



BURMA REPORT

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Free all political prisoners, free Burma.

Between - Covering news about Burma, Myanmar, August 14, 2011 - burmaonlinecentre <burmaonlinecentre@gmail.com>

Between News - <<http://www.betweenonline.com/news-article/myanmar%E2%80%99s-oath-to-peace>> - Sun, 14. Aug 2011 03:16:36

Myanmar's path to peace - By Rose-M



Myanmar Union Minister for Information U Kyaw Hsan, @popularjournal

The erring party should just let the political prisoners free. In a democratic country, it is not wrong to voice your opinion. Your right to your land remains for generations unless you sell it. The government discusses the pros and cons of issues in front of the public. Elections push through and the elected assume power.

A Constitution that tolerates violence against its own citizens is not a constitution. Anarchy exists when there is confusion as to what principles should rule. In fact, the government is fascistic because a dictator seems to emphasize militarism and preys on the race of the ethnic groups, subjecting them to forced labor against their will.

In the enumerated eight principles of peace, the fifth principle which is "not to make interference in administration, management and judicial affairs of the government", a democratic country makes

decisions through validation which is open to the scrutiny of the public. A citizen can charge any official of any violation through the courts of the land.

Extortion is a favorite practice of the military government. Taking away the lands of farmers for the use of the military. Making farmers cultivate land to feed the military. Perhaps, they mean, it is only the military government who may do the extortion on peaceful farmers.

Most of the eight principles are superfluous if the Myanmar government wants to move towards peace. The fact is, the Myanmar government insists on being undemocratic.

Your email:

THE BURMANET NEWS - newsletter covering Burma, August 3, 2011 Issue #4240, "Editor" <editor@burmanet.org>, www.burmanet.org

The Irrawaddy - The Irrawaddy Today's Newsletter, August 3, 2011, news@irrawaddy.org, <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=21829>

No Amnesty for Dissidents After Four Months

By WAI MOE Wednesday, August 3, 2011

Four months after the junta formed by the 1988 coup officially ceded power to the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party, family members of political prisoners are demanding the release of their loved ones to prove the political will of President Thein Sein's new government.

"I want my son's freedom as soon as possible. They [political prisoners] were unjustly imprisoned. They have suffered imprisonment for too long. Their time in prison is without description," said Thet Nyunt who is father of Burma's most famous political prisoner, Min Ko Naing. Min Ko Naing was a student leader during the 1988 uprising and is now a leading member of the 88 Generation Students group.

He and his close colleagues were arrested on Aug. 21, 2007, just days before the September 2007 mass demonstration. They were sentenced to terms of up to 65 years imprisonment in 2008 on several charges. Currently Min Ko Naing is in Keng Teng Prison in Shan State. Before this arrest, Min Ko Naing was also in prison from 1989 to 2005 for political activism.



Protestors in Manila demonstrate the plight of Burma's political prisoners with mock chains (Photo: AP)

After the new regime came into the office on March 30, family members of more than 2,000 political prisoners were hopeful for the release of their sons, daughters, brothers, sisters and parents. However, that hope has gone sour with the government's announcement of a derisory one year reduction for prisoners in May.

Responding to questions of detaining political prisoners, a member of the president's political advisory board, Nay Zin Latt, said: "We need to look at 'stability' first. Even the US, they also look at stability. When we think there is stability, prisoners will be released gradually."

But such promises are no consolation to the unjustly imprisoned or their families.

"My brother has always worked peacefully for his beliefs. We want the government to release him. But it is sad that there is little chance of winning amnesty for political prisoners," said Aung Tun, younger brother of Ko Ko Gyi—Min Ko Naing's close colleague who is also serving 65 years in Mong Set Prison in Shan State.

Aung Tun added that his brother and other members of the 88 Generation Students group have spent more than half their lives in prison, but they "always think about doing good for the nation."

