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Free all political prisoners, free Burma.

Zin Linn <zinlinn@cscoms.com> - NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma, Sun, 19. Jun 2011

Asia-Pacific News - Jun 19, 2011, <http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/asiapacific/news/article_1646316.php/Myanmar-s-Aung-San-Suu-Kyi-asks-for-peace-on-66th-birthday>

Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi asks for peace on 66th birthday

Yangon - Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi wished for peace on her 66th birthday Sunday, at a party held at her National League for Democracy (NLD) headquarters in Yangon.

'I want peace, we all want peace,' Suu Kyi told a crowd of more than 600 well-wishers who gathered at the NLD office to mark her birthday.

'But peace cannot be obtained by one person or one party. All need to work together to achieve peace,' she said. 'I wish to see steps taken to further national reconciliation while achieving peace.'

Diplomats from the US, British and other Western embassies attended the party. Her youngest son Kim Aris, 33, arrived at Yangon Airport on Sunday morning to attend the event, which also drew well-wishers from all walks of life.

'I love her and I wanted to see her,' said a 61-year-old Buddhist nun who came from ThanLyin, 10 kilometers south of Yangon. 'I wish her to be healthy, and to live for hundreds of years.'

Suu Kyi, the daughter of Myanmar independence hero Aung San, is widely seen as the only hope for bringing democracy to the country.

Myanmar was under military rule from 1962 to 2010, and is currently run by a pro-military government which came to power after the November 7 general election - described as a 'sham' by most western democracies.

Suu Kyi, the 1991 Nobel peace laureate, was only freed from a seven-year house detention sentence on November 13, six days after the polls. Her NLD party, which won the 1990 polls by a landslide, refused to contest the last election as military-imposed regulations would have forced them to drop Suu Kyi from the party to do so.

Suu Kyi has spent about 15 of the past 21 years under some form of house arrest.

Hla Kyaing <hla.kyaing@gmail.com>, [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] Recent Burmese News - 110615 [1 Attachment]Wed, 15. Jun 2011 15:33:30

VOA News - June 13, 2011 - <<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/Burmese-Pro-Democracy-Leader-Appeals-for-Labor-Rights-123743079.html>>

Burmese Pro-Democracy Leader Appeals for Labor Rights

Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi is appealing to the International Labor Organization for continued help in improving her country's dismal record on human rights and labor rights. Unable to leave Burma, she made her appeal via video to delegates attending the annual International Labor Conference in Geneva.

In her video message, Suu Kyi, expresses her gratitude to the International Labor Organization [ILO] for its steadfast work on behalf of the Burmese people.

She said social justice is the base of lasting peace, and few organizations have succeeded in pursuing this goal as has the ILO.

Burma's pro-democracy leader praised the ILO's achievements in improving international labor standards, employment and social protection for workers around the world. The 65-year-old Nobel Laureate urged the ILO to build upon these successes to make sure all nations adopt policies, which lead to social justice.

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"Here I would like to make a special appeal for my own country, Burma," said Suu Kyi. "Once upon a time it was considered the nation most likely to succeed in Southeast Asia. But now it has fallen behind almost all the other nations in this region. The work of the ILO in our country has highlighted the indivisibility of social, political and economic concerns."



Myanmar pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi talks to reporters after meeting with U.S. Senator John McCain (R-AZ) at her home in Yangon June 2, 2011 (file photo)

She noted the ILO's efforts to eliminate forced labor and the recruitment of child soldiers have broadened to include the cause of prisoners of conscience and freedom of expression, and to get Burma's military leaders to embrace the rule of law.

The ILO has been combating forced labor in Burma for more than a decade. Little progress has been made to eliminate this practice, despite repeated promises by the military junta to end forced labor and to reform the country's labor laws.

Earlier this month, a special ILO committee overseeing the situation of Burma, also known as Myanmar,

expressed regret that no substantive progress has been made toward complying with a 1998 Commission of Inquiry to end forced labor and to prosecute those involved in this practice.

Suu Kyi said the Burmese people have been struggling for political change in Burma for a very long time. She said they are hungry for a society based on social justice joined to political and economic progress.

