



BURMA REPORT

February 2012
မြန်မာ - မှတ်တမ်း

Issue N° 105

Free all political prisoners, free Burma.

Assistant Association for Political Prisoners (Burma), AAPP-B'S VIEW ON PRESIDENT U THEIN SEIN'S AMNESTY ANNOUNCEMENT

Statement - Date: 14 January, 2012 - info@aappb.org, <http://www.aappb.org>, <http://www.fbppn.net>

President U Thein Sein's administration declared an amnesty on the 12th of January, 2012 regarding the release of 651 male and female prisoners on the 13th of January, 2012 under article 401 (1) of the Criminal Procedure Act. According to the data that AAPP-B has collected and verified up to the morning of the 14th of January 2012, the number of political prisoners among those released under the amnesty announcement is 272.

We, members of AAPP-B, welcome the actiAAPP-B'S VIEW ON PRESIDENT U THEIN SEIN'S AMNESTY ANNOUNCEMENTon of President U Thein Sein's administration given that 88 generation student leaders, ethnic leaders and prominent political prisoners were among those released. We feel unhappy, however, as under article 401 (1) of the Criminal Procedure Code, the release is not without conditions, the number of political prisoners released is limited, and the demands of the opposition, the Burmese people and the international community were not met. Considering that article 401 (1) of the Criminal Procedure Code states that released political prisoners would have to serve the remainder of their sentences if needed, this greatly harms the human rights of released political prisoners and their ability to engage in activities openly.

The discrimination and limitations of the release seriously damages the physical and mental well-being of around 1,000 political prisoners who remain locked up in Burma's prisons. We consider that leaving the remaining political prisoners behind bars is a way of torture. At the same time, by leaving the political prisoners from ethnic armed groups in prison hugely damages the prospect of national reconciliation in Burma.

Lieutenant-General, Ko Ko, the Minister of Home Affairs, articulated this morning that the number of political prisoners remaining was 430, and they released 302 political prisoners in this amnesty. They are unable to release the remaining 128 prisoners, however, since they were arrested and sentenced under explosive acts. The number that Lieutenant-General, Ko Ko expressed is unacceptable. In accordance with AAPP-B's current data, the number of the remaining political prisoners is more than 1,000, and we are able to verify the location of more than 600. Our verification process is ongoing. Regarding the dispute of the number of political prisoners, an independent investigation body, led by the UN for example, should be allowed to investigate Burma's prisons. We express our view yet again that AAPP-B is ready to work in cooperation with anyone or any organization.

For these reasons, AAPP-B strongly urges President U Thein Sein's administration to release, immediately and unconditionally, the remaining political prisoners and erase their criminal records. Thus, creating a political landscape whereby released political prisoners can be involved in democracy, the national reconciliation process and the state's development.

Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

For more information:

Tate Naing (Secretary): +66 (0) 81 287 8751
Bo Kyi (Joint-Secretary): +66 (0) 81 962 8713

zin linn <zinlinn@yahoo.com.au>, [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma, 21. Jan 2012

The Washington Post - <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/an-interview-with-burmas-democracy-activist-aung-san-suu-kyi/2012/01/19/gIQAfNi0DQ_story.html?wprss=rss_economy>

An interview with Burma's democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi

Rangoon, Burma - By Lally Weymouth, Published: January 20, 2012

Aung San Suu Kyi sat in the living room of the home where she lived under house arrest for so many years and talked about the future. She is now a free citizen, meeting with high-level foreign delegations; she's a political star in her country and possibly a future president. In an interview with Washington Post senior associate editor Lally Weymouth on Wednesday --- the same day Suu Kyi registered as a candidate for Burma's parliamentary elections --- she talked about

FOR PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

her country's president, U.S. economic sanctions and her political plans. Excerpts:



In the United States, people are asking if President Thein Sein's reform process is real. Do you think the reforms are real? And how did your meeting with the president go?

My meeting with the president went well, and I believe he sincerely wants reform. But he is not the only one in government. Our present constitution gives the military far too much power. Although the president is the head of state, he is not necessarily the highest power in the land. The commander in chief can take over all powers of government at any time he feels it to be necessary. That must be very difficult if you are in the position in which our president is. I don't know how much support he has within the army. He himself is an army man, so I assume there must be considerable support for him in military circles. But that is just an assumption.