The issue of political prisoners has not been resolved for decades despite the international community making repeated calls for their immediate release. A Burmese human rights group, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners-Burma (AAPP), said tens of thousands of dissidents have been arrested since 1988 and most of them have faced abuse and torture during interrogation and imprisonment.

"According to reports from ethnic areas, many minority people have been arrested amid armed conflicts in recent months. So numbers of political prisoners are expected to rise," said Bo Kyi, joint-secretary of the AAPP.

Human rights activists believe that political prisoners remain victims while the Burmese authorities play games with the international community, easing pressure on themselves by releasing a few individuals under strict conditions who are approaching the end of their sentence.

"I don't think they will release the political prisoners soon. But as a wife of a political prisoner, I hope my husband will be free before too long," said May Zun, wife of Aung Naing who is also serving a 65-year jail term following his arrest in August 2007. With two children, May Zun has been struggling to support her family and visit her husband.

Meanwhile, lawyers with the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) have prepared for the next round of appeals to current head of state President Thein Sein against extreme prison sentences for political dissidents on the grounds that "the terms are not lawful."

NLD member Aung Thein, who was one of the lawyers defending dissidents monks and members of the 88 Generation Students group, told *The Irrawaddy* that it is legally clear that the detaining of political prisoners is unjust.

"The new administration's legal chiefs must examine cases of political prisoners and release them," he added.

Irrawaddy reporter Lin Thant contributed to this story.

Tin Kyi <mtinkyi7@yahoo.com>, <NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK@yahoogroups.com>, Thu, 18. Aug 2011 19:19:2

Myanmar's president says country facing hardship

By AP | August 18, 2011 - <<http://www.canadianbusiness.com/article/40682--myanmar-s-president-says-country-facing-hardship>>

YANGON, Myanmar (AP) — Myanmar's president says the strengthening local currency is hurting the economy and garment factories face closure if the U.S. dollar continues to weaken.

The dollar has fallen from 800 kyat to 750 kyat, dealing a blow to Myanmar's exporters, President Thein Sein said in a speech given Wednesday (17.08.2011) to economists, businessmen and local aid organizations in the capital Naypyitaw.

Farmers and garment factories have been the hardest hit with some factories in the industry that employs thousands facing closure, he said in the speech, which was published in state-run newspapers Thursday.

It was the first time the president publicly acknowledged that the country, which is run by a military-dominated government, faces economic hardship. Average income per person is one of the lowest in the world after years of state control of the economy and international sanctions.

Thein Sein said that to ease the problems, the government has removed export taxes on some items including rice, beans, corn, sesame, rubber, fish and other animal products.

Additional "ways and means are being sought to ease the crises," he said.

A new government took power from a military junta last March after elections that were widely condemned abroad as rigged to ensure Myanmar's generals retained their hold over the country. It has embarked on economic reform and slightly eased its hardline stance against opponents.

Thein Sein said the government invites people and organizations with different views to "work with us for common goals in the national interests." He said the government will also consider Myanmar citizens living abroad who want to return.

The government has invited pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who was released from house arrest last November, to an economic development forum scheduled for Aug. 19-21 in Naypyitaw.

Suu Kyi's spokesman Nyan Win told The Associated Press they have not decided if Suu Kyi will attend.

In another conciliatory gesture, three state-run newspapers stopped running slogans blasting the foreign media on their back pages this week.

THE BURMANET NEWS - July 28, 2011 <<http://burmanet.us2.list-manage1.com/track/clicku=de1cb2dc3a1d3641b6857de4e&id=c389bd0a33&e=de4efced93>>
THE BURMANET NEWS - newsletter covering Burma, July 28, 2011 Issue #4236, "Editor" <editor@burmanet.org>, www.burmanet.org

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Open Letter (Unofficial Translation)

- 1) U Thein Sein, President, Union of Myanmar
- 2) Kachin Independence Organization (KIO)
- 3) Karen National Union (KNU)
- 4) New Mon State Party (NMSP)
- 5) Shan State Army (SSA)

The (post-independence) Union of Burma was co-founded by different nationalities. Like siblings from a single family, all these nationalities had cohabited this land since time immemorial. Therefore, forging peaceful ties and unity among the nationalities is of paramount importance.

