burma's Penal Code. (Karen News)

He was arrested for his role in organizing protests with farmers to plough land that had been confiscated by the Burmese government for the Letpadaung Copper Mine Project. The government closed his trial to the public and he was denied a defense lawyer. He was sentenced to one and a half year's imprisonment and is currently serving his sentence in Shwe Bo prison in central Burma.

Bauk Jar, an ethnic Kachin activist and member of the National Democratic Force political party, was arrested on July 18, 2013 by the police in Myitkyina. She has been charged under Section 304(a) of the Penal Code, causing death by negligence, the Medical Council Act: Section 41, for possession of medical equipment not registered with the Medical Council, and Section 33, for illegal possession of medicine. Bauk Jar's lawyer underlined the fact that the charges were based on an incident which occurred over a year ago, when she was treating sick villagers who had no access to

doctors. She was found guilty by the Hpakant Township Court, and sentenced to 7-10 years imprisonment under Section 304(a).

On June 18, 2013, three days after Burma's President U Thein Sein pledged to release all remaining political prisoners by the end of the year, Lahtaw Brang Shawng, a farmer with great public support in Kachin State was sentenced to two years in prison under the Unlawful Associations Act.

He was found guilty after the government accused him of having connections to the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), an ethnic rebel group that is engaged in peace talks with the government after decades of civil war. The farmer, who was accused of participating in a bomb plot and being a soldier for the KIO's armed wing, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), was living at a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) when he was arrested in June last year. Other residents at the camp and people in the north Burma state that he had no connections with the rebel groups and was merely an ordinary civilian seeking shelter from the fighting.

The final verdict, which was delayed for several weeks, came after Thein Sein vowed to release all remaining political prisoners by the year's end. It also followed recent assurances by the government that the KIO would be removed from its list of illegal associations and that Brang Shawng would be released from custody.

July 23rd

[Htin-Shu-Myaing Sayardaw, sentenced to one year and six months with hard labor \(RFA Burmese\)](#)
[The case of Kachin State NDF in-charge Daw Bauk Ja, causing death by negligence, tried today \(Mizzima Burmese\)](#)

July 19th

[Kachin Farmer Brang Shawn Imprisoned for 2 Years \(DVB\)](#)
[Kachin Farmer Brang Shawng Imprisoned for 2 Years \(Irrawady Burmese\)](#)
[Activist Bauk Ja Arrests for Negligent Homicide \(Mizzima Burmese\)](#)

July 18th

[U Lahtaw Brang Shaun, a suspected member of KIO, sentenced to 2 years imprisonment \(Mizzima Burmese\)](#)

July 9th

[Myanmar Activist Jailed for 10 years For Anti-Mine Protest \(RFA\)](#)

July 7th

[Activist jailed for farming on confiscated land and offending 'Public Tranquility' \(Karen News\)](#)

Facing Trial

Nine residents from Bassein Township, Irrawaddy Division, held a prayer campaign for peace and to request that the Letpadaung Copper Mine Project cease its operations. As a result, the case of nine protesters was opened under Section 18 of the Peaceful Protesting Bill at Ah-Thae-Gyi police station. One of the defendants Ko Kyawt Maung said that they would defend themselves in compliance with the law.

U Tun Tun Oo and U Than Win, who led a protest without permission on July 4, 2013, in Bassein Township, Irrawaddy Division, were indicted and their case was filed at No-2 Police Station on the same day, according to the defendants. Around 200 farmers participated in the protest without permission in front of the National League for Democracy (NLD) Township and District Office. U Tun Tun Oo stated that he had submitted a request letter on June 1, 2013, to get the permission to protest. "We heard that our case was filed under Section 18 at No-2 police

station. When the authorities informed us that we were not allowed to protest, we had already finished protesting. So, it is not fair that the authorities only informed us then," said U Tun Tun Oo. (Mizzima)

On July 15, 2013, the case of U Zin Naing Gye, Ko Kyaw Swar, and Ko Myint Aung were brought to Bassein Township, after 7 months. After leading a protest against the crackdown on anti Lapdaung Taung Copper Mine protests, the three activists were indicted under section 18 of the Peaceful Protesting and Procession bill by the station commander and police lieutenant Tin Maung Thet at Ah-Thal-Gye police station. One of the defendants, Ko Kyaw Swar claimed that in order to protest legally, they had submitted the letter. They were still denied the right to protest despite following the procedures.

