

Detention conditions

Detention conditions in prisons across Burma continue to be extremely poor. Since December 2005, the SPDC has prevented the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from carrying out prison visits and monitoring detention conditions in Burma's jails.⁸ Women face particular hardships and risks in Burma's prison system including physical and sexual violence, reproductive health problems, disease, and dire sanitation.⁹

In August 2006, Nyunt Yin died in Insein Prison at the age of 60. She had served 16 years of a life sentence because of her involvement in the 1988 uprising. She was denied medical treatment for a heart condition.¹⁰

Political bargaining chips

The release of women political prisoners as part of several mass releases of prisoners has been a welcome development. Unfortunately, releases do not signify increasing political freedom for women, as they continue to face arrest and imprisonment for their political participation and opinions.¹¹ Following one of her releases from prison, labor rights activist Su Su Nway observed "*I took (my) prison uniform with me because I know that I will have to come back to prison until Burma gains democracy.*"¹²

More Information

For more information on:

- Individual women political prisoners: <http://www.aappb.org/female.html>
- The leadership of women during the Saffron Revolution: WLB (Nov 07) Courage to Resist, available at www.womenofburma.org
- The latest arrests of political activists: www.altsean.org/Reports/Saffron%20RevolutionOneYear.php
- Prison conditions for women in Burma: www.aappb.org/Women%20Political%20Prisoners%20in%20Burma.pdf

To get involved in campaigns for the release of political prisoners in Burma, check out:

- Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) www.aappb.org
- Amnesty call for action www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA16/018/2008/en
- Become a sister for a woman political prisoner <http://annaactionforburma.blogspot.com/2007/11/become-sister-for-woman-political.html>
- Free Burma's Political Prisoner's Now! www.fbppn.net
- Women's League of Burma www.womenofburma.org

20 of Burma's 178 female political prisoners¹³

Name	Role	Arrest
Aung San Su Kyi	General Secretary, National League for Democracy (NLD)	Rearrested on 30 May 03 and held under house arrest.
Aye Thi Khaing	Eco-Bank Service	Arrested on 4 July 2005 and sentenced to eight years.
Daw Ponnami	80-year old nun at Thitsatharaphu Monastery.	Arrested on 6 October 2007 and defrocked.
Daw Theingi	64-year-old nun at Thitsatharaphu Monastery.	Arrested on 6 October 2007 and defrocked.
Ein Khine Oo	Journalist with Ecovision	Arrested on 10 June 08.
Lay Lay Mon	88 Generation Student Group; writer	Rearrested on 23 September 07 and held in Insein prison.
Mar Mar Aye	Currently longest-serving female political prisoner.	Arrested on 4 January 97 and sentenced to 7+7 years under article 5 (J) and 17/20.

⁸ Irrawaddy (21 Dec 06) Relief agency wants to go alone

⁹ AAPPB (Sep 04) Women political prisoners in Burma

¹⁰ DVB (24 Aug 06) Another political prisoner dies in Burmese jail; Asian Tribune (22 Apr 03) SOS - For God's sake, save the 189 dying political prisoners languishing in prisons in Burma

¹¹ Human Rights Council, 6th session, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, 7 December 2007, UN Doc A/HRC/6/14

¹² DVB (06 Jun 06) Breaking News: Su Su Nway released today

¹³ A complete list of known female political prisoners is available at <http://www.aappb.org/female.html>

Moe Moe Khaing	All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF)	Arrested on 12 October 05 and sentenced to 18 years.
Mu Mu	Karen National Union	Sentenced under article 17 (1) and imprisoned in Moulmein.
Ni Mo Hlaing	NLD youth wing; ABSFU; 88 Generation Student Group	Rearrested on 12 June 08.
Nilar Thein	88 Generation Student Group; ABFSU	Rearrested on 10 September 08.
San San Thwin	Businesswoman	Arrested during the Saffron Revolution.
Sandar Min Aka Shwee	88 Generation Student Group; Tri Color; NGO worker	Rearrested on 23 August 07 and held in Insein prison.
Su Su Nway	Labor rights activist	Rearrested 13 November 07.
Thet Thet Aung	88 Generation Student Group	Arrested on 18 September 07 and held in Insein prison.
Thin Thin Aye Aka Mee Mee	88 Generation Student leader; NLD; ABSFU; Democratic Party for a New Society (DPNS)	Rearrested on 13 October 07 Following interrogation she was hospitalized with severe torture injuries.
Thwe Thwe San	Businesswoman	Arrested during the Saffron Revolution.
Ti Za	Arrested for her support of her husband, elected MP Kyaw Min.	Arrested on 17 March 2005.
Tin Tin Mar	Farmer	Arrested in December 2007 and sentenced to three years imprisonment in Pegu.
Unknown	Staged solo protest calling for the release of political prisoners near Rangoon's City Hall.	Arrested on 25 June 2007.