Of late, there have been news stories about military conflicts between the country's Armed Forces and the armed nationalities groups in various regions such as the Kachin, the Shan, the Karen, the Mon and so on. These conflicts are resulting in the tragic outcomes such as loss of life, destruction of costly physical infrastructures and economic projects and a condition of general deterioration. Besides causing enormous sufferings among local communities, these conflicts come with a potential risk of spilling over and spread across Burma's immediate neighborhoods.

The use of force to resolve the conflicts is only going to be mutually harmful to all parties concerned. National

reconciliation and unity cannot be built on might. It can only be pursued through political negotiations. Only through political negotiations can genuine national unity be established. Only such unity among nationalities can guarantee the country's (peaceful) future. In the absence of genuine peace and reconciliation the potential spread of civil war always lurks beneath.

Conflicts among nationalities can surely be resolved on the basis of mutual respect and mutual understanding, leading ultimately to the Union's peace and stability. Only when the Union is genuinely peaceful and stable can nation building programs be implemented successfully. Therefore, with the sole purpose of promoting the well-being of all nationalities in the land I call for immediate ceasefires and the peaceful resolution of the conflicts.

On my part I am prepared, and pledge, to do everything in my power towards the cessation of armed conflicts and building peace in the Union.

Signed
Aung San Suu Kyi
54/56 University Avenue, Rangoon

The Irrawaddy - Newsletter for Monday, August 8, 2011, news@irrawaddy.org , www.irrawaddy.org

The Irrawaddy - <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=21854>

Suu Kyi Calls for Unity on Anniversary of 88 Uprising -

By **BA KAUNG**

Monday, **August 8, 2011**

Hundreds of Burmese people led by pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi gathered at a monastery in Rangoon on Monday to commemorate the anniversary of the failed popular 88 uprising which demanded democratic change.

During the ceremony, Suu Kyi called for unity within opposition groups in the country dominated by the new nominally civilian government under the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party.



Hundreds of Burmese people led by pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi gathered at a monastery in Rangoon on Monday to commemorate the anniversary of the failed popular 88 uprising which demanded democratic change.

During the ceremony, Suu Kyi called for unity within opposition groups in the country dominated by the new nominally civilian government under the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party.

Popularly known as the 88 uprising as it took place on Aug. 8, 1988, the nationwide student-led protests challenged the ruling Socialist government to bring about economic and political reforms.

From August to September 1988, the country saw three leadership changes but the army staged a coup in the final week



Senior NLD leader Win Tin arriving at the monastery.
(Photo: Irrawaddy)

of September and responded to peaceful demonstrations by slaughtering at least 3,000 people.

During Monday's anniversary ceremony at a Buddhist monastery in Kyeemyindaing Township in Rangoon, Suu Kyi, who made her first political appearance during the 88 uprising, said that unity and concerted efforts within opposition groups would be crucial in reaching the common goal of democratic reforms in the country.

One of the participants, Cho Cho Kyaw Nyein, a leader of the opposition Democratic Party (Myanmar), agreed: "Without democracy in our country, we will work on together under the leadership of Aung San Suu Kyi."

Despite meeting with a Burmese government minister last week, Suu Kyi said she is still against the 2008 military-drafted Constitution. However, she also confirmed that she is planning to

make her first political tour since her release from house arrest last year to the town of Pegu a few kilometers outside Rangoon on Aug. 14, and received a positive response when she informed the authorities.

Hundreds of democracy activists, including officials from political parties which took part in last year's general elections, joined Suu Kyi for one minute's silence in honor of protesters killed in the 88 uprising. Plainclothes security officers and anti-riot police trucks were seen near the monastery, but participants said that no disturbance was made to the occasion.