National Democratic Force Political Party member Daw Bauk Ja was accused of causing death by negligence, being in illegal possession of medicine and medical equipment not registered by the medical council. Daw Bauk Ja was tried at Phar-Kant Township court on July 23, 2013. She has been indicted by the prosecutors Daw Kham Sai, a resident of Kamaing Township, Kachin state and Kamaing Township police lieutenants Than Tun Win and Nyan Win. The final sentence was set on the 31st July.

July 23th

[Three Lapdaung Taung Affair activists indicted in Bassein Township \(Irrawaddy Burmese\)](#)

July 18th

[Nine farmers, harvested in the confiscated land, indicted \(RFA Burmese\)](#)

July 16th

[Seven Farmers from Mawlamyine Gyunn Township brought to court for trespassing \(RFA Burmese\)](#)

July 13th

[Ko Wai Phyo, activist for the release of political prisoners, arrested \(RFA Burmese\)](#)

[Three farmers in Inpagu Township indicted again \(RFA Burmese\)](#)

July 10th

[Fifty two farmers who saw their land confiscated, were not allowed to indict the company \(RFA Burmese\)](#)

July 6th

[NLD Township leaders indicted as they protested without permission \(Mizzima Burmese\)](#)

[Pyapon battalion indicted nine Farmers \(RFA Burmese\)](#)

July 5th

[Nine Bassein Township protesters regarding Lapdaung Taung Affair, indicted \(RFA Burmese\)](#)

July 2nd

[Ko Htin Kyaw's case in Chauk Township and Daw Myint Myint Aye's case in Nattalin Township, both tried \(RFA Burmese\)](#)

Releases

The president of Burma, U Thein Sein in his recent visit to the United Kingdom has made a commitment that all political prisoners in Burma will be released by the end of the year. On July 23, 2013, two weeks after this statement, President U Thein Sein pardoned 73 prisoners. Among the released are Shan ethnic people and Kachin prisoners of conscience.

"In total, about 70 political prisoners will be released nationwide, including 26 Kachin prisoners," said U Hla Maung Shwe, a special government advisor at the Myanmar Peace Center (MPC). He added that 13 detainees were being released from Kachin State's Myitkyina Prison. "They were released as part of an amnesty by the president — this was part of his pledge to the

international community to release all political prisoners by the end of the year," Hla Maung Shwe told The Irrawaddy. "This move will be a boost for the peace process." Hla Maung Shwe, of the MPC, said Lahtaw Brang Shawng, an ethnic Kachin farmer, was among the released. (The Irrawaddy)

Lahtaw Brang Shawng was arrested on June 17, 2012, in an IDP camp in Myitkyina. He was charged with violating Article 17/1 of the Unlawful Associations Act for allegedly being a member of the KIA. Last Friday, he was sentenced to two years in prison. Lahtaw Brang Shawng's lawyer Mar Khar welcomed his client's release, but added, "I feel very sad about Brang Shawng's imprisonment. He was tortured during interrogation even though he was just a normal civilian and had no link to the KIA."

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the release of 73 prisoners in Myanmar. Ban Ki-moon also welcomed a recent statement by Burma President U Thein Sein that all political prisoners in the country will be released by the end of the year. The UN chief hoped that such efforts will "further strengthen efforts toward a comprehensive nationwide cease-fire and national reconciliation in Myanmar," according to his spokesperson. (Mizzima)

July 24th

[UN Sec-Gen welcomes release of 73 Myanmar political prisoners \(Mizzima\)](#)

July 23th

[Thein Sein signs release for 70 political prisoners \(Mizzima\)](#)

[Myanmar set to release some 70 prisoners \(Myanmar Times\)](#)

[Myanmar Releases Scores of Political Prisoners \(RFA\)](#)