I think the president is genuine about reform. I think there are those who support him in the government. Whether all people support him, I can't answer.

Do you worry that there could be a reversal of this reform process?

I don't worry overmuch, but I am aware that there is a possibility of reversal. I think we have to work very hard to diminish this possibility. I do appreciate what the United States is doing to encourage this process. I think we here inside Burma have to do the major part of the work.

Should the United States lift sanctions and engage?

Engage and lift sanctions when they think the time is right. The U.S. has laid out very clearly what the conditions are for the removal of sanctions. If this government wants sanctions to be removed, they will have to try and meet those conditions.

One condition was the prisoner releases, and the president did release quite a few recently.

Yes, but not all of them yet. All the major political prisoners have been released.

Do you feel you could you play a role in bringing about peace and reconciliation between the ethnic groups and the government?

I could play a role only if both sides are willing to have me play a role. I can't just go in because one side has asked me to take part. The ethnics have indicated they want me to be part of it.

I asked the president if he would consider giving you a cabinet post. He said it was up to parliament.

Quite right. Even if we win all the seats we are contesting, that will be only 48 out of 600 seats. The reason we want to get into parliament is not because we expect to do all our work in parliament. We want to extend our activities into the parliament.

Going back to the U.S. demands what other conditions must be met?

There should be an end to all hostilities in the ethnic areas. There has been a cease-fire with the KNU [Karen National Union] but not yet with the KIA [Kachin Independence Army]. That is a big problem for the country.

Senior U.S. officials look to you for guidance in regard to lifting the sanctions.

What they have in me is someone to give an honest assessment of the situation. The situation in the Kachin [state] is a major problem. If we are to have a genuinely peaceful nation, we will have to resolve these problems politically, not militarily.

The government reportedly has been brutal in the ethnic areas.

Yes, there have been human rights violations, and that's why it's necessary to allow third-party access to those areas to find out what's really happening.

Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) has said that Burma is developing a nuclear weapon [with the help of North Korea](#).

I don't know that they are developing a nuclear weapon. They certainly have reestablished diplomatic relations with North Korea. That cannot be denied.

Is it true they picked Naypyidaw as the new capital because of an astrologer?

I understand that the previous government was guided by astrologers.

Do you think Thein Sein is sort of a Gorbachev?

No, because Gorbachev came into power gradually through the ranks, and he had his grip on power quite firmly before he started going towards reform. Thein Sein is in a rather different situation. I think very few people expected him to become head of state. He was not the highest-ranking member in the military government under Gen. [Than] Shwe.

You referred to the fact that the army could overthrow this president. What is his relationship with the army?

He is respected in the army, that we know. He is one of the few members of the previous regime who is considered by all to be clean. Not only he, but his family as well, and that is unusual.

This is the house you lived in when you were under house arrest. How many years did that go on?

All together, 15 years.

How did you keep going?

I had enough to do to keep this house from toppling down. I could listen to the radio, and I had access to books from time to time. Not all the time.

Your family was in England?

Yes, in some ways that was good because I didn't have to worry about them. At least I knew that they were safe. The first six years I was kept totally alone. The last six years I had two people staying in the house. The first six years really trained me very well.

Do you want to be president one day?

I don't want to be president, but I want to be free to decide whether or not I want to be president of this country.

If you win a majority of the parliamentary seats in 2015, as you did in 1990, do you think they would let you assume power?

What we want is to make sure that by 2015, this should not be a question at all. By 2015, we should be certain that whichever party wins the majority in parliament should decide how the government is going to be organized. We have said quite clearly that one of the aims of the NLD [National League for Democracy] is the necessary amendments to the constitution.

Burma News - 30 December 2011, "Burma News" <burma_news@verizon.net>,

AFP – 30 December 2011 - <<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hgbHIX2zt3sT0p0HfJA2YolgPxYw?docid=CNG.30b3d6dd8339de2bcb1a783e5b922d18.751>>

Myanmar sets by-election date



Myanmar is to hold by-elections on April 1, a government official said on Friday, which could propel democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi into the army-dominated parliament. -- PHOTO: AFP

Myanmar is to hold by-elections on April 1, state media announced on Friday, which could propel democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi into the army-dominated parliament.