"I would like you all to think about what has happened and not forget," Suu Kyi wrote in a guestbook, according to a report by international news agency *AFP*.

While it has been more than two decades since this major uprising took place, prominent student leaders of the movement together with over 2,000 political prisoners remain incarcerated throughout Burma.

And the political deadlock remains between the democratic opposition and Burmese military which last year handed power to a nominally civilian government led by former junta generals through a flawed election.

A middle-aged English teacher from Upper Burma, who was a student dentist during the 88 uprising, said that the lack of strong leadership during the protests damaged the success of the movement.

"The 88 gave us opportunities to uproot the dictatorship and establish democracy, but we could not grab those opportunities in time because of some weaknesses in leadership," he said. "Now the military dictators are leading the [political] game and still in a position to control the opposition."

May Zin, a resident of Rangoon born in the year 1988, said that although she did not witness the uprising first hand, it is still a significant event for her generation which has not been consigned to the history books for Burma.

"I would have participated in it if I was there at that time," she said.

Marking the anniversary of the uprising, Burmese exiled groups called for the new government in Naypyidaw to release all political prisoners in a joint statement today. They also demanded an end to military attacks against ethnic minority and opposition groups as well as political dialogue with all stakeholders. Opposition groups also called for a review of the 2008 military-drafted Constitution, which caused Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party to boycott last November's parliamentary elections in protest.

Tin Kyi <mtinkyi7@yahoo.com>, Burma Related News - Aug 11, 2011

The Irrawaddy - The Irrawaddy Newsletter for Thursday, August 11, 2011, news@irrawaddy.org, www.irrawaddy.org

Suu Kyi Appeals for Megadam Review

By YENI Thursday, August 11, 2011 - <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=21881>

Burma's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi has issued a personal appeal to all concerned parties to review the ongoing dam projects in Kachin State, the main one being the 6,000-megawatt Myitsone dam which is being built at the source of the Irrawaddy River.

"Ecological change to the Irrawaddy would impact all those whose lives are linked to the great river, from the ethnic peoples in the northernmost state of our country to the rice-growing communities of the delta," Suu Kyi wrote in a statement released on Thursday. "To conserve the Irrawaddy is to protect our economy and our environment, as well as to safeguard our cultural heritage," she added.

"While recognizing that large sums of money have already been spent on the realization of the project, we would urge that in the interests of both national and international harmony, concerned parties should reassess the scheme and cooperate to find solutions that would prevent undesirable consequences and thus allay the fears of all who are anxious to protect the Irrawaddy," Suu Kyi said. (To read the full statement: http://irrawaddy.org/pdf/Irrawaddy_Appeal.pdf)



In this file photo taken on Jan. 7, 2011, a Kachin ethnic woman walks on stones in the Irrawaddy River near Myitkyina. (Photo: AP)

Dam construction on the Irrawaddy—often referred to as the “lifeline” of the country, because it flows through several of Burma’s main cities—is being facilitated by the Burmese government and financed by China’s state-owned China Power Investment Corporation (CPI). However, the project has become a major talking point among Burmese in recent weeks as criticism by environmental rights groups mounts.

Environmentalists say the megadam project will cause serious social and environmental problems, and will directly affect people living both upstream and also far downstream, even as far away as the Irrawaddy delta and the coastal areas of Burma.

In May 2007, the Burmese military regime and CPI signed an agreement to build seven large dams in Kachin State by 2017.

Upon completion, the project will have capacity to produce approximately 13,360-MW of electricity annually—which will not be for local consumption; it will be transferred to Yunnan Province to feed China’s expanding energy needs.

Meanwhile, an environmental impact assessment, fully funded by CPI and conducted by a team of Burmese and Chinese scientists—but which was obtained by Thailand-based Burma Rivers Network—said that the dams will threaten the biodiversity of the local ecosystem, as well as impacting millions of people who depend on the Irrawaddy River for their livelihoods.