[Burma Frees a Further 73 Political Prisoners \(BBC News Asia\)](#)

[Burma Frees Around 70 Political Prisoners: Official \(DVB\)](#)

[Burma Gvt Releases 73 Political Prisoners \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

July 22nd

[Activists Call On Government To Free Whistleblowers During Next Amnesty \(DVB\)](#)

July 19th

[BURMA: Identifying and freeing remaining political prisoners \(Asian Human Rights Commission\)](#)

July 17th

[Will Myanmar clear jails of political prisoners as promised? \(Amnesty International\)](#)

July 4th

[Political Prisoners will be released in this month have not sent yet to network \(Mizzima Burmese\)](#)

Detentions

This month, a total of **31** activists and farmers were arrested and kept in custody.

One of the most controversial arrests this month was that of Ko Wai Phyto, Secretary of Generation Wave, who was arrested on July 10, 2013, in Rangoon. This was due to his involvement in a 2011 campaign for the release of political prisoners. Indeed, in 2011, Ko Wai Phyto and two activists were indicted because they were involved in a campaign aiming at releasing political prisoners, but Ko Wai Phyto managed to escape. Ko Wai Phyto has since lived openly and freely in Burma. The two activists were sentenced to 3 months imprisonment or 30, 000 Kyats fine in February 2012, while the police considered Ko Wai Phyto a fugitive.

July 23th

[Thein Sein's pledge to release all political prisoners looks hollow as 74 year-old activist is jailed \(Burma News International\)](#)

[Armed Mon group calls on army to return abducted members \(DVB\)](#)

July 20th

[Myanmar arrests continue amid prisoner pledge \(Irrawaddy Burmese\)](#)

July 11th

[Ko Wai Phyo, activist for the release of political prisoners, arrested \(RFA Burmese\)](#)

July 3rd

[Four Farmers from Maw Gyunn Township, arrested \(RFA Burmese\)](#)

July 1st

[Seventy five year old farmer who re harvested his land, arrested \(Irrawaddy Burmese\)](#)

Conditions of detention and treatment of family members

The wife of former Burmese military officer Win Naing Kyaw, who was detained in Tharawaddy Prison in Pegu Division exactly four years ago and sentenced to death for leaking state secrets, said that he is a political prisoner and should be released. She said that as President U Thein Sein's reformist government has released hundreds of political prisoners, it should acknowledge that Win Naing Kyaw is a prisoner of conscience who also deserves amnesty. However, President's Office Minister U Soe Thein recently said that the former major was not a political prisoner as the government has evidence of engagement in illegal activities.

Maung San Moe, 19 years old, who was arrested on the night of July 10, 2013, after a dispute in Hopan Township, Kachin State, was brutally beaten and tortured at the police station. According to one of his co-detainees, Maung San Moe was isolated from the others in an individual cell, where he was beaten during the whole night. As a result, he has been suffering from serious injuries and hospitalized in Mohnyin Township Public Hospital. He was unable to walk properly due to serious injuries over his whole body, one of his lower back bones was broken and the doctor assumed that his inside organs would probably be damaged as well (Irrawaddy).

Two workers from Taw-Win Factory, Shwe-Pyi-Thar Township detained in Insein prison, Thiha Ko Ko and Maung Maung Thet, were beaten by the gate warder, Aye Min Aung on the night of July 18, 2013. Even if the two men complained to Insein prison official, no measures were taken to put an end to these practices.

Their lawyer opened a case on July 18, 2013 to indict the Insein prison official and warder. According to detainee Nay Lin Oo they were kicked, slapped and strangled by the prison guard.

July 22th

[Police from Hopang Township Police Station, Shan state, brutally tortured detainee \(Irrawaddy Burmese\)](#)

July 20th

[Two workers, detained in Insein prison, beaten \(RFA Burmese\)](#)

July 19th

[The case of an Insein prison official beating prisoners, filed \(Mizzima Burmese\)](#)

July 10th

[Wife Says Ex-Officer on Death Row Is a Political Prisoner \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

Restrictions on political and civil liberties

Following more than two years of reforms, land rights have become one of the most tempestuous issues in Burma as farmers begin to challenge authorities over property that was

appropriated by the military and crony-connected companies during nearly five decades of junta rule.