PROFILES

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

NLD General Secretary

Born: 19 June 1945

Organization: National League for Democracy (NLD)

Prison: House arrest in Rangoon



- Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is the daughter of General Aung San, considered the father of Burmese Independence.
- Between 1960 and 1988, she lived, worked, and studied in India, the US, Bhutan, Japan, and England.
- On 1 April 1988, she returned to Burma to take care of her sick mother. When nationwide mass demonstrations for democracy started in August, she took a leading role in the movement.
- On 24 September 1988, she became General Secretary of the NLD. She delivered over a hundred public addresses, encouraging people to fight for their rights, and toured the country extensively.
- On 20 July 1989, she was placed under house arrest and disqualified from running in the May 1990 elections. On 14 October 1991, the Nobel Committee awarded her the Peace Prize. She was released on 10 July 1995.
- On 21 September 2000, the regime placed her under house arrest again. She was released on 6 May 2002.
- On 30 May 2003, NLD members and supporters accompanying her were attacked by pro-junta thugs near Depayin, Sagaing Division. She was subsequently again placed under house arrest.
- On 27 May 2008, the SPDC extended her house arrest by another year.¹⁴ On 6 June, the SPDC indicated that she could be detained up to 27 November 2009 under the 1975 State Protection Law.¹⁵

¹⁴ Reuters (27 May 08) Myanmar extends Suu Kyi house arrest; Irrawaddy (27 May 08) NLD members arrested; Suu Kyi's sentence extended

¹⁵ Permanent Mission of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, Switzerland (06 Jun 08) Rebuttal Statement by His Excellency U Wunna Maung Lwin, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Union of Myanmar at the Eighth Session of the Human Rights Council

For more information, please see Altsean-Burma's reports: *Daw Aung San Suu Kyi: needed now more than ever* <http://www.altsean.org/Reports/DASSKNeededNowMoreThanEver.php>
She must be free <http://www.altsean.org/Reports/SheMustBeFree.php>

Su Su Nway

Human rights activist

Born: 1971

Organization: National League for Democracy (NLD)

Prison: Insein, Rangoon



- Su Su Nway is the first Burmese citizen to have successfully brought charges against local regime officials for forced labor practices. She filed a complaint after she was forced, along with other villagers, to work on road construction projects by local SPDC authorities. Her forced labor complaint led to three SPDC officials in Htan Manaing village, Kawmoo Township, Rangoon Division, receiving prison sentences of between 8 to 16 months on 31 January 2005.
- In late April 2005, the same officials that had been convicted on forced labor violations in January filed charges that she had obstructed them in the performance of their official duties. On 30 June 2005, the Kawmoo Township Court charged her with allegedly using abusive language and threatening the Htan Manaing SPDC village authorities.
- On 18 October 2005, she was sentenced to 18 months in jail and detained in Insein prison. Prison officials confiscated her heart medication. On 4 January 2006, she was hospitalized at the prison's clinic. On 6 June 2006, the SPDC released her from prison.
- On 15 May 2007 she was arrested along with other activists while they were on their way to pray for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in Rangoon.¹⁶ Following her arrest, she was hospitalized at the Muslim Free Hospital in Rangoon.¹⁷ She was freed on 7 June.¹⁸
- On 28 August 2007, pro-junta thugs attacked her while she demonstrated against the regime along with other NLD members in Rangoon's Hledan Township.¹⁹
- On 13 November 2007, she was arrested for putting up anti-junta posters in Rangoon's Bahan Township.²⁰ She was detained in Insein prison. In late January 2008, the SPDC filed criminal charges against her.²¹
- On 5 July 2008, she was put in solitary confinement following an argument with Insein prison officials.²² Since then, family members have been prevented from visiting her.²³
- She has a heart condition and prison authorities have repeatedly denied her adequate medical attention, including needed medications and regular checkups.