"We look to the ILO to expand its activities in Burma to help usher in an era of broad-based social justice in our country," she said. "We are particularly concerned that our workers should be enabled to form trade unions, concerned with the highest international standards as soon as possible."

In an emotional appeal to the ILO, the Burmese pro-democracy leader notes failure in one nation raises obstacles in the way of progress in all other nations. Suu Kyi said Burma must not be allowed to fail and the world must not be allowed to fail Burma.

AsiaNews.it - <<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Aung-San-Suu-Kyi-calls-on-Beijing-to-dialogue-with-Burmese-opposition-21709.html>>
05/31/2011 13:34 MYANMAR - CHINA

Aung San Suu Kyi calls on Beijing to dialogue with Burmese opposition

Yangon (AsiaNews / Agencies) - Chinese diplomats in Myanmar should engage in dialogue with the National League for Democracy (NLD), the main Burmese opposition party banned by the regime on the eve of the elections last November.

The Nobel Peace Prize Winner and NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi made the call during a videoconference with the University of Hong Kong. In a live web link up from her home in Yangon, the "Lady" also asked Beijing to tie its stellar economic development to a series of reforms on the path for democracy and openness.



Answering a question from the *South China Morning Post* (SCMP) on relations with Beijing, Aung San Suu Kyi said she has "long sought" contacts with the Chinese leadership, which "has always shunned us." China has initiated several projects and economic development in

neighbouring Myanmar, which is why the opposition leader calls for "talks also with us" and more contacts with members of the NLD".

The Nobel Laureate also noted that the rapid growth of the Chinese giant has caused social problems in Myanmar, including trafficking of women along the border in the direction of the Chinese provinces. Beijing is interested in maintaining good relations with the leadership of government, by not meddling in the internal affairs of a country with which it does trade and business.

Aung San Suu Kyi, free after spending 15 of the last 21 years under house arrest since 2003 and who is confined to Yangon, told the audience of students, academics and community leaders she sees a future Burmese society, "free, open, educated" in which there is "respect for the law" and the possibility of a market economy modelled after on the local reality.

The opposition leader states she does not want to choose between China and the West, because both will be necessary for the development of Myanmar. If she had to choose, she states, "we are on the side of human rights." Aung San Suu Kyi ended by clarifying her message to the leadership in Beijing: "China is a great country - says the Nobel Peace Prize Winner - the Chinese people are a great people with a marvellous and long history... They can afford to take more steps, they can afford to be daring, they can afford to allow room for all kinds of opinions. "

Finally the opposition leader also confirmed her intention to make a political tour of the country, as anticipated in recent weeks. The route and itinerary have not yet been established, because the Burmese authorities have not granted any "particular assurance" for her safety.

Aung Thu <aungthu@t-online.de>

Asia Pacific News - AFP/cc - < http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_asiapacific/view/1132744/1.html>

Merkel urges ASEAN to discuss Myanmar problems

Posted: 02 June 2011 1314 hrs

SINGAPORE: German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Thursday urged ASEAN to openly discuss Myanmar's political and human rights problems before the country takes its turn as chair of the regional bloc.

"Looking at the discussion about Myanmar and its interest in taking over the presidency of ASEAN, I am a little bit concerned," she told a forum in Singapore, a founding member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Merkel told an audience of government officials, foreign diplomats and academics that "the present leadership of Myanmar has not really proved that they are serious about embarking on the road of democracy."

The 10-member ASEAN rotates its chairmanship annually, with Indonesia currently presiding.

ASEAN diplomats say Myanmar is pressing to take its turn in 2014, which means holding summits in a country considered an outcast in the international community.

"We think that perhaps countries in your region ought to discuss these matters openly because standing up for democracy and for freedom, this is not only a regional commitment, it's a global commitment that we've all entered," Merkel said.

The bloc has a principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of members despite criticism over the years that it is little more than a talking shop.

Myanmar skipped its turn to chair ASEAN in 2006 due to international pressure for democratic reforms, but only on the condition that it could ask to lead the group at a later time if it felt it was ready, regional officials said.

Campaign group Human Rights Watch said in May that giving the chair to Myanmar would be an embarrassment for a group that is already struggling for credibility.