Residents displaced by the controversial Letpadaung copper mine in Sagaing Division, northwest Burma say the Implementation Committee tasked by the government with reducing the mining project's negative impact on local communities has failed to perform its duties. Meanwhile, an activist Ko Aung Soe and two farmers: Ko Soe Thu and U Maung San on Monday (July 8, 2013) saw their prison sentences extended by a district court in Sagaing Division after opposing the mining project. Their lawyer also says they never received a fair trial.

According to Hla Htay, one of 13 local farmers affected by the land grab in Mahtasu village, about 50 government and police officials arrived at their farm at dawn on 5 July and proceeded to seize the 100 acres of land by putting up a barbed wire fence around it.

On July 7, 2013, the news follows reports that police arrested the National League for Democracy (NLD)'s Taungoo Tsp., executive committee member, Min Swe, in Pegu division's Taungoo over the weekend for participating in a plough protest in Mandalay division's Tharsi Township last April. He was sent to a detention center in Tharsi Township.

Free speech advocates have slammed Burma's controversial publishing bill, which was passed by the lower house of parliament last week, amid concerns that it will reintroduce censorship in the former military dictatorship. The draft bill has attracted criticisms for prohibiting the media from criticizing Burma's 2008 constitution, causing social unrest, or insulting religion, while empowering the government to ban publications deemed to violate these rules.

In a response to lawmakers' questions on Tuesday July 9, 2013, National Police Chief and Home Affairs Deputy Minister U Kyaw Kyaw Htun has told Parliament that the government has no plans to abolish or amend two draconian laws: the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act and the 1975 State Protection Law. Both were frequently used to prosecute political activists during past decades of military rule. The Minister stated that in his view "every country has these kinds of law to protect the security and stability of the nation as well as its citizens".

July 17th

[Poor governance in Burma's extractive sector risks fuelling abuses: report \(DVB\)](#)

July 16th

[Tensions Rise in Parliament over Land Grab Cases \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

July 16th

[Commission approves contract giving government larger share of Letpadaung profits \(DVB\)](#)

July 12th

[Autonomy coming for Burma's universities \(DVB\)](#)

July 11th

[No plan to repeal two repressive Junta-era laws: minister \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

[MP slams military promise to return confiscated land \(DVB\)](#)

July 10th

[Farmers call on leaders to return land as officials target 'plough protestors' \(DVB\)](#)

[Burma Publishing Bill to Reintroduce Censorship: activists say](#)

July 9th

[The activists, gave assistance to farmers, were not allowed bail \(RFA Burmese\)](#)

July 8th

[Farmers In Rangoon Incensed After Authorities Seize Disputed Land \(DVB\)](#)

[Complaints Abound Over Letpadaung Implementation Committee \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

Restrictions on former political prisoners

More than a dozen would-be students have been denied the opportunity to re-enroll at the University of Yangon, only because of the time they served as political prisoners, which the government says amounts to truancy. The 15 students, all activists and former political prisoners, sent three separate letters to the ministry and President U Thein Sein and even met with officials at the President's Office but had no luck persuading them that they should be allowed to re-enroll. The personal assistance of the Deputy Minister of Education, U Kyaw Thu Maung even explained that any student, who skipped school for a long term, would not be allowed to go back to university.

Daw Aung San Su Kyi, the chairperson of the Rule of Law and Tranquility Committee, said that she planned to give assistance to former political prisoner university students who wish to attend university. She said she would bring the case before Parliament and the Ministry of Education, according to De Nyein Lin, one of the students who spoke to the Naypyidaw conference. "She [Suu Kyi] said we had suffered two punishments, as we could not go back to university after our release from prison," he said. "She told us she would help us all return to school." Phyo Phyo Aung, also among the group of 15 students, urged the government to change its current policy (Irrawaddy).

