

WOMEN of BURMA

Brazen Out "Utter Cruelty"

In Order to Give Greater Freedom for All



Women's Human Rights: Still A Rough Journey Ahead for Women of Burma

Politically active women of Burma are not protected or given any help from local women's organisations because these organisations are founded and organised by the military regime and led by their wives. Far from protecting women and girls from human rights abuses including sexual and gender-based violence, it is the military government that causes fear through its brutality and lack of mercy in quelling dissent and opposition. When Maung Wai, Burmese representative, to the United Nations said in October 2007 before the UN Security Council that "Traditional law guarantees the equal rights of women" he was not trying to

be comical as he definitely meant dead serious. Equal rights of women to military regime mean to treat women just the same as the men – to use as porters for advancing army to crush ethnic armed groups, to beat up, attack, abuse, rape, torture, throw into jail or kill if women are politically active and demand democracy and human rights. The military regime known as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) carries out state sanctioned kidnapping or taking ransom by detaining women family members or women relatives of political activists if they avoid being arrested or refuse to give in to the authority.

This campaign material for women of Burma are compiled by the Asia-Pacific Peoples' Partnership for Burma (APPPB). The APPPB is the network of organisations and individuals that aims to develop a strong broad-based partnership of peoples of Asia-Pacific advocating and mobilising a solidarity movement for promoting freedoms, democracy and human rights in Bruma. This compilation aims to assist solidarity friends of Burma in their Burma campaign activities.

PROFILES

Women Political Activists Arrested & in Hiding During & After August and September Uprising



Ma Nilar Thein

**WANTED & LISTED as "TERRORIST!" by the regime.
On 21st November she calls for greater security of
women's human rights defender**

Nilar Thein (aged 35) is a leading member of 88' Generation Students Group. Nilar is a mother of 6 months old baby girl and wife of Kyaw Min Yu (a) Jimmy - a former political prisoner and one of the leaders of 88' Generation Students Group. She was detained more than one time since 1988 and was arrested and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in January 1997 for actively participating in the 1996 student movement. Her crime is for protesting and demanding for democracy and human rights.

Right now, she is on the run and in hiding to avoid persecution by the authorities leaving her little daughter with her mother-in-law. In an interview given to the Radio Free Asia (RFA) Nilar said "I am so choked up with feeling when I had to leave my daughter (4 months old) with my mother-in-law on 27th September. It will not be wrong to say it was the worse day of my life...[but] I don't regret at all. I don't because just like my daughter I see many faces of children in my country whose future lacks. With that I encourage myself to continue this journey."



Ma Thet Thet Aung

**Mother & Mother-in-law were taken as ransom by
the authorities in order to make her surrender
leaving three young children at home with no one
to care for**

Thet Thet Aung (aged 30) is a university student majoring in Philosophy. She was one of the founders of women group of 88' Generation Students Group in July 2007.

Thet Thet has 3 young children, the youngest is one and a half year old, and her husband Ko Chit Ko Linn, also a member of 88' Generation Students, was also arrested on 8th October for participating in the recent protests while Thet Thet narrowly escaped on

that day but was never being able to return home. Thet Thet was in the hiding along with her aunt Daw Sann Sann Tin and cousin Noe Noe. Her mother and mother-in-law were arrested by the authorities so that she would come out from hiding and would give in. Until early October, her mother was still detained by the authorities but mother-in-law was released a few days after being taken. On 19th October, she was arrested from a hiding place in Tarmwe Township in Rangoon.



Daw Sann Sann Tin

Arrested for helping activists to hide and assisting democracy movement since 1988

Daw Sann Sann Tin (aged 57) is mother of two. One of her sons is Nyi Nyi Aung who is one of the exiled activists and member of All Burma Students' Democratic Movement Association (Ma-Ka-Da) led by Min Zeya and Htay Kywe during 1988 Uprising. She has

been an instrumental for activists for democracy and human rights since 1988.

She had previously been arrested several times by the regime since 1990. Her crime was for helping activists who sacrifice their life for the people of Burma and risk everything to bring better future for the country.