The megadam project in Kachin State is deeply unpopular among the general population. Local communities in project areas have opposed the dams, not just because of their displacement, environmental impact and threats to cultural sites, but also because the site is located less than 100 kilometers from a major fault line, posing a risk to basin inhabitants should an earthquake weaken the dam structure or cause landslides in the reservoir.

“If the Irrawaddy Myitsone Dam were to break during an earthquake, it would endanger the lives of hundreds of thousands of people by flooding Kachin State’s largest city, Myitkyina,” noted Burma Rivers Network on its website.

The Myitsone Dam is being constructed at the confluence of the Mali and N’Mai rivers. It is the largest among the seven dams, and is expected to produce 3,600 to 6,000 MW of electricity annually. When finished, it will be the 15th-largest hydroelectric power station in the world.

Under contract to the CPI in partnership with Burma’s Electricity Ministry of Electric Power-1 and private firm AsiaWorld, the dam will create a reservoir the size of New York.

In July, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Hong Lei said that “cooperation between China and Myanmar [Burma] is on the basis of mutual equality, and is in the interest of both countries’ development and both countries’ people.”

The spokesman added that China pays close attention to ecological protection and requires Chinese companies operating outside its borders to obey local environmental and other laws.

The Burmese state media, in response to critical articles such as Aung Din’s “Killing the Irrawaddy” has maintained that the project will have no negative impact on the flow of the Irrawaddy, nor on the lives and livelihoods of the local

population.

Related Article: Killing the Irrawaddy <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=21835>
[Killing the Irrawaddy](#)

Between News - Covering news about Burma, Myanmar, Between news <burmaonlinecentre@gmail.com>

A unity call for Burma from Suu Kyi - August 16, 2011

By **Between news** - <<http://www.betweenonline.com/news-article/a-unity-call-for-burma-from-suu-kyi>>

Thousands of supporters thronged around Aung San Suu Kyi on Sunday as she rallied for unity throughout the country during her first political trip outside her home city since being released from house arrest.



Aung San Suu Kyi addresses supporters eager to hear about any sign of a political thaw, during a visit outside Rangoon. @euronews

Witnessed by an AFP reporter, she made similar appeals at the openings of two libraries, the first to 600 people in Tha Nat Pin and the second to 2,000 in Bago town. She told the crowds that the development of the country is possible if everyone worked together. She further said that unity is the strength of the country and unity is needed anywhere but most especially in Myanmar.

She reminded the people that she had always given her best since she joined politics 20 years ago and she will continue to do so.

Addressing the AFP, the Nobel Peace Prize winner said that she relied on the support of the people for strength to persevere.

A lessening of hostility between Suu Kyi and the government recently allowed a second round of talks with labour minister Aung Kyi on Friday. A joint statement released after the discussions gave the observation that both sides would work together to bring about stability and democratic development.

Subject to economic sanctions by the US and other western nations, Myanmar has to exhibit democratic and human rights reforms.

THE BURMANET NEWS, August 13 - 15, 2011, newsletter covering Burma, Mon, 15. Aug 2011, Issue #4248, "Editor" <editor@burmanet.org>

Agence France Presse - August 15, 2011 -

US 'encouraged' by Myanmar's allowing Suu Kyi to travel

- <http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/SEAsia/Story/STIStory_702595.html>

Washington — The United States welcomed Monday a move by the military-backed authorities in Myanmar to allow democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi to travel and speak to her supporters inside the country.

"We are encouraged by (her) talks with the government," State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland told reporters.

"And we are also encouraged that she was able to travel, that she was able to speak when she traveled and that the

FOR PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA



The United States welcomed on Monday a move by the military-backed authorities in Myanmar to allow democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi to travel and speak to her supporters inside the country. -- PHOTO: REUTERS

government met its responsibilities to keep her safe and secure."

The 66-year-old has spent much of the last two decades in detention, and some observers believe the government would be quick to restrict her freedom again if she were perceived to threaten its rule.