Moreover, despite the presidential releases, Myanmar's Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Kyaw Zan Myint reminded the Parliament that: "any prisoners released under an amnesty shall be charged with the remainder of his or her punishment if they break any parameter" (Burma News International). This statement contradicts the radio speech made on June 4th, 2013 by the president. Indeed, he declared that those released would not be charged with any remaining sentence.

July 30th

[Released political prisoners still on parole \(Burma News International\)](#)

July 3rd

[Former Political Prisoners Denied University Education in Rangoon \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

July 2nd

[Daw Aung San Su Kyi plans to help former political prisoner university students to attend daily classes \(Irrawaddy Burmese\)](#)

AAPP (B) in the media

Ko Bo Kyi, joint-secretary of Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)-AAPP (B), spoke out against the practice of mass prisoner release for political gain:

"We have been repeating that the government has used a pattern of political prisoners' release ahead of official visits abroad," he told The Irrawaddy. "President U Thein Sein has said that he doesn't use the political prisoners as political tools, but there were some simultaneous moves that happened in the past." The Joint-Secretary underlined that Burma's president U Then Sein is very good at PR but he needs to turn his words into action. For the time being the rule of law is very weak. There are still arbitrary arrests and there is no fair trial." (RFA)

Indeed, according to AAPP (B), “149 activists were pressed with charges in the month of June with around 70 already on trial,” said Khin Cho Myint, AAPP staff. “There were far too many farmers pressed with charges in June as well as activists who provide them assistance.” (Democratic Voice of Burma)

Arrests are still ongoing while president U Thein Sein declared during his visit to the UK, that he was guarantying “that by the end of the year there will be no prisoners of conscience in Myanmar” (AFP). AAPP (B) released a statement underlining that “concrete action towards emptying Burma’s prisons of all political prisoners and ensuring no one is arrested for their political beliefs or activities”. Even if AAPP (B) recognizes the sentiments and the message of the president, it is not enough and words must result in actions that further the goal of national reconciliation. Indeed “Despite the positive steps taken in freeing those imprisoned, there is still the increasing issue of the number of current activists working openly inside Burma facing indictment and imprisonment for their political actions. AAPP is concerned that regardless of the number of political prisoners being released, there is still an unacceptably high number of people being arrested and charged for their political beliefs and activities.” Most of all, “The ongoing harassment and incarceration of human rights activists and demonstrators is a major obstacle to achieving the goal of national reconciliation and political freedom.” (Karen News)

July 27th

[President releases 73 political prisoners, but hundreds more await potential prison sentences \(Karen News\)](#)

July 23th

[Thein Sein’s pledge to release all political prisoners looks hollow as 74 year-old activist is jailed \(Burma News International\)](#)

[Myanmar Releases Scores of Political Prisoners \(RFA\)](#)

July 16th

[Activists urge action, not words, on Myanmar prisoners \(AFP\)](#)

July 12th

[Petition for Rohingya Protection Nears 1 Million Ahead of Thein Sein’s Europe Visit \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

July 10th

[Farmers call on leaders to return land as officials target ‘plough protestors’ \(DVB\)](#)

[Wife says Ex-Officer on Death Row Is a Political Prisoner \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

Key Domestic and International Developments

The month of July was marked by the president U Thein Sein’s visit to Europe. On July 15, 2013, he was the first leader of Burma to visit Britain in more than a quarter of a century. He held talks with Prime Minister David Cameron, and announced his belief that all political prisoners would be free by the end of 2013.

The UN’s Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Burma once again raised concerns over ongoing arrests of activists wishing the reformation of such law as the Peaceful Assembly, the Peaceful Procession Act and the Unlawful Associations Act, as well as encouraging the new prisoner review committee to become more transparent.

But the month of July, is also the month of the preparation of the 25th Anniversary of the 8.8.88 Uprising in Rangoon. A three-day ceremony from August 6th to 8th will take place to mark the silver jubilee of the August 8, 1988 protests, a key event in the democratic history of Burma. The event will focus on 2 main themes: peace and national reconciliation. But the participants will have to face two particularly important challenges: insuring effective checks and balances and amending

the 2008 Constitution. At the end of this gathering, the activists want to come up with a political agreement, as a roadmap for the future written by the democratic forces.