"The by-election will take place on Sunday April 1, 2012," said an announcement by the Union Election Commission, read out on state radio and television.

Suu Kyi, who officially registered her opposition party a week ago, has already said she intends to stand in the polls.

Her National League for Democracy (NLD) was given the green light by authorities to rejoin mainstream politics earlier this month, but is waiting for official approval of its application.

Those who wish to take part will need to register between January 16 and 31, according to the Union Election Commission announcement.

A total of 48 seats are up for grabs -- 40 in the lower house, six in the upper house and two in the regional assemblies.

The by-election is to fill places vacated by those elected in the November 2010 vote who have since become ministers and deputy ministers in the government.

The number of available seats is not enough to threaten the resounding majority held by the ruling military-backed party.

One quarter of parliament's seats are taken up by the army while the Union Solidarity and Development Party, which is packed with former military men, holds about 80 percent of the remainder.

Further details of the by-elections are expected to be announced in local newspapers on Saturday.

Between news <burmaonlinecentre@gmail.com> [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] Political prisoners are the victims of political differences and conflict, 09. Jan 2012

Political prisoners are the victims of political Differences and conflict -

January 9, 2012 | Filed under: News, Politics | Posted by: Between News

<<http://www.betweenonline.com/2012/01/09/political-prisoners-are-the-victims-of-political-differences-and-conflict/>> -

Released political prisoners who were granted amnesty were denouncing and persistently calling the attention of Myanmar government to release more political detainees to prove its dedication on the real changes happening in Myanmar.

Those who were freed in jail last January 3 were common criminals estimated to be around 6,656 while other prisoners whose length in jail terms were just lowered to shorter terms as reported by state media, Monster and Critics said.

Based on the report made by Myanmar Times, the number of political prisoners who were released on amnesty was recorded at 10 to more than 30 detainees only.

Among those encouraging President Thein Sein to promote progressive action for unity is Kyi Than, 52, a political prisoner released from Insein Prison in Yangon.

In his statement he said that they were just victims of political differences and conflict, no crimes committed and yet they were put to jail, the report said.

Now that there's freedom of democracy in Myanmar, he is one among the hopefuls that other prisoners will be freed



Myanmar prisoners release. @reutersvideo

FOR PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

from jail.

Since the new government took office last March, their main focus is for democracy to reign all over the land and to end all human rights abuses and violations that has been committed since 1962.

The granting of amnesty last January 2 states that death sentence will be reduced to life imprisonment, jail terms of more than 30 years will be cut down to 30 years, prisoners with 20 to 30 years imprisonment will be meted with only 20 years and those with less than 20 years will be meted by a quarter.

The only way for United States, Britain and other Western countries to lift the international economic sanctions in Myanmar is for the government to release all political detainees, Monster and Critics reported.

BurmaNet News, January 11, 2012, January 11, 2012 Issue #4328, Editor <editor@burmanet.org>, www.burmanet.org

The Age, Melbourne, Australia, January 11, 2012 -

In Burma, a general election really means the generals' election - Dr Jonathan King

Democracy? Not while China pulls the strings, writes Jonathan King. DESPITE the euphoria that followed the recent visit to Burma by the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, Burmese people are not holding their breath waiting for democratic changes any time soon. Sure, there are byelections in April, when about 15 per cent of parliamentary seats are up for grabs and the National League for Democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, will herself stand.

But even if the adored "Lady" - whose portrait hangs proudly in most shops and cafes - wins all seats contested, she could not gain real power before 2015's general election. Yet most people I spoke to in the street do not believe the government will allow free elections in 2012, let alone 2015. It annulled the NLD's 1990 landslide victory, and crushed 1988 and 2007 democratic protests. With no independent newspapers, television or radio, it would be difficult to mobilise NLD votes. As the political Mandalay comedians the Moustache Brothers announced in a stage performance, the generals will buy people's votes and intimidate voters to retain their personal fortunes. They have lied for decades and, like leopards, will not change their spots. Why would they give up riches accumulated over decades, including land, houses, investment funds and revenue from royalties levied on resources, sold mainly to China? Indeed, the real elephant in the room at talks between Clinton and Burmese leaders was China. For no matter what she offers Burma, behind the scenes, China - not known for its promotion of democratic reforms and human rights - pulls the strings.