But there have been signs of a thaw in relations between the government and Suu Kyi recently, with the Nobel laureate holding a second round of talks with labor minister Aung Kyi on Friday.

On Sunday, Suu Kyi called for unity in Myanmar as she was feted by thousands of supporters during a visit to the Bago region, her first political trip outside her home city since being released from house arrest in November.

After President Barack Obama took office in January 2009, his administration concluded that longstanding sanctions

against Myanmar had been ineffective and initiated a dialogue with the leaders while maintaining sanctions.

The United States has voiced disappointment over developments in Myanmar, including a November election widely denounced as a sham, but has said that it sees no alternative to engagement at such a fluid time.

Aung Thu <aungthu@t-online.de> - by phone – 15:44 (19.08.2011)

Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) - <<http://www.dvb.no/news/suu-kyi-relaxed-after-president-talks/17147>>

Suu Kyi 'relaxed' after talks with president

By SHWE AUNG

Published: 19 August 2011



Aung San Suu Kyi met with President Thein Sein for the first time today (Reuters)

Burma's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has met with the country's president in the capital, Naypyidaw, the first time she has been granted an audience with Burma's premier.

Little warning was given of the meeting, although officials from her National League for Democracy said that an invitation had arrived on Wednesday for the Nobel laureate to travel to Naypyidaw. It's not clear whether the invite had explicitly referred to a meeting with Thein Sein, who became president in March this year.

Few details have yet been released about what the two discussed. Khun Thar Myint, a member of the National League for Democracy's central executive committee, who traveled with Suu Kyi to the capital today, said only that

the two appeared "relaxed" after the meeting.

"We don't know what they discussed in the meeting but it seemed quite warm and causal, so maybe we can remain hopeful. I think Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will make a press release about the discussions in the meeting after she has informed our Central Executive Committee."

The former Burmese junta, which ruled in various guises until handing power to a nominally civilian government this year, has spent decades attempting to sideline the 66-year-old.

Recent overtures to the political opposition are being seen by some observers as a sign that relations are thawing.

Ko Ko Hlaing, chief political adviser to the president, told AFP ahead of the talks this afternoon that, "It is an important step for national reconciliation. We should all work together"

The Irrawaddy Newsletter for Wednesday, August 24, 2011, news@irrawaddy.org, www.irrawaddy.org, Wed, 24. Aug 2011 19:17:31

The Irrawaddy - <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=21954>

UN Envoy Meets Suu Kyi, Visits Insein Prison

By SAW YAN NAING Wednesday, August 24, 2011

The UN's Special Rapporteur to Burma, Tomas Ojea Quintana, held talks with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi at her home in Rangoon on Wednesday after a visit to Insein Prison where a number of political prisoners are currently held.



UN envoy Tomas Ojea Quintana (left) meets with Aung San Suu Kyi in her Rangoon home. (PHOTO: Sun Ny's Facebook)

He also met with central executive committee members of Suu Kyi's party, the National League for Democracy (NLD).

Neither Suu Kyi nor Quintana disclosed any details of their talk. However, a press conference has been scheduled by Quintana for Thursday at Rangoon International Airport before he leaves the country, according to sources in Rangoon.

During his five-day visit to Burma, the UN envoy also visited the capital, Naypyidaw, where he sat in on a parliamentary session attended by MPs of both the Lower and Upper Houses.

During Quintana's meeting with government house speakers, he said that it is necessary to amend the current constitution in accordance with human rights, according to a report by the US-based Radio Free Asia (RFA), quoting Dr. Aye Maung, the chairman of the Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee for the Upper House.

Ethnic leaders frequently complain that the current constitution was written in 2008 by the military junta's hand-picked representatives, and that it doesn't guarantee the rights of ethnic minority groups.

According to the RFA report, Quintana also said that the new government has made "some progress," but that political activists who are currently being detained in prisons across Burma should be released in the interests of national reconciliation in the country.