"Rewarding Burma with ASEAN's chairmanship after it staged sham elections and still holds 2,000 political prisoners would be an embarrassment for the region," HRW Asia deputy director Elaine Pearson said in a statement.

"ASEAN leaders need to decide if they will let Burma demote ASEAN to the laughing stock of intergovernmental forums."

ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest in November shortly after an election, Myanmar's first in 20 years that led to the handover of power from the military to a nominally civilian government.

Her release was welcomed worldwide, but Western governments who impose sanctions on Myanmar want the new government to do more to demonstrate its commitment to human rights.

Burma, from a German Perspective

As a leading member of the European Union, Germany is known among Burmese opposition groups for its soft stance towards the Burmese government and is assumed to have played a key role in relaxing EU sanctions against Burma last April. Since Burma installed a civilian government in March, there have been increasing exchanges between Germany and the new administration in Naypyidaw. Recently, Burma's state-run newspapers gave extensive coverage to meetings between Burmese senior government officials and German delegations, most of which were headed by Germany's ambassador to Burma, Julius Georg Luy.

In this exclusive interview with Irrawaddy reporter Ba Kaung, Ambassador Luy, who has been posted in Rangoon since September 2008, discusses EU sanctions on Burma, as well as the role of German companies alleged to be indirectly involved in Burma's suspicious weapon programs. He also offers his opinion of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.



German Ambassador Julius Georg Luy

Question: How would you describe your diplomatic experience in Burma and your relationship with government officials there?

Answer: For a diplomat present-day Myanmar is an interesting and professionally challenging post. The historical, political, social and economic complexities of this multiethnic country are extraordinary and hard to decipher and understand. In the last few weeks we took up the first contacts with the new government.

Q: How has the bilateral relationship evolved since Dr. Richard von Weizsacker, the former acting president of the Federal Republic of Germany, visited Burma in February of 1986?

A: Since 1986 there has not been much of an evolution. As a reaction to the political events in Myanmar unfolding from 1988 on, EU member states

reduced their relations with Myanmar considerably and introduced sanctions. It is in the hand of Myanmar's Government to improve relations through substantial reforms.

Q: What is Germany's position on last year's election and the new government in Naypyidaw?

A: Elections in Myanmar took place under very difficult conditions. The democratic opposition and parties representing ethnic minorities were massively discriminated against. The whole process was neither free, fair nor inclusive.

However, the President's inaugural speech of March 30 contained a number of positive statements and perspectives. Yet, at the end of the day, the government will be judged by its deeds, not its words.

Q: When Burma went to the polls on Nov. 7, there were major clashes on the Thai-Burmese border between the Burmese army and a faction of a former cease-fire group. A similar situation also occurred in Shan State more recently, and fears of renewed conflict are rising in other areas. What can the outside world do to help Burma resolve its ethnic tensions?

A: There is no simple recipe to solve the ethnic conflicts which persisted from historical Burma into present-day Myanmar. They are a challenge which at least equals and is connected to the democratic challenge. Ethnic minorities need a proper and adequate participation in the political decision-making of Myanmar. Some hopes rely on the new regional and state structures, which still have to prove their actual political impact. The clue for a solution lies within Myanmar herself, and a proper process of national reconciliation would—for all sides involved—be a good and wise way to go.

Q: On May 30, you led a delegation of German foundations meeting with Burmese government ministers and the Speaker of the Union Parliament in Naypyidaw. Burma's state-run newspapers subsequently reported that Germany agreed to assist the country's social welfare programs. Does this mean that Germany is going to resume official development cooperation with the new government in Burma?

A: It is the common position upheld by all EU member states, including Germany, that the time to resume fully fledged official development cooperation has not come yet. This is very costly for Myanmar and has tangible effects: According to UN statistics, Myanmar annually receives US \$6 of economic assistance per capita, whereas neighboring Laos receives

\$60!

Q: In a phone call with Aung San Suu Kyi in March, German Chancellor Angela Merkel called for the release of political prisoners in Burma and on June 2, she urged the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) to openly discuss Burma's human rights issues before allowing the country to take the bloc's chairmanship. Have you ever raised these issues with Burmese government officials in the country or made any public statement about them?