Nilar Thein

Human rights activist

Born: 1973

Organization: 88 Generation Student Group, All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU)

Prison: Aung Tha Pyay Detention Centre, Rangoon



- At 16 years of age, Nilar Thein joined the ABFSU and took part in the 1988 uprising.²⁴

¹⁶ Mizzima News (15 May 07) Over thirty prayer campaigners arrested in Rangoon; Statesman (15 May 07) Myanmar detains activists seeking Suu Kyi's freedom; DVB (15 May 07) Activists face spate of arrests; Irrawaddy (15 May 07) More rights advocates arrested in Rangoon

¹⁷ DVB (23 May 07) Su Su Nway hospitalised

¹⁸ IHT (07 Jun 07) Myanmar frees prominent human rights activist on health grounds

¹⁹ AP (28 Aug 07) New Myanmar Protest Quashed in Minutes; AFP (28 Aug 07) Dozens detained over new protest in Myanmar; AFP (28 Aug 07) Protests spread around Myanmar; Reuters (28 Aug 07) Myanmar fuel protests spread to northwest oil city

²⁰ DVB (14 Nov 07) Activist Su Su Nway and colleague arrested

²¹ Reuters (29 Jan 08) Myanmar junta charges leading protesters; Irrawaddy (30 Jan 08) Junta Charges More Political Prisoners, Others Seriously ill

²² DVB (08 Jul 08) Su Su Nway held in isolation

²³ AAPP (21 Sep 2008) Profile update: Su Su Nway

²⁴ WLB (Nov 08) Courage to resist

- In 1991, she was detained for two months by Military Intelligence at Insein Prison.²⁵
- On 6 June 1998 she was arrested during student demonstrations in Rangoon. She was sentenced to ten years in jail. In Thrawaddy prison she suffered with recurring illnesses. She was released in 2005, but needed ongoing medical treatment.²⁶
- During the early protests of August 2007, she was one of the leading activists. After the arrest of 88 Generation Student Leaders on 21 August 2007, including her husband, Nilar Thein and other women activists led almost 500 people in a demonstration.²⁷
- She was forced into hiding, leaving behind her four-month old daughter.
- While in hiding, Nilar Thein continued to issue public appeals calling for the international community and the UN Security Council to take action in resolving the grave human rights abuses that women suffer from under the military regime.²⁸ The SPDC named her as one of the country's top five "terrorists".²⁹
- On 10 September 2008 she was arrested and subsequently detained at Aung Tha Pyay Detention Center in Rangoon.³⁰
- In September 2008 Amnesty International and the Women's League of Burma issued an urgent appeal for Nilar Thein, expressing concern that she may "face torture and ill treatment."³¹

Ein Khine Oo

Born: 1984

Organization: Ecovision Journal

Prison: Insein, Rangoon



- Law graduate.
- In April 2008, Ein Khine Oo was employed by Ecovision, a Rangoon-based weekly business journal.
- On 10 June 2008 she was arrested in front of the UNDP office in Tamwe Township Rangoon.³² Thirty cyclone survivors from South Dagon Township were calling for aid from the UNDP and ICRC. When she attempted to get information from the cyclone survivors, she was arrested.³³ She was detained at Tamwe police station and accused of taking photos of cyclone victims with the intention of selling them to foreign media, a charge she denied.
- She was charged with "inciting hatred of the government" and "committing crimes against public tranquility".³⁴ Her "trial" continues.

Nobel Aye

aka Hnin May Aung

Born: 1981

Organization: Freelance writer and journalist

Prison: Insein, Rangoon



- In the mid 1990s, Nobel Aye was a physics student at Dagon University.
- She became a student organizer in support of the Committee Representative People Parliament (CRPP). She participated in three demonstrations in Rangoon. She also distributed clandestine publications from underground student organizations.

²⁵ WLB (Nov 08) Courage to resist

²⁶ AAPP (17 Oct 08) Profile update: Nilar Thein

²⁷ AAPP (17 Oct 08) Profile update: Nilar Thein

²⁸ Nation (25 Nov 07) Women's plight in Burma, South under the spotlight

²⁹ WLB (Nov 08) Courage to resist

³⁰ WLB (Nov 08) Courage to resist

³¹ WLB (21 Sep 08) Call for the immediate release of Burmese democracy activist Nilar Thein; Amnesty International (21 Sep 08) Fear of torture or ill-treatment: Nilar Thein