Burma, isolated by the West, is a client state of its most powerful neighbour now exploiting enormous resources of oil, gas, minerals and timber. Most Burmese resent this Chinese dominance. Having bought the oil-rich south-west island of Kyauk-Phyu, the Chinese are building a pipeline right across Burma. Most vehicles you see on the road north from Mandalay are heavily laden Chinese trucks. People hate cheap plastic goods flooding their market. The Chinese are adding Chinese characters to Burmese signs, offloading Chinese TV programs, introducing Chinese games to Burmese schools and infiltrating Buddhist culture. China will support the generals to maintain their mutual wealth.

One Chinese university student claimed they were helping the exploitation of resources because Burma had more resources than it needed, and China had historical rights, as Burma was historically part of China, anyway. She said she hoped bloody border conflicts between ethnic groups would worsen to fragment Burma, easing Chinese access. Some Burmese fear their government. Others say it betrays traditional community-focused Burmese culture as the generals provide no free healthcare, education, or welfare.

The generals are also betraying deeply rooted Buddhist faith, breaking four of the basic principles for which worshippers pray in Burma's many temples - no violence; no theft; no lying; no drinking alcohol. Some say they break the fifth, which forbids adultery. Admittedly, there is hope. There may be an amnesty for wealthy generals to be allowed to retain some personal wealth and not be tried by any future democratic government. President Thein Sein also released political prisoners and cancelled China's Myitsone Dam. He allowed the NLD to register for 2012 and Suu Kyi to run, even though she is loved by the people and the daughter of revered independence leader Bogyoke Aung San, whose photo crowns the gateway of her home. The West will discover in April if it is all just window dressing. This liberalisation will be maintained up to 2014, when Burma hosts the ASEAN meeting. Burma needs Suu Kyi to stop the Chinese takeover. Hopefully, if the Lady does by a miracle gain power in 2015, it will not be too little too late.

THE BURMANET NEWS, January 19, 2012, newsletter covering Burma, Editor <editor@burmanet.org>, www.burmanet.org

Foreign Policy - <http://transitions.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/01/19/burma_movement_on_sanctions>

Burma: Movement on Sanctions - MIN ZIN Thursday, January 19, 2012 -

McConnell, the Senate's leading Republican, called it "an emotional moment," and said that both of them had probably thought "that we were never going to meet." "It's an incredible day," he continued.

McConnell, who has long been one of the biggest supporters of Burmese democracy movement, also welcomed president Obama's decision to restore full diplomatic relations with Burma last week. (That, of course, was in reaction to the Burmese government's release of hundreds of political prisoners and its conclusion of a cease-fire agreement with the Karen ethnic rebel group.) The Senator said that he is also convinced that Burmese President Thein Sein is "a genuine reformer" after meeting with him in the capital of Naypyidaw. McConnell also hinted that sanctions on Burma could be eased or lifted following the April by-election, which Aung San Suu Kyi (known to the Burmese as "Daw Suu") and her supporters are going to contest.

McConnell laid out three criteria for the removal of sanctions. First, the government should accept the presence of



On Monday (Jan. 16), U.S. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, on a [visit to Burma](#), met for the first time with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

international observers at the April by-elections. Second, it should stop fighting with the country's ethnic minorities. And third, it should end its murky relationship with North Korea.

More importantly, the Senator said he would take advice from Daw Suu on the sanction issue. Many U.S. lawmakers share McConnell's optimism.

This is pretty remarkable stuff. McConnell is the architect of sanctions against the Burmese junta. The Burmese military and some foreign experts have tended to see him as a hardliner, a staunch advocate of tough measures against Burma's rulers.

Other countries are already forging ahead. Australia eased travel restrictions against Burmese officials in early January. Norway has decided to lift trade and investment sanctions. Some members of the European Union are considering whether to start lifting sanctions against Burma as early as February to encourage the reform process.