At the parliamentary session in Naypyidaw on Tuesday, Quintana also listened to calls by ethnic politicians for the release of political prisoners, and for allegations of human rights abuses by the Burmese army in ethnic areas to be investigated.

Quintana has been a vocal critic of the Burmese government and has previously proposed a UN Commission of Inquiry (CoI) to investigate war crimes and crimes against humanity that have allegedly been committed by the Burmese army.

The UN envoy proposed the CoI in April 2010, and it is now supported by US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and several EU nations.

Hla Kyaing <hla.kyaing@gmail.com>, [8888peoplepower] Recent Burmese News – 110826

asian correspondent <<http://asiancorrespondent.com/63485/un-envoy-calls-on-burma-to-release-prisoners/>>

AP-UN envoy calls on Burma to release prisoners

By AP News Aug 26, 2011 2:56PM UTC

YANGON, Burma (AP) — The U.N. human rights envoy to Burma said Thursday at the end of his visit to the country its new government should release all political prisoners.

Burma installed a nominally civilian government in March but still holds more than 2,000 political prisoners.



Tomas Ojea Quintana. Pic: AP.

Releasing them is a “central and necessary step toward national reconciliation,” Tomas Ojea Quintana said in Yangon on conclusion of his five-day visit.

He also told reporters Burma needs an independent judiciary and should investigate alleged human rights violations.

He thanked the government for allowing his visit and access to government ministers and opposition leaders. He met with democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi for the first time Wednesday.

His last visit to the country was in February 2010, while Suu Kyi was under house arrest. She was freed in November shortly after Burma’s first election in 20 years.

Quintana and others have criticized that vote as undemocratic, and the new government is largely still dominated by the military.

He said President Thein Sein’s new government has taken some positive steps on human rights, including recognizing the need for peace talks with armed ethnic groups and opening the door for exiles to return.

He called on the government to “intensify its efforts to implement its own commitments and to fulfill its international human rights obligations.”

Quintana added many concerns remained, including reports of torture in prisons and the use of prisoners as porters for the military.

He met with seven people imprisoned in Yangon’s notorious Insein Prison.

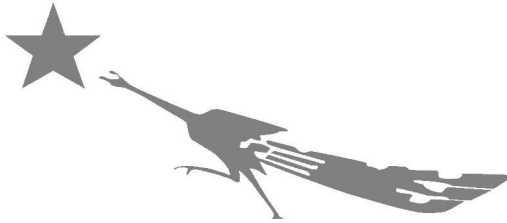
The international community must remain engaged and closely follow developments but should also “support and assist the government during this important time,” he said.

He added he hopes to visit Burma again before his next report to the Human Rights Council in March 2012.

Mary B. Fleischmann <mbfleischmann@gmx.de>, Aung Thu <aungthu@t-online.de>

Open Letter: **Appeal for support to Foreign Minister**

Dr. Westerwelle - by Burmabureau e.V., Cologne, Germany - Monday, 08.08.2011



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Cologne, 08.08.2011

Myanmar - UN Commission of Inquiry

Dear Mr. Foreign Minister,

on the occasion of the 23rd anniversary of the 8.8.88 students uprising in Burma we once again ask you to kindly support the inclusion of the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry into this year's UN General Assembly Resolution on Myanmar (Burma).

Crimes committed by the military (Burmese Army) since the 2010 election include

- mass use of gang-rape as a weapon against ethnic minority women and girls
- continued recruitment of child soldiers
- deliberate targetting of civilians e.g. mortar bombing of villages without warning
- continued arrests and torture of political opponents
- forced labour and abduction

We call for the release of all political prisoners without preconditions. Tens of thousands of internally displaced people and refugees are listed in international statistics. For ever?

The ILO Commission of Inquiry expresses grave concern at the continued practice of arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, rape and other forms of sexual violence, torture and cruel inhuman degrading punishment.

The Burmese military is breaking long-standing ceasefire agreements entered into with ethnic minorities increasing human rights abuses by killing its own people.