To this effect, 88 Generation Students representative met with the ethnic alliance (United Nationalities Federal Council) to discuss how to achieve peace in Burma. They collectively agreed on the fact that a “road map” must be established to guarantee continuous political dialogue with the government.

July 30th

[UN envoy welcomes political prisoner release but says arrests continue \(Burma News International\)](#)

July 25th

[Political prisoners walk free \(DBV\)](#)

July 24th

[UN Secretary-General welcomes release of 73 Myanmar political prisoners \(Mizzima\)](#)

July 23th

[Constitution review committee formed by parliament \(Burma News International\)](#)

July 22th

[French President urges U Thein Sein to push on with reforms \(Myanmar Times\)](#)

July 19th

[Thein Sein Not Gearing Up for 2015 Election \(RFA\)](#)

[Burma President Says Not Preparing Himself for 2015 Election \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

July 18th

[Hollande Urges Thein Sein To Forge Ahead With Reforms \(DVB\)](#)

[Suu Kyi Asks Shwe Mann To Push for Charter Changes \(RFA Burmese\)](#)

July 17th

[BNI oppose Government’s draft media law \(Karen News\)](#)

July 16th

[88 Generation, UNFC discuss peace process \(Burma News International\)](#)

[UK to resume military ties with Burma \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

[Burma Leader Pledges Prisoner Release on UK Visit \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

[Thein Sein Pledges to Free All Political Prisoners by End of Year \(DVB\)](#)

[Saying no to political imprisonment \(Mizzima\)](#)

July 15th

[Ethnic Rebels Want Suu Kyi at Next Peace Talks with Government \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

[Thein Sein leaves for Europe \(Mizzima\)](#)

[Are Burma’s Opposition MPs Too Quiet? Critics and Lawmakers weigh in \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

[Burma’s Leader Visits Britain, May Be Challenged on Human Rights \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

[The wrong Hague \(DVB\)](#)

[Burma to free all political prisoners, says Thein Sein \(BBC World News\)](#)

July 11th

[Parliamentary Committee to Be Formed On Constitutional Amendments \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

July 10th

[Thein Sein headed to Europe this week: official \(DVB\)](#)

July 9th

[Myanmar’s first home-grown social media site launches \(Burma International News\)](#)

July 8th

[88 Gen. to mark 25-year anniversary \(Myanmar Times\)](#)

[Media bill gets freedom of expression clause \(Myanmar Times\)](#)

[Burma’s Press Council Threatens Resignation Over Media Rules \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

July 5th

[Shwe Mann To Take Over As Union Parliament Speaker \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

July 3rd

[Burmese president to visit Britain and France \(Burma News International\)](#)

[Shwe Mann Demands Parliament's Involvement in Burma's Peace Process \(Irrawaddy\)](#)
[Thein Sein Cannot Control Army, Shan Rebels Say \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

Conclusion

This month was marked by the release of 73 prisoners. However of these 73, 54 are recognized by AAPP (B) as being political prisoners. This release has occurred while arrests for expressing basic rights such as the freedom of assembly or association are still continuing. Freedom of expression, harassments of activists and continuous physical and psychological tortures that political prisoners still face in Burma's prisons have been all been in evidence this month. In addition the government still pressures Burma's civil society outside the prison walls while the Minister of Education prohibits former political prisoners to re-enroll in university.

These abuses and denials of basic human rights underlines the fact that there are still draconian laws resulting in over a hundred political prisoners remaining in jail but most importantly barring the civil society to step into the path of democracy. Even if Burma is certainly in a transition stage, almost all the repressive laws against political prisoners remain in place. AAPP (B) continues to emphasize the lack of rule of law, allowing the government to pressure the population and restraining the democratic transition.

The international community should recognize the continuing issue of political prisoners, as well as the daily intimidation and harassment of human rights activists in Burma. Only by ensuring the unconditional release of all political prisoners and ending persecution of those willing to stand up for their freedom can Burma truly be considered a free democratic society.

Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

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