Her loving-kindness was considered a threat to the regime and she was arrested on 19th October 2007 in Tarmwe Township in Rangoon.



Ma Sandar Minn

Active since 1988 and being arrested several times because she would not stop demanding democracy and human rights

Sandar Minn (aged 39) is a leading member of women group within 88' Generation Students Group. During 1988 she actively participated in the famous 8.8.88 Uprising.

She was also one of the leaders among Tri Colours Students (known as *Thone-yaung-chare*) and took care of security for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. She was arrested and imprisoned on 19th July 1989 and released after serving her 3 years jail term.

In 1996, she was allegedly accused to having involved in Swedaw Pagoda's terrorist attack but was released after a month of interrogation.

In 2003, she becomes the Operation Manager for the non-governmental organisation called the La Pyi Won Children Development Organisation.

Since the formation of 88' Generation Students Group, she has taken a leading role and she is one of the founders of the 88' Women Group.

In late August, she was one of the organisers of the women led peaceful march on 27th August which drew about 2000 people to join in.

She was arrested by the military regime on 25th August 2007 at her home.

What is the 88' Generation Students Group and who are they?

The 88' Generation Students Group is a group of pro-democracy activists formed in 2005 by former student leaders of 1988 Uprising since their release from long term imprisonment for their political belief and activities, and formed to work for peace and national reconciliation in Burma.



Ma Phyu Phyu Thin
A carer of people living with HIV (PLHIV) and
AIDS is currently on the regime's
WANTED LIST!

Ma Phyu Phyu Thin (aged 36) is a member of the National League for Democracy (NLD) since 1990.

She had been imprisoned in late 1999 for 4 months for organising Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Mandalay trip.

In 2002, she becomes a leading activist for HIV/AIDS Education Program and her Community Outreach activities were banned by the military regime. She has safe houses running for HIV patients in Rangoon and is providing care for PLHIV.

She was shortly detained for her involve-

ment in prayer campaign calling for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in May 2007 for more than a month while the PLHIV she provides care were left unattended medically.

On August 19, she joined the 88' Generation Students Group and led some of the peaceful protests.

She went into hiding when 13 of 88' Generation Students Group's leaders were arrested by the military regime.

She is currently on the military regime's wanted list!



Ma Nwe Hninn Yee (a) Ma Noe Noe
A young member of 88' Generation Students
Group, this new generation of politically active
woman is born out of the regime's incompetency
in handling country's economy and brutality in
killing and beating of the Buddhist monks

Noe Noe (aged 20) was born just a year before a tragic event of 8.8.88 Peoples Uprising in which as many as 3000 protestors were killed by the military regime in Burma. She is still studying Philosophy to be a graduate when August and September Uprising took place.

She joined the women group of 88' Generation Students Group in July 2007 and not only participated but also organised

several activities in August and September peaceful protests.

She was arrested by the military regime on 19th October 2007 at a hiding place in Tarmwe, in Rangoon along with her aunt Daw Sann Sann Tin and her cousin Thet Thet Aung and two other male members of 88' Generation Students Group.



Ma Su Su Nway

**She was awarded 2006 John Humphrey Award
from Canada**

**She has a heart condition and is of small built
but determined to stand against injustice**

Su Su Nway (aged 36) is a labor rights activist and member of National League for Democracy (NLD).

She has been the first and only Burmese national to have successfully sued local government officials in 2005 under a 1999 domestic law that prohibits forced labour in Burma.

She was jailed in October 2005 after a punitive counter-action by the village authorities and was released from Insein Prison, Rangoon on June 6, 2006. Since her release she continued her determination for the country by leading and organising various campaigns and actions including prayer campaign for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and political prisoners in May 2007.

She was then arrested second time for a few months along with Phyu Phyu Thinn who is currently in hiding to avoid the regime's persecution.

Again once she was released she continued her human rights actions together with the 88' Generation Students Group and other NLD members.