Now some of my own sources in Washington tell me that it's possible there could be a gradual lifting of some elements of the wide-ranging American sanctions against Burma, which include an arms embargo, bans on imports and investment, a ban on visas for senior government officials, and financial sanctions against regime leaders and their cronies.

The first thing to go would be a removal of the visa ban against officials. It would allow U.S. lawmakers to invite members of the Burmese parliament to the U.S. to provide them with exposure to democratic institutions. Then, depending on the results of the April-by election, President Obama can decide whether he wants to renew the investment ban, which runs out in May. Obama could also lift the 2007 presidential executive order that imposed financial sanctions against the

regime's officials for their crackdowns against Buddhist monks and protestors in the same year.

Aside from this, though, other changes in the sanction regime, such as the arms embargo, are not likely to take place soon. Meanwhile, most of the major sanctions against Burma require congressional action, since they were passed into law by the Congress.

Some lawmakers are skeptical. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, the Republican chair of the powerful House Foreign Affairs Committee, has criticized U.S. concessions to the Burmese regime as premature. As a result, it's entirely possible that some of the sanctions could continue right up until the next general election in Burma in 2015.

In any event, McConnell will be meeting Daw Suu several more times to coordinate the process. One can only hope that he'll with meet other stakeholders in the country, including representatives of the ethnic minorities and the leaders of the 88 Generation Student Group.

zin linn <zinlinn@yahoo.com.au>, [NLDmembrsnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma, Sun,15. Jan 2012

French Foreign Minister Meets Burmese Opposition Figure

Lisa Bryant - January 15 2012, <<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/asia/French-Foreign-Minister-Meets-Burmese-Opposition-Figure-137374508.html>>



Photo: AP
French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe and Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi attend a press conference after their meeting at her lake side residence in Rangoon, Burma, January 15, 2012

French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe and Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi attend a press conference after their meeting at her lake side residence in Rangoon, Burma, January 15, 2012.

France's top diplomatic envoy met with Burma's leading opposition figure Sunday, as he became the latest Western official to visit the Asian nation following a series of fast-paced reforms. The trip comes shortly after the United States restored full diplomatic ties with Burma.

The visit by French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe is the latest sign of Western approval of recent reforms by the new civilian government in Burma, after years of authoritarian rule.

In Rangoon, Juppe met with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, to whom France is giving its highest award, the Legion of Honor.

At a news conference, Aung San Suu Kyi said she hoped the

Burmese government's recent release of more than 650 prisoners, including many political activists, will reinforce the process of democratization and national reconciliation in her country.

The French minister's trip to Burma follows a similar visit in December by Hillary Clinton, who became the first U.S. secretary of state to visit the Asian nation in more than half a century. On Friday, Washington restored full diplomatic ties with Burma, following the prisoner release.

Juppe told reporters he had met with some of the newly freed prisoners and had saluted their courage and dignity. He said France and the European Union will consider how to adapt sanctions and their relations with Burmese authorities in light of the country's democratic progress.

Juppe is expected to meet Monday with Burma's president, Thein Sein, in the capital. The French envoy has welcomed the recent Burmese government reforms as "historic."

The Irrawaddy Today's Newsletter for Wednesday, January 18, 2012, news@irrawaddy.org, www.irrawaddy.org

The Irrawaddy - <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=22877>

Burmese Gov't and Kachin Armed Group

Hold Peace Talks in China - By BA KAUNG Wednesday, January 18, 2012

A Burmese government delegation held peace talks in China on Wednesday with the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), the political wing of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), an ethnic armed group that has been engaged in armed conflict with the Burmese military since June when a 1994 ceasefire agreement collapsed.

"We had frank exchanges with each other," said Zau Raw, a KIO official who participated in the discussions. He said that the peace talks will continue on Thursday in Ruili, a China-Burma border town in Yunnan Province, and the two sides are

expected to work towards a ceasefire deal.

This was the second round of talks to take place between the two sides in Ruili, with the first round taking place in November. The high-level Burmese government delegation was led by Aung Thaung, the head of a peacemaking committee created in December by President Thein Sein.

During the discussions on Wednesday, the KIO repeated its calls for further political discussions with Naypyidaw, which it believes will pave the way towards greater self-determination in Kachin State within the framework of a federal system, according to a KIO press statement released after the talks.