³² Irrawaddy (02 Jul 08) Journalists arrested, detained for their reporting

³³ AAPP (07 Jun 08) Profile Update: Eint Khaing Oo

³⁴ International freedom of expression exchange (25 Jun 08) Magazine journalist covering plight of cyclone victims held in police detention, International freedom of expression exchange (03 Jul 08) "Ecovision" reporters charged with "inciting hatred" of government

- On 21 September 1998, Nobel Aye was in her third year of university. She was arrested and sentenced to 42 years imprisonment, the only female student to receive such a sentence. Her mother was arrested at the same time.³⁵
- In 2003, she and her mother met with an Amnesty International delegation.
- On 6 July 2005, she was released from prison but refused an ID card.
- The SPDC also refused her permission to re-enter university. She began private lessons, and opened a school in her home for poor students. She was again arrested on 23 August 2007.³⁶
- On 16 February 2008, she was charged under Order 5/96, which carries a maximum penalty of 20 years, for criticizing the regime's proposed constitution.³⁷

The Nuns of Thitsatharaphu Monastery

Daw Htay Yi (San)
 Daw Ponnami (Mya Nyunt)
 Daw Pyinyar Theingi (Nyunt Nyunt/Khin Nyunt Wai)
 Daw Seitta
 Daw Setkar (Khin Hla)
 Daw Theingi (Than Yi)
 Daw Thila
 Daw Thila Nadi (Aye Aye)
 Daw Wunna (Khin Hla)



Prison: Insein, Rangoon

- Between 18 and 28 September, thousands of monks and nuns led massive anti-junta nationwide demonstrations in the largest show of peaceful protests against the military regime since 1988. Burmese women were among people from all walks of life joining rallies across the country. The attacks on religious figures mobilized many women to join the protests.³⁸
- In crackdowns, SPDC authorities beat, disrobed, and arrested nuns.³⁹ SPDC authorities raided at least 53 monasteries throughout Burma multiple times.⁴⁰ At least ten nuns remain incarcerated, including nine from Thitsatharaphu Monastery, North Okkalapa Township, Rangoon.⁴¹
- On 6 October, seven nuns, Daw Ponnami (80), Daw Htay Yi (70), Daw Pyinyar Theingi (64), Daw Seittavati, Daw Setkar, Daw Theingi (64), and Daw Thial Nadi were arrested in a raid on their monastery and defrocked.
- Along with nine senior monks, their trial began on 18 January 2008.⁴² They were charged in North Okkalapa Township Court under sections 292 and 295 of the criminal code for “defamation of religion”.⁴³
- Daw Ponnami is in poor health, and a stroke survivor. During a court appearance, she was forced to drag herself to the bar to face charges.⁴⁴ Daw Theingi fainted during a hearing, but received no medical attention.⁴⁵
- Prison authorities have prevented family members from visiting nuns in prison.⁴⁶ During the trial, family members were prevented from approaching them.⁴⁷

³⁵ fbppn.net (Mar 08) Profile: Nobel Aye

³⁶ fbppn.net (Mar 08) Profile: Nobel Aye

³⁷ RSF (18 Feb 08) Burma - Police raid weekly, close it down and arrest editor and manager; Asian Tribune (20 Feb 08) Burma's Media completely under military dictatorship

³⁸ AP (28 Sep 07) Myanmar junta declares no-go zones at Buddhist monasteries seen as flashpoints of protests; WLB (Nov 07) Courage to resist

³⁹ AAPPB (06 Oct 07) Monasteries Raided Since September 26; IMNA (05 Oct 07) Monasteries in Rangoon ordered not to accommodate guests

⁴⁰ AAPPB (06 Oct 07) Monasteries Raided Since September 26; DVB (03 Oct 07) Monks fear government raids on monasteries

⁴¹ AP (28 Sep 07) Myanmar junta declares no-go zones at Buddhist monasteries seen as flashpoints of protests

⁴² Irrawaddy (24 Jan 08) Imprisoned Writer Win Tin Admitted to Hospital

⁴³ DVB (04 Mar 08) Artharwaddy monks and nuns appear in court

⁴⁴ Irrawaddy (29 Feb 08) Monks and nuns in court over September protests

⁴⁵ RFA (14 Feb 08) Monks, nuns in court over Saffron Revolution

⁴⁶ DVB (13 Aug 08) Monks and nuns banned from receiving visitors

⁴⁷ Irrawaddy (29 Oct 08) Monks and Nuns in Court over September Protests