She was able to evade the arrest from the authorities during their manhunt, however, was arrested on 13th November during the UN Human Rights Rapporteur Prof. Pinheiro's visit in the country. She was arrested with another youth activist Bo Bo Win Hlaing, as they were attempting to put anti-junta posters on a pro-junta and anti-US billboard.



Ma Ni Mo Hlaing

**Still on the run and on 21st November she calls
for greater security for women's human rights
defenders along with other women activists**

Ni Mo Hlaing (aged 38) was a university student when 1988 Uprising took place in Burma. Although joining the People's Development Party (PDP) as a member she helped organising election campaign for the NLD in May 1990. She was arrested in 1998 and detained at Insein Prison then released in 1999.

Since her release she works at the NLD Youth Wing's Central Office in Rangoon.

She joined in the peaceful march led by the 88' Generation Students Group. On 22nd August during women-led peaceful march, she was severely and repeatedly beaten by the members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association and the regime's thugs that all her clothes were torn off and her watch broken. She went into hiding on 24th August as her house was raided by the authority.



Ma Tin Moe Lwin
Politically active since 1988
Still on the run from the regime's persecution
after escaping the raid by the authority on 22nd
August 2007 and calls for greater security for
women's human rights defender

Tin Moe Lwin (aged 35) is politically activist since 1988 and participated in the 1988 Uprising in Thandwe, Arakan State.

She worked as volunteer for social work in the outskirts of Rangoon.

In 2005, she becomes a member of the 88' Generation Students Group and actively participated in the group's activities from 2006.

She joined the first protest against the fuel price hike on 19th August 2007 and was the leading organiser of the 22nd August

peaceful march. Since then she is hunted down by the military authority.

She participated in the protests from 19th through 23rd August. On 22nd August, the military regime raided her house but she was lucky enough to escape the raid. On 23rd, she had come face to face with the regime's violent crack down in Shwe Gone Taing, Bahan Township.

Since 24th August, she has been on the run to avoid the persecution.



Ma May Mie Oo
She was three months pregnant and now six but her
mother is not allowed to see and visit her in Prison
on 28th October

May Mie Oo (aged 34) was taken away from home by the authorities on 19th September in Rangoon the second day on which the Buddhist monks started their peaceful protests. All she did was handing out drinking water to protesting monks who were just chanting metta-sutta.

On 28th October, Daw Khin Khin, May Mie's mother went to Insein Prison with Ma

Ohmar who was just released from the same prison on 25th October to see her daughter but the prison authority denied of her detention there.

May Mie is in urgent need of operation for gynecology reason and her health may not allow her to give birth in Insein Prison. Both lives of mother and child can be at great risk if she is to give birth in the prison.



Ma Lay Lay Mon

**She was arrested and imprisoned for her involvement during 1996 Student Protests
Once she was released from prison she continued her political activism, however she is being detained for her involvement in peaceful protests led by the monks this year AGAIN!**

Lay Lay Mon (aged 29) began her activism as an executive member of Dagon University Students Union during the 1996 student protests. She was sentenced to 10 years under 5 (c) State Emergency Law. On 3rd January 2005, she was released from prison and continued her political activism since her

release in the '88 Generation Students Group. She took the leading role in organising various pro-democracy campaign activities.

Since September 18, she began to join the monk led protests and she was arrested on 22nd September. Currently she is being detained in Insein Prison.



Ma Thin Thin Aye (a) Ma Mie Mie

In an interview with UK-based Amnesty International (AI) Mie Mie urged that "The regime must create a stable political condition if it really means to implement genuine dialogue and if it has a genuine well intention towards its own people"

Mie Mie (a) Thin Thin Aye (aged 35) is mother of two. She involved in the 1988 Uprising as a high school student and joined the All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU) and the Democratic Party for a New Society (DPNS). In 1989, she was detained for 4 months because of her political activities. In 1996, she was arrested and sentenced to 7 years imprisonment for participating in the protests and was released in 2001. While in prison, she actively joined other fellow political prisoners in defying unjust treatments by the prison authorities.