"We want to have further political talks with the government for self-determination in Kachin State and equal rights among the country's ethnics," said the KIO press statement.

The KIO/KIA has been fighting for greater autonomy in Kachin State since 1961, and the KIO delegation said it agreed to engage in the talks because the government said that it would work towards a peace deal through political means.



Burmese government representatives and leaders of Kachin Independence Organization holds talks in China's border town of Ruili on Wednesday. (Photo: Kachin Net)

"I think this will lead to further political discussions because the government representatives agreed that our desire for self-determination and equality for ethnic peoples are reasonable demands which have been ignored by successive Burmese governments," said Zau Raw.

On Dec. 10, President Thein Sein ordered the army in a written statement to halt military operations against the predominantly Christian KIA except for self-defense purposes. However, the deadly fighting in the strategic and resource-rich region near China's border has not lessened, with an estimated 60,000 war refugees having fled their homes to date.

When the KIO asked the Burmese government officials in the peace delegation why attacks by the Burmese military have continued despite the president's order for them to stop, the government officials responded that such a ceasefire order is no easy thing to get immediately implemented, according to Zau Raw.

Since the military-backed civilian government took office in March, it has signed or renewed ceasefire agreements with a number of ethnic armed groups—the latest one reached last week with the Karen National Union, which has been engaged in a 63-year insurgency with the government.

But in reaching these agreements, the government and ethnic groups did not discuss major issues such as greater autonomy for ethnic minorities within a federal state, which the KIO has stated is crucial to reaching a new ceasefire deal with the government.

On Monday, US Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell said during a visit to Burma that an end to ethnic conflicts will be a key consideration in whether the US lifts sanctions on the country.

"I thought the ceasefire with the Karen recently was a very important step in the right direction. We would like to see that kind of progress made with other ethnic groups," McConnell said.

Observers therefore believe the Burmese government is motivated to end the conflict in Kachin State in order to continue its momentum towards the reduction of sanctions by the US and other Western countries.

zin linn <zinlinn@yahoo.com.au>, [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma, 15. Jan 2012

Myanmar high profile political prisoners released

January 14, 2012 - Posted by: **Between News** - <<http://www.betweenonline.com/2012/01/14/myanmar-high-profile-political-prisoners-released/>>



Min Ko Naing, 8888 student leader. @AFP

Myanmar officially released a number of high profile political prisoners of well known dissidents, news reporters, and former leaders last Friday under a major prisoner amnesty with the increasing chain of reforms by the government.

The "88 Generation Students" who were part of the released prisoners were the front liners in the failed coup attempt in year 1988 where thousands of people died.

Democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi praised and approved of the action taken by the government in granting this major amnesty which numbered in the released of 650 prisoners of conscience and this she welcomed it as a good indication to peace and national reconciliation, said in news report from Agence France-Presse.

Min Ko Naing, a former student activist who had been in jail since 1988 was among the lucky prisoner who was freed in jail, according to his family. Htay Kywe, another activist was also among the released political prisoner together with Khun Htun Oo, leader of the Shan ethnic minority who served prison sentence of 93 years. Khin Nyunt, Former prime minister and military intelligence leader was also included in the list, AFP report said.

Khin Nyunt clad in a T-shirt in his home in Yangon, he told reporters last Friday that he is open for a dialogue with Suu Kyi as well as with the government. He mentioned that with his released, he will no longer join in any political related concerns. With the various visits done by different nations he said that it will further the progress and development of their country, the report said.

A number of journalists who belong to the Democratic Voice of Burma who had been at odds with the government were also freed.

Myanmar political analyst Aung Naing Oo of the Vahu Development Institute, a Thai-based think tank told AFP that the released of the political prisoners will bring to closer ties with the Western countries.

He said further that the process for the reforms will take some time but they are assuring that changes will happen as soon as possible.

Myanmar was asked by the New York-based Human Rights Watch to make certain that all the released prisoners will be given the chance to actively participate in the April election to cast their votes.

As deputy Asia director Elaine Pearson describes, the released of the latest prisoners is the best thing the government of Myanmar has ever done since it's been years that it was the far cry of international community to release its prisoners.