You convinced the international community and for sure us that you are a political leader dedicated to fight for human rights.

The EU will draft the next UN General Assembly Resolution on Burma which we trust will include the endorsement for the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry on Myanmar. Therefore we send our appeal for support at this crucial time.

In anticipation of your kind assistance

sincerely yours,

Burma Büro e.V. Germany
Executive Committee

U Aung Thu
Chairman

FOR PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

zin linn <zinlinn@yahoo.com.au>, [NLDmembrsnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma, Mon, 29. Aug 2011 16:28:34

The Mizzima News, <<http://www.mizzima.com/edop/editorial/5847-shocking-jail-term-indicates-business-as-usual-for-burmese-political-prisoners.html>>

Shocking jail term indicates ‘business as usual’ for Burmese political prisoners - (Editorial) – Monday, 29 August 2011 12:54

The verdict was like a slap in the face—10 years in jail.

Just when people were lulled into thinking the new Burmese government was showing openness, a special court in the notorious Insein Prison sentenced a blood donation group volunteer—pushed into the court in a wheelchair—for breaking the Electronics Act.

In a closed hearing on August 26 that his family was barred from attending, Nay Myo Zin, a former army officer, was sentenced to a lengthy prison term for possessing an e-mail critical of the military on his computer.

The verdict came just a day after UN envoy Tomas Ojea Quintana left Burma after a five-day visit in which he talked with the government about releasing political prisoners and was even allowed to visit Insein Prison, claiming conditions had improved. According to *The New Light of Myanmar*, the government indicated to Quintana a willingness to release some of the prisoners, though they were at pains to point out that Burma has “no political prisoners,” only prisoners who had committed crimes.

Quintana has long made a nuisance of himself with the Burmese authorities calling for the release of political prisoners. Right now there are said to be 1,995 people in prison in Burma whose only crime was to act out what the UN charter on human rights says should be universal—freedom of speech and conscience. But they were convicted by archaic laws that the authorities use to keep the people silent.

The case of Nay Myo Zin had been in process for four months and the judge was unlikely to be swayed by the recent real-politic of a government trying to show a clean face. Clearly, there is a disconnect between officials chasing down people who have broken Burma’s unjust laws and the leadership of President Thein Sein eager to burnish his country’s image on the world stage.

Superficially, change is in the air. The president recently met Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi in Naypyitaw and her recent meetings with government minister Aung Kyi held a glint of promise that the government was willing to turn over a new leaf and consider reconciliation. Suu Kyi claimed the discussions had been “constructive.” There has even been talk of Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy being allowed to re-register as a political party after its dissolution by the authorities.

But is this all smoke and mirrors?

Quintana, in a statement as he exited Burma, said “the government has taken a number of steps that have the potential to bring about an improvement in the human rights situation” in Burma. Note that word “potential.” No action yet.

Nay Myo Zin’s case is a reminder that it is “business as usual” for Burma’s rulers. The blood donation volunteer is no big league activist. The story is that he fell over in prison and injured his back. But given the nasty tales of brutality in Insein Prison, the question is whether the fall was accidental. More to the point, there should be fears for his health, given he fractured his lower vertebrae, which could leave him in a wheelchair for the rest of his life if not handled properly.

Just what was Nay Myo Zin’s crime? Possessing an e-mail critical of the *Tatmadaw*, a criticism of his former military colleagues?

Burma’s newly-elected government is propped up by the 2008 Constitution—offering the army the right to step in when they wish—and by the generals living behind their high walls in Naypyitaw who have a manic fear of dissension in their ranks.

So Nay Myo Zin’s case may be used as an example of what happens to those who try to stir up dissent in the military.

All this gives pause to question whether the recent meetings and photo opportunities are all a game.

Just because the president deigns to meet with Suu Kyi does not mean there will be meaningful change in a system designed to keep the generals living in luxury.

Nay Myo Zin’s case is a chilling reminder to the people not to step out of line.

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