A: The release of political prisoners is an important political priority of the European Union and the German government. It has been and is being raised in our meetings with all our partners in Myanmar. These and other human rights questions are central issues taken up by the German government's Human Rights Commissioner during his talks in Myanmar last week.

Q: There have been reports that you have actively argued in closed meetings that the EU should lift its sanctions against Burma. At the same time, Chancellor Merkel is urging the Burmese government to release political prisoners. Which do you think should occur first—the release of prisoners, or the withdrawal of sanctions?

A: As I said before, the release of political prisoners is an important political priority of the German government. With regard to the second part of your question, I would like to state once more: the time to lift more sanctions has not come yet. I regret however that public discussions about how to support the Myanmar people often underestimate the wide range of instruments available in the diplomatic and foreign policy toolbox. If you read the EU's common position you will find that it does not only contain restrictions, but also encouragement, too.

Q: Leaked US diplomatic cables show that German officials, along with those of Spain and Italy, have expressed doubts about the effectiveness of EU sanctions against Burma. What role did Germany play in the EU's decision to ease sanctions in April?

A: As a matter of principle I don't comment on leaked confidential cables. However, Germany has substantially supported the work on the most recent decision of the Foreign Affairs Council of the EU on the common position. It is a position supported unequivocally by all EU member states.

Q: The EU has imposed an arms embargo on Burma, as well as a limited ban on trade and investment, but this hasn't prevented German weapons manufacturer Fritz Werner from continuing to do business with the Burmese military. How does this work within the framework of EU sanctions? Can you tell us more about the nature and extent of these sanctions, and why you think they are too stringent?

A: To my best knowledge, the company Fritz Werner has no arms-related business in Myanmar. Anything else would not only violate the EU's common position and be punishable accordingly, but harm as well the business and reputation of any European company considerably.

Q: Last year Al Jazeera reported that the German firm Deckel Maho Gildemeister (DMG) sent engineers to Burma to assist with the installation of specialized imported machinery in Burmese military-owned factories. Is it true, as the report claims, that German diplomats in Rangoon visited two of those factories in 2008 and 2009?

A: DMG has delivered education-related turning machines to Myanmar. The repeated visits of experts and officials give us no indication that these machines are not being used in accordance with their assigned purpose.

Q: During President Thein Sein's recent visit to China, Burma and China said that they had established a strategic relationship. What are Germany's views on the regional and international implications of China's growing influence in Burma?

A: Myanmar seems to strive for balanced relations with the region. This includes her relations with China as well.

However, trade and economic relations between Myanmar and China have increased considerably over the last few years.

Q: What do you think about Burma's relationship with North Korea, and reports that Naypyidaw has nuclear ambitions?

A: Any report on developments anywhere in the world not in line with the international obligations arising out of the Non Proliferation Treaty is taken very seriously by the international community.

Q: We have heard that the German embassy in Rangoon believes that Aung San Suu Kyi should not be singled out for meetings with EU diplomats, since such an action might offend representatives of other opposition parties. What are your views on Suu Kyi's status in relation to that of leaders of parties represented in the Parliament in Naypyidaw?

A: Germany—as like other EU member states—respects the decision of political parties to participate in last year's elections as well as the decision of other political parties not to take part. We maintain contacts with a wide range of political actors, as well as with members of the opposition, be they inside or outside Myanmar's new institutions. Amongst

them Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is an outstanding personality giving an impressive example of self-discipline, modesty, sacrifice and an untiring search for peaceful solutions. She is and will be an inspiration for many people and has her important place in Myanmar's political development

"Burma News" <burma_news@verizon.net> Burma News - 02 June 2011 Datum: Fri 03 Jun 2011 06:05:02

AFP – 02 June 2011 - <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_asiapacific/view/1132828/1/.html>

US senator McCain meets Myanmar's Suu Kyi

YANGON – US Senator John McCain pledged to support efforts to bring democracy to Myanmar in talks Thursday with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi during a visit to assess the new political landscape.