The next consideration Myanmar has to offer to the international community is to let them watch the predicament and the whereabouts of some prisoners and to monitor their situations and conditions, the report said.

Between news <burmaonlinecentre@gmail.com>, [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] Political prisoners are the victims of political differences and conflict

Myanmar funded for education development by Denmark

Posted by: **Between News**, <<http://www.betweenonline.com/2012/01/09/myanmar-funded-for-education-development-by-denmark/>>

January 9, 2012

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Denmark has approved last Friday to provide the Multi Donor Education Fund (MDEF)-Phase 2 established under UNICEF an initial amount of 4.5 million U.S. dollars from 2012 onwards which will benefit the children of Myanmar.

The contract signing was done by Christian Friis Bach, a Danish Minister of Development Cooperation right after he arrived in Yangon, Xinhua reported.

In a press conference, Bach told that the second-phase MDEF will take effect on 2012 whose main objective is to uplift

FOR PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

the vital need for the enhancement and development of excellent education in Myanmar and to be able to successfully achieve and attain the Millennium Development Goal-2.

This is to make certain that by the year 2015 all children in Myanmar, both boys and girls are enabled to finish primary level of education, it said.



Christian Friis Bach and Suu Kyi. @politiken

UNICEF Representative Ramesh Shrestha said that the First Phase was finished in 2010 with the support of Denmark, Norway and European Union, Australia as well as UK, the report said.

And for the target of year 2012 until 2015 all partners will work hand in hand to raise 15 million U.S. dollars for the improvement of education covering 25 townships which will benefit 650,000 primary school children, it said in Xinhua's report.

Bach met National League for Democracy (NLD) leader Aung San Suu Kyi and members of civil society in Yangon on his first day of visit and also to meet government officials in Nay Pyi Taw on the last day of his tour.

For his four-day visit he will make a countryside trip to Shan state to see for himself the progress on its development activities and to be able to talk to some stakeholders, the reported said.

It is known that Denmark has been contributing a lot in suppressing poverty in Myanmar and has been supportive of its democratic improvement.

Over the years Danish government and Danish non-governmental groups have served and extended humanitarian support to the citizenry of Myanmar.

They are also actively participating in line with health and livelihood with the help of multi-donor funds and bilateral projects in cooperation with international and local associates, stated by the Danish Embassy.

The total estimated assistance given by Denmark yearly is more than 12 million U.S. Dollars.

"Burma_News" <burma_news@verizon.net>, Burma News - 23 January 2012, Mon, 23. Jan 2012 21:07:06

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION Brussels, 23 January 2012

Council conclusions on Burma/Myanmar

3142th FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting - <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/127480.p>

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- 1."The Council welcomes the remarkable programme of political reform undertaken by the Government and Parliament in Burma/Myanmar, together with its commitment to economic and social development. These changes are opening up important new prospects for developing the relationship between the European Union and Burma/Myanmar. The EU stands ready to respond accordingly.
- 2.The EU considers that the recent release of a substantial number of political prisoners marks a crucial step forward and clearly shows the determination of the Government to continue on the path of reform.
- 3.The Council also welcomes the Government's efforts to seek peace with ethnic groups; the legislation permitting trade union activity, establishing freedom of assembly and loosening censorship of the media; as well as the creation of a Human Rights Commission. These elements are essential steps towards establishing a democratic state under the rule of law.
4. The Council welcomes the dialogue between President U Thein Sein and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the changes to the Electoral Law adopted by the Parliament. The Council is pleased by the NLD's decision to register as a political party and, together with other parties, contest the by-elections on 1 April. The EU attaches particular importance to the free and fair conduct of these elections.
5. The EU welcomes the resolve by the Government to engage with ethnic groups through an inclusive political process, thus bringing to an end the armed conflicts in the country, including the recently concluded cease-fire with the Karen National Union. The Council underlines the need for all actors concerned to establish a credible and sustained process for handling the difficult issues involved in securing long-term peace and national reconciliation. It stresses the importance of improved humanitarian access, especially to areas affected by ethnic conflicts.