She has taken leading role in the 88' Generation Students Group and involved in the early protest marches in August. She was among those women leaders who led

the August 22nd protest march which drew about 2,000 people.

However, she was soon forced into hiding as the authorities launched a manhunt for those they perceived as the leaders of the protests. The place where Mie Mie and other two male leaders of the 88 Group, Htay Kywe and Aung Thu, were in hiding was raided on 13 October as part of a continuing crackdown by the military authorities.

Mie Mie gives many interviews to the media outlets in which she talked about the brutality of the regime and her messages were very strong and defiant.

Mie Mie is being detained in Insein Prison right now and often taken out to be interrogated! Her safety is of great concern!

MORE WOMEN FACE DANGER & ARE AT RISK FOR THEIR LIVES

Hnin May Aung (a) Nobel Aye (aged 32) was arrested in 1998 along with her mother and sister. She was detained at a police station and released after about a week because she was underage at that time. Her sister was sentenced to 40 years on 15 January 1998 and was released on 6 July 2005. Hnin May Aung has continued her political activism by joining the 88' Generation Students Group and actively participated in the protests. She was arrested on 23rd August 2007.

Mya Mya Thet is a 25 year old student from Computer University in Rangoon. She is currently detained in Insein Prison and Yee Yee Win another woman activist who was just released last week reported that Mya Mya Thet has been interrogated often and tortured.

Dr. Daw May Win Myint (aged over 60) is a medical doctor and is Central Committee Member of the NLD's Women Wing. She was sentenced to 7 years in 1997 under Section 5 (c). She was to be released in 2004 but the military regime extended her sentence under Section 10 (A) State Protection Law. Right now, she is suffering from the problem of chronic headache in the prison.

Than Than Htay was arrested in 2000 and sentenced to 4 years under Section 5 (c). However, she is still detained.

Daw Win Mya Mya local organiser of the National League for Democracy (NLD) was arrested since September without any charge. She is over 60 years old and was seriously injured during 2003 Depayin Massacre where the military regime and its thugs carried out mob-attack on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her convoy. Her family business is also severely hampered by the authorities who tried to intimidate the customers against coming

to her fabric shop. Her shop in Zay Cho Market in Mandalay was also closed down by the authorities for having the NLD's flag.

Hnin Hnin and **Ei Ei**, two young women were arrested during the raid on Ngway Kyar Yan Monastery in September by the military regime. These two women were promised that they would be released if they made statement dictated by the authority. They were forced to state that they had had improper relationship with the monks, and these records were retained by the authority. Then only Ei Ei was released but Hnin Hnin was still detained even after this forced confession. This kind of event reflects the situation of political prisoners. However, it is very worrying indeed that Ei Ei has not yet to reach to her family. Her family had talked to media organisations publicly about this.

NLD member, **Daw Kyi Kyi Nyunt** of Taung Oo Town was also arrested for participating in the monks-led peaceful protests at No (2) Taung Oo Township Police Station. She was arrested on 27th October and was tortured – being severely kicked, beaten and verbally abused by Police Station Officer Bo Ye (a) Poe Ye, Deputy Aung Lwin and Deputy Myint Swe for two days consecutively in the township office and was released.



Buddhist nuns joined monks during September in peaceful protest on Shwedagon Pagoda and some of them languishing in the SPDC's detentions now!

Message from the APPPB Secretariat Words of Appreciation and Hope for Continuous Support!

Our deepest admiration to the incredibly brave people in Burma who marched on the streets throughout August and September, putting their life at stake by calling for democracy, justice and peace in the country.

With sharpened security and more than a thousand protesters continued to be detained, including leading democracy activists, it is now extremely difficult for the democratic forces inside the country to continue their defiance in the open. However, despite the unbelievably high price already paid by many, small scale protests are still held at different locations in Burma in different forms.

While attention on Burma in international media is declining, it's especially important that the momentum is maintained. Campaigns and new initiatives by Burmese and Burma solidarity groups around the world have already shown lasting support for the people of Burma in their calls for freedom, democracy and peace and APPPB would like to request that we, as actors on the outside, continue to take on responsibility and not let the situation in Burma return to status quo.

Saying this, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to all solidarity groups and devoted individuals around the world for your determined actions. We have been overwhelmed to witness your support and please know that it is deeply appreciated by the people of Burma both inside and outside the country.

VOICES OF POLITICAL ACTIVISTS' MOTHERS

It is not only these women, who have been arrested, detained, humiliated, tortured, interrogated and on the run and in hiding, suffer but also women relatives of both politically active women and men endure the pain as a result of their political belief and activities.

Daw Nyo Nyo Oo, mother of a student activist Ko Van Tate Tun, urged the authorities to solve country's problem peacefully and to release innocent students. In an interview given to the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) she said "I would like to appeal to release [the students] immediately since my children did not do any criminal activities. I want them to release the detainees as a mother seeing my children innocent."

Another mother's anguish was expressed while interviewed by DVB. **Daw San Aye**, mother of a detained student Ye Myat Hein, criticised that the Burmese military regime is not honest since it is only releasing members of parliament and politicians but not releasing the students who are detained. Upon the United Nations' Pinheiro and Gambari's trip to Burma, she added saying "If Pinheiro and others come they should not only see senior politicians and political prisoners in jails but also they should see mothers like us as well. We would like to tell them how we the mothers are suffering. I would like them to tell the world how we suffer and how we lose our human rights here".

"If Pinheiro and others come they should not only see senior politicians and political prisoners in jails but also they should see mothers like us as well. We would like to tell them how we the mothers are suffering. I would like them to tell the world how we suffer and how we lose our human rights here"

Daw San Aye, mother of a detained student

Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security adopted in 2000, brought the issue of sexual and gender-based violence during and post-conflict situations, and the importance of protecting women and girls in those circumstances, into the heart of the global discourse on peace and security.

Theme of this year 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence (25th November to 10th December) at international level aims to overcome challenges and obstacles that hinder the progress of activities, networks and organisations that campaign to end all forms of violence against women. This year campaign calls for greater accountability and political commitment from states to prevent and punish all forms of violence against women in practice, not just words. However, for women of Burma who face and are under state-sanctioned violence this call cannot be more relevant than ever and the international community needs to have strong commitment and will to work harder towards protecting and securing women's human rights.

Has Burma come close to realising CEDAW & UNSC Resolution 1325?

Here are some facts and information about women of Burma:

- ♀ Noble Peace Laureate, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, is still under house arrest for more than 12 years of last 18 years since 1989.
- ♀ Hundreds of women including the Buddhist nuns are arrested and treated like common criminals during 2007 August and September peaceful protests led by Buddhist monks who called on the regime to fulfill basic needs of the people and calling for peace and reconciliation in the country.
- ♀ Women from different ethnic nationalities are raped, killed and taken as porter in conflict zones.
- ♀ Hundreds of Buddhist nuns are arrested and in detention for their involvement in marching with monks to chant Metta-sutta in peaceful protests in which as many as hundreds being killed.
- ♀ Prison conditions are deliberately made unbearable to teach both women and men political inmates a lesson. Women political prisoners are tortured and interrogated in specific ways based on their gender.
- ♀ Some women activists from the 88' Generation Students group, NLD and ABSFU are still in hiding from the authorities as they refuse to give in to the regime's merciless crackdown.
- ♀ Women relatives- mothers, mothers-in-law, wives, sisters, aunts, and daughters of activists are detained and kidnapped by the authorities to make activists to surrender.

What you can do to help women of Burma?

- ☛ Sister a woman political prisoner and use your liberty to promote hers!
- ☛ Learn about women of Burma on these websites & blogs
 - <http://www.womenofburma.org/>
 - <http://www.aappb.org/>
 - <http://www.altsean.org>
- ☛ Spread the words on situation inside Burma
- ☛ Organise event or activity to show solidarity with women of Burma
- ☛ Engage with media to widen public awareness
- ☛ Lobby your government to pressure the military regime in Burma to stop all human rights violations, particularly of women's human rights