US Senator John McCain (L) meets Myanmar democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi at her lakeside home in Yangon. (AP Photo/Khin Maung Win)

"Mr. McCain said they (the US) will always help and support Myanmar democracy. We are also satisfied with the meeting with him," Suu Kyi told reporters after the pair met for about one hour at her lakeside mansion.

The US senator has described Suu Kyi as "my inspiration" and wrote in the guestbook at her party's headquarters: "Thank you for unwavering support for 'the Lady'," as she is widely known in Burma.

On Wednesday McCain, the ranking Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, met with Vice President Tin Aung Myint Oo and Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin in the capital Naypyidaw, according to state media.

They "exchanged views on promotion of bilateral ties and cooperation between the two countries," the New Light of Myanmar reported.

He also met Thursday with senior figures of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party as well as a small group of recently released political prisoners and people infected with HIV.

McCain also met Khin Maung Swe, the leader of the National Democratic Force, formed by a group of former members of Suu Kyi's party who broke away to run in the November vote and won several seats in parliament.

"We will discuss the hot issues here like sanctions and (a prisoner) amnesty," Khin Maung Swe told AFP before the talks. AFP/de

Hla Kvaino <hla.kvaino@gmail.com> - Burma at risk of an uprising - INLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSKI Recent Burmese News - 110605

The Bangkok Post - <<http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/240403/mccain-warns-burma-risks-arab-style-uprising>>

McCain: Burma at risk of an uprising - Published: 3/06/2011 at 01:31 PM

U.S. Senator John McCain has warned that Burma could face a Middle East-style revolution if the new army-backed government fails to implement democratic reform and improve human rights.



US Senator John McCain, seen here with Myanmar democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi following their meeting, at her house in Yangon on June 2. McCain pledged to support efforts to bring democracy to Myanmar in talks with Suu Kyi during a visit to assess country's new political landscape.

"The winds of change are now blowing, and they will not be confined to the Arab world," the senior Republican told reporters on Friday, at the end of a three-day visit to the military-dominated nation.

"Governments that shun evolutionary reforms now will eventually face revolutionary change later."

McCain was in Burma to assess the new political landscape after the junta handed power to a nominally civilian but army-backed government in March following the country's first election in 20 years.

The November vote, won by the military's political proxies, was marred by widespread complaints of cheating and the exclusion of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who was released from house arrest shortly afterwards.

McCain urged the government to ensure the safety of Suu Kyi, who said this week she hoped to soon conduct a political

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tour around the country that will be a key test of her freedom following her release.

"Aung San Suu Kyi's last attempt to travel freely was marred by violence, and the new government's ability and willingness to prevent a similar outcome this time will be an important test of their desire for change," McCain said.

In 2003 Suu Kyi's convoy was attacked in an ambush apparently organised by a regime frightened by her popularity.

She was arrested along with many party activists and placed under house arrest for a third time. The dissident has spent most of the past two decades in detention.

On Thursday McCain, who has described Suu Kyi as "my inspiration", met the Nobel Peace Prize winner and pledged to support efforts to foster democracy.

His visit comes as President Barack Obama, who beat McCain in the 2008 White House race, pursues greater engagement with Burma.

McCain, who held talks with regime figures in the capital Naypyidaw on Wednesday, said it was "clear" that the new government wanted a better relationship with the United States.

But he said it was too soon to lift economic sanctions, calling for the release of the country's more than 2,000 political prisoners. [Burma at risk of an uprising](#)

THE BURMANET NEWS. June 16. 2011. newsletter covering Burma. June 16. 2011 Issue #4211. "Editor" <editor@burmanet.org>, www.burmanet.org

Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) - Published: 16 June 2011

China urges restraint, KIA seeks mediation

By **JOSEPH ALLCHIN** - <<http://www.dvb.no/news/china-urges-restraint-kia-seeks-mediation/16168>>



Ethnic Kachin refugees travel on vehicles with their belongings as they flee fighting near Burma's border with China (US Campaign for Burma via Reuters)

China has called for "restraint" in its first official acknowledgement of the escalating conflict over the border with Burma, following requests from the Kachin Independence Army that Beijing plays an intermediary role between it and the Burmese government.

Hong Lei, China's foreign affairs spokesperson, told a press conference in Beijing today that the government was "paying attention to the situation in Myanmar [Burma] near the border area. We urge the two parties to exercise restraint and prevent the escalation of the situation, and resolve the relevant disputes through peaceful negotiations."

The spokesperson of the Kachin Independence Organisation, the political wing of the KIA, James Lundau, told DVB today (16.06.2011) that China was the only foreign power capable of negotiating between the two sides to bring about an end to the fighting.

China is also a stakeholder in the conflict: Lundau told DVB that 7,000 refugees had now fled to China, which will be monitoring the conflict in fear of its infrastructure projects in the region, including the controversial Myitsone Dam near the Kachin state capital of Myitkyina.

Fighting began on Thursday last week but temporarily quietened on Monday, with little indication of any major successes for either side. A spokesperson for the KIO in Laiza near the China border told AFP that, "Without the involvement of another country as a witness, as a facilitator... there is no solution."

Casualty figures are hard to ascertain, not least because the Burmese government has made no public statement on the

fighting. The conflict however seems part of a wider concerted effort to rein in key ethnic areas that, like Kachin state, have huge strategic and economic potential for Burma.

China has been a key ally to Naypyidaw but is ever wary of the instability that Burma's ethnic politics seemingly creates. In August 2009 the Chinese chastised Naypyidaw for creating a similar influx of refugees, this time from the Kokang region in Shan state where fighting broke out.

The KIO's 17-year ceasefire deal with the Burmese in 1994 allowed its to maintain arms in exchange for Burmese control of the crucial jade mines in areas such as Hpakant.

But the advent of the government's Border Guard Force plan, which groups like the KIO refused to sign on account that it would effectively end their autonomy, has pushed the Burmese to aggressively attempt to bring the areas under their control.



Zin Linn <zinlinn@cscoms.com> - [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma, Sat, 18. Jun 2011

People's Daily Online - June 18, 2011 15:32 - <<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90777/90851/7413878.html>>

Myanmar reiterates it opens door of peace to dissidents

Myanmar official media Saturday said the government would open door of peace to dissidents, referring to a recent armed clashes between the government forces and the ethnic armed group of Kachin Independence Army (KIA) based in northernmost Kachin state bordering China.

The New Light of Myanmar cited the attitude of the government as saying that "It would open the door of peace to welcome those who are holding different views if they wish to cooperate with the government in mutually concerned cases for the interest of the nation and the people and run for election in compliance with democratic practice to justly gain power".

"The only objective of the Tatmadaw (armed forces) in launching attacks on KIA is just to protect its members and an important hydropower project of the nation without even a single intention of aggression and oppression," clarified the official report.

The report added the government forces had to inevitably attack the KIA just to rescue its officers detained by the KIA and to protect the high-cost Tarpein hydropower project being implemented with the Chinese side.

According to the report, in mid-April, the KIA made threats to stop quarry work on the east bank of the Malikha river, entering Lahsa hydropower project site and threatening Chinese staff to move to the west bank of the river within two days and to withdraw the extended camps from the east bank as soon as possible.

On June 8, two government military officers, who went to KIA camp for negotiation, were detained by the KIA which also opened fire at the government forces who were marching to the Tarpein hydropower project site.

After heavy weapon fire exchange, the two military officers were rescued the next day, the report said, adding that although the government forces informed the KIA to withdraw from its camp near the power project site within two days, the KIA rejected to follow by launching heavy weapon fire at the plant from its Dunbon outpost and blowing up pylons carrying cables connecting the plant and the Bhamo district.

The clashes led to the occupation of the camp by the government forces on June 12.

As a follow-up of the fighting between the two sides, from June 14 to 16, the KIA blew up 25 bridges including bailey, concrete and wooden ones which are key transportation route to Kachin state, the report disclosed.

The Tarpein hydropower project is a heavily-invested joint venture project between Myanmar's Ministry of Electric Power-1 and Datang (Yunnan) United Hydropower Developing Company of China, according to the report.

Of the two-phase 400-megawatt project, the first phase of the 240-megawatt (mw) Tarpein-1 hydropower plant comprising four 60-mw generators has been completed yielding power at 1,065 million kilowatt-hours yearly. The remaining 160-megawatt plant project is underway.

The Irrawaddy Today's Newsletter for Thursday, June 9, 2011, news@irrawaddy.org, www.irrawaddy.org

The Irrawaddy - <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=21459> - June 9, 2011

No Time to Waste on Burma: Ban Ki-moon – By Lalit K Jha



Burmese stand by windows of their home in Dala township in Rangoon. (Photo: AP)

CHICAGO — The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, told a meeting of the Group of Friends on Burma on Wednesday that there is “no time to waste” in this Southeast Asian country, which even after the formation of a new government continues to face its challenges in the fields of human rights and democracy.

“There is no time to waste,” UN spokesman Martin Nesirky said at his daily noon briefing at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

Releasing all political prisoners and reaching out as broadly as possible through dialogue to all those who have a contribution to make, including Aung San Suu Kyi and political forces inside and outside Parliament, will be key to ensuring that any reforms enjoy broad support, he said.

Both the secretary-general and his special envoy on Burma, Vijay Nambiar, briefed the Group of Friends on Burma during its first meeting since last year’s elections and the formation of the new government in Burma, which pro-democracy activists say is military rule in new garb.

“Whether the new government has the political will, capacity and support to live up to its commitments and promises is yet to be seen. In order for Burma to move forward, all citizens should be allowed to participate in building their country,” said Nesirky.

President Thein Sein’s stated recognition of the need to move forward in a way that strengthens national unity, including through wide-ranging reforms, is welcome, he said. Nesirky also stated the meeting took place against a backdrop of significant recent developments that could affect the country’s future direction and standing regionally and globally.

Collectively too, the international community has a shared responsibility towards the people of Burma, the UN spokesman said, adding that enabling the current process to result in a successful transition requires the global community to follow events closely, but also to recognize efforts and maximize opportunities for meaningful change.

“That is why, with the cooperation of the new government and the continued support of member states, the secretary-general is personally committed to the United Nations’ long-term engagement with Burma in the political, humanitarian and development areas, all of which are important to advance durable peace and democracy,” Nesirky said.

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Meanwhile, Burma figured into a White House state dinner hosted by US President Barack Obama in honor of German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

"Freedom is indivisible. Each and every one has the same right to freedom, be it in North Africa or Belarus, in Myanmar [Burma] or Iran," Merkel said in a toast.

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

Time - May 30, 2011 at 10:11 am - <<http://globalspin.blogs.time.com/2011/05/30/burmas-suu-kyi-announces-high-stakes-political-tour/>>

Burma's Suu Kyi Announces High Stakes Political Tour

- by Emily Rauhala

Pro-democracy campaigner Aung San Suu Kyi confirmed today that she's planning a visit to Burma's provinces this summer. "I hope to be able to travel out of Rangoon in the month of June, as soon as I have got rid of all the work that has piled up," she said in a video conference hosted by Hong Kong University. The Nobel Laureate has spent almost 15 of the last 21 years under house arrest.

The tour, if it proceeds, would be her first trip since her release last fall and, indeed, her first sojourn since a pro-Junta mob ambushed her entourage as she toured the countryside eight years ago today. Several of her supporters were killed in the May 30, 2003 attack. Suu Kyi, who initially fled, was apprehended and detained. "The generals saw her crowds growing larger," a diplomat told TIME after the incident, "and decided they had to stop it."

That, of course, could happen again. But Suu Kyi didn't dwell on the danger, so neither will I. Instead, here are some of the most interesting bits from today's live chat:

On Sanctions: Suu Kyi reiterated her support for **international sanctions** on Burma, saying that, as far as she can tell, the policy is hurting the government, not the people.

On China: "China can afford to be daring, to allow for all types of opinion," she told the crowd. "Open your greatness to everybody else." Suu Kyi also voiced support for imprisoned dissidents: "You are not alone," she told them.

On India: The democracy campaigner called out the world's largest democracy for its ambivalence on Burma. "India is not as concerned about our fate as we would like them to be," she said.

On OBL: "With regards to the recent death of bin Laden, it just shows that violence ends with violence, and that there is too much violence already in our world and we've got to try do something about it."

Just as the talk drew to a close, the power went out in Rangoon. It seemed a fitting ending: The Lady, in half-light, looking out at the world.

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[guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk), Sunday 19 June 2011 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jun/19/unhappy-birthday-aung-san-suu-kyi>>

Aung San Suu Kyi's unhappy birthday - Wainin Pwint Thon

The opposition leader is free, but Burma's new dictatorship is torturing and killing civilians. We can no longer 'wait and see'

Until last year, when I told people I was from Burma, people would say: "Oh, I hear it's really bad there. Isn't that where that woman is under arrest."

Now when I tell people I am from Burma they often say: "Oh, aren't things getting better there now?"

The answer is no, but the fact that some people have this impression is good news for Burma's new dictator, Thein Sein. Aung San Suu Kyi may have been released, and is free to celebrate her birthday, but about 2,000 political prisoners remain in jail, and are treated worse than in the past. Many, including my father, have been moved to remote prisons to make it harder for family members to visit. More than 150 are being denied medical care for illnesses, a cruel form of torture that causes suffering and even death. And they are serving much longer sentences than before, with many set to stay in prison for 65 years.



Aung San Suu Kyi at the National League for Democracy HQ, shortly after her release from house arrest. Photograph: Dnm/Getty Images

Recently political prisoners protesting about their conditions were thrown into "dog cells", prison cages for dogs where they are forced to act like dogs and beg for food and are often not even allowed to talk.

At the same time Thein Sein has stepped up attacks against ethnic minorities in Burma's border areas. Amnesty International and Burma Campaign UK have received reports of Burmese army soldiers mortar-bombing villages, gang-raping women and executing and torturing people. Thein Sein is breaking 20-year ceasefire agreements with armed ethnic groups and bringing the country to the verge of civil war.

When the previous dictator, Than Shwe, came to power in 1992, he

admitted that there were political prisoners, and released more than 400. In contrast, Thein Sein denies political prisoners even exist.

With human rights abuses on the increase, the threat of widespread civil war and no genuine political change, you would expect the international community to be taking urgent action. Instead, the response has been to wait and see what the new dictator does.

This has been the standard response to events in Burma for my entire life. I was born in 1989, a year when the dictatorship was rounding up and jailing leaders of the democracy movement, including Aung San Suu Kyi. At the time the international community argued we must wait and see what happened with elections planned for 1990. The regime lost the elections but refused to hand over power.

In 1994 I started school in Rangoon. At the time the international community was arguing we must wait and see what happened at a national convention that was drafting a new constitution. It was another 13 years before that convention finished its task – a constitution designed to legalise dictatorship, passed in a rigged referendum in 2008.

From 2008 we were told to wait and see what happened in elections that were held in 2010. The elections were rigged and the main pro-democracy party, the National League for Democracy, was banned. In any case, under the new constitution parliament is completely powerless: a showcase to present an image of change, while the generals take off their uniforms and run the country just as before.

Now we are told to wait and see what Thein Sein's new government does. We don't need to wait any longer. We already know his regime sends soldiers to rape women. We already know his regime bombs villages, killing civilians. We already know that his regime tortures those who peacefully protest for their rights. Thein Sein is no reformer, it is business as usual – and while the world says we must wait and see, my people are suffering and dying.

It is time for urgent and concrete action from the international community, there must be no more "wait and see".

Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary general, must appoint a new UN envoy to Burma and restart UN efforts to secure political dialogue between the dictatorship, Aung San Suu Kyi and ethnic groups. Ban must ensure the envoy has the backing of world leaders in achieving two urgent objectives: the release of all political prisoners, and a nationwide ceasefire.

When it meets later this year, the UN general assembly should establish a commission of inquiry into possible war crimes and crimes against humanity. We know from experience that when real pressure is applied the dictatorship is forced to respond. A UN inquiry is likely to reduce human rights abuses, and encourage Thein Sein to start dialogue, because he'll be afraid of real consequences if he doesn't.

The international community must face the fact that there will be no reform in Burma without real pressure. "Wait and see" costs lives. It's time for action.