6. The Council notes the commitment by the Government to continue and complete these reforms, notably by the unconditional release of the remaining political prisoners within the next few months and by the free and fair conduct of the by-elections. The Council also welcomes the Government's continued commitment to credibly addressing the ethnic conflicts through an inclusive political process. The Council confirms that the ongoing reform process has already led to improved relations between the EU and Burma/Myanmar and that this, together with meeting the above mentioned expectations, would lead to the further easing or lifting of the restrictive measures, in the Council's Decision by the end of April. The Council decides, as a first step, that restrictive measures (visa ban) concerning the President, the vice-Presidents, cabinet members and the Speakers of the two Houses of Parliament should be suspended and mandates relevant working groups to implement it, and to consider further steps. A further review of the Council's Decision imposing restrictive measures is ongoing.

7. The European Union wishes to assist Burma/Myanmar in advancing reforms. It will promote economic development through increases in assistance to reduce poverty and build capacity, and through strengthened sectoral dialogue with the Government. The EU invites progressive engagement by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to support Burma/Myanmar in developing its strategy. The EU stands ready to back the peace processes with the ethnic groups, for example through financial assistance for the process of the reintegration of returnees. The Council looks forward to a visit by the High Representative to the country. It also reaffirms its full support for her decision to open an EU Office in Yangon and looks forward to its early opening."

The Irrawaddy Newsletter for Wednesday, January 25, 2012, news@irrawaddy.org, www.irrawaddy.org

The Irrawaddy - <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=22921>

Suu Kyi, 88 Generation Leaders Hold 'Family Reunion'

By THE IRRAWADDY Wednesday, January 25, 2012



Aung San Suu Kyi, center, poses together with members of the 88 Generation Students group at her home in Rangoon on Jan. 24, 2012. (Photo: National League for Democracy)

More than two decades after their last encounter, pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi and recently released leaders of the 88 Generation Students group met on Tuesday for an evening that focused on reflections on the past and plans for the future.

The gathering, which took place at Suu Kyi's lakeside home in Rangoon, was an intimate, casual affair, bringing together a generation of leaders who had been kept apart for most of the years since they rose to prominence during the heady days of Burma's nationwide pro-democracy uprising in 1988.

"It was like a family reunion, because we were apart for so long," said Ko Ko Gyi, one of the 88 Generation leaders who were freed on Jan. 13 as part of an amnesty declared by Burmese President Thein Sein, speaking to The Irrawaddy on Wednesday.

In the years since their last meeting, Suu Kyi and the 88 Generation leaders have been in and out of detention repeatedly. During Suu Kyi's intermittent periods of freedom, the former student leaders were kept behind bars; when they were out of prison for a few years until their re-arrest in 2007, she was under house arrest.

During the more than two hours that they spent together on Tuesday, Suu Kyi and her guests discussed the years they spent cut off from the outside world and their plans for the future. Suu Kyi, who at 66 is nearly two decades older than most of the former student leaders, also offered some motherly advice.

"She suggested that we should get married," said 88 Generation leader Ant Bwe Kyaw, who like most of his colleagues is in his late forties and single.

When they weren't reflecting on their past experiences or discussing their personal plans for the future, the newly reunited group talked about social issues, said Mya Aye, who was among the nine who were invited to Suu Kyi's house for dinner.

"We didn't talk about politics last night, but we agreed that we shared the same political goals and should continue to meet and work together," said Mya Aye.

At a press conference in Rangoon last Saturday, the 88 Generation leaders said they welcomed Suu Kyi's decision to contest the April 1 by-election and offered her their full support.

Ten Years On

The Life and Views of a Burmese Student Political Prisoner

by **Moe Aye**

(Former Burmese Student Political Prisoner)

(170 pages) in German Euro 10.- + Postage

Burma Büro e.V., P.O. Box N° 27 03 66, D-50509 Köln, Germany.

Tel: 0221-9522450 Fax:0221-9522470

e-Mail: <burmabureaugermany@t-online.de>

Published by : Burma Buero e.V.,P.O.Box 27 03 66, DE-50509 Cologne Tel: + 49 (0) 221-9522450 Fax:+ 49(0) 221-9522470

e-Mail: <burmabureaugermany@t-online.de> - <http://www.burmabureaugermany.com> <http://www.burma-report.de>

FOR PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA