



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

နိုင်ငံရေးအကျဉ်းသားများကူညီစောင့်ရှောက်ရေးအသင်း (မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ)

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

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

Information Release

Date: 6 July, 2010

Burma's Human Rights Record Up For Review

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners has submitted its report to the UN Human Rights Council for the Universal Periodic Review of Burma. The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a new mechanism of the Human Rights Council (HRC) aimed at improving the human rights record of all 192 UN Member States.

Burma is up for its first review in the 10th session of HRC, in January 2011.

“For countries, like Burma, with a poor human rights record and a low ratification rate of international human rights treaties, the UPR provides a unique opportunity to put them in the hot seat and have their rights record publically scrutinized” says Bo Kyi, Joint Secretary of AAPP.

“Through the UPR, the Human Rights Council has examined country situations that are rarely raised at the international level and would otherwise fall off the radar, such as North Korea. It also draws attention to the human rights concerns in states, with a generally good human rights performance, showing us that no state is perfect”, says Bo Kyi.

AAPP's UPR submission shows that the human rights situation for the more than 2,170 political prisoners in Burma remains dire: incommunicado detention, torture, and the denial of adequate medical care are common place. This treatment is meted out to all prisoners, without distinction to age, health and the special needs of women, children and those with disabilities. Evidence collected by AAPP suggests that torture is a cultural norm, amongst the military, police and security officials. AAPP has documented hundreds of cases of torture experienced by political prisoners, dating back to 1988 and as recent as 2010.

AAPP, along with a number of other independent non-governmental organizations working inside Burma and in exile, joined together and worked hard to produce credible reports for the UPR.

“Will the SPDC take the UPR process just as seriously, asks Bo Kyi?

North Korea's approach illustrates the limitations of UPR. They mocked the process by refusing to accept any of the recommendations offered by a wide range of member states, as every other country has done at the UPR sessions. Instead, they would only state which recommendations they rejected.

“Ultimately, the effectiveness of UPR can be measured by the extent to which it inspires a country to alter its actual human rights practices, as there is no enforcement mechanism” says Bo Kyi.

When the SPDC are confronted with the reality of their human rights record at the HRC in January, will they respond with defensive rhetoric, fabrications and denial as they have done in past, or engage in a meaningful debate to improve the situation for the people of Burma?

Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

For further information, please contact:

Tate Naing, Secretary +66 (0) 81-287-8751

Bo Kyi, Joint-Secretary +66 (0) 81-962-8713