



**Washington Office**  
1101 Pennsylvania Ave, SE #204  
Washington, DC 20003  
Tel. (202) 547-5985  
Fax (202) 544-6118

**West Coast**  
P.O. Box 9573  
Berkeley, CA 94709  
Tel. (510) 559-0002  
Fax (510) 559-0003

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## TESTIMONY BEFORE UNITED STATE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

### Advisors

Simon Billenness

Larry Dohrs

Edith Mirante

Aung Thu Nyein

Min Zaw Oo

Heidi Quante

U Kyaw Win, Ph.D.

Moe Thee Zun

### Staff

Zarni, Ph.D.  
Founding Director

Aung Din  
Director  
*Policy & Strategy*

Jeremy Woodrum  
Director  
*Washington Office*

Dan Beeton  
Director  
*Campaigns*

June 18, 2003  
Aung Din, Director of Policy

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on behalf of 50 million Burmese who are locked in a battle with an illegitimate military regime to bring peace, democracy and human rights to our country. My name is Aung Din, and as you mentioned I serve as the director of policy for the Free Burma Coalition, an organization based in the United States with national and international chapters.

I'd like to thank you Senator Brownback and Senators McConnell and Feinstein, and the members of the United States Senate for the overwhelming bipartisan vote to approve the Burma Freedom and Democracy Act last week. . By supporting this legislation, you sent a clear message to the people of Burma that you support our struggle for freedom. I urge the House to act on this legislation soon.

Since you have already heard much about the events surrounding May 30th, 2003, I want to tell you about myself and discuss the many different ways that the people of Burma are working to get rid of our country's dictatorship. I know that Aung San Suu Kyi is the most recognized person from Burma, but it is important for the Committee to know that there are thousands of others in Burma who are committed to nonviolence and working for the removal of the regime and the institution of a democratic Burma.

In 1988, I was a student at the Rangoon Institute of Technology when I and many of my fellow students helped to organize a nationwide demonstration that almost overthrew the military government. We marched proudly in front of the American Embassy and waved our banners, because we knew that Americans believe in freedom and democracy. We avoided the Soviet embassy for the same reason.

Tragically, as millions of people marched on the streets, the military regime opened fire on me and my fellow students. Up to 10,000 people were murdered in a matter of weeks, including students, women and infant children. Those who survived were jailed and suffered daily torture sessions.

The Free Burma Coalition is dedicated to restoring freedom, democracy and basic human rights in Burma.

Email [info@freeburmacoalition.org](mailto:info@freeburmacoalition.org) Websites [www.freeburma.org](http://www.freeburma.org) [www.freeburmacoalition.org](http://www.freeburmacoalition.org)

Mr. Chairman, this was one year before the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Unfortunately, because the military refused to let any international news media inside the country, no one knew what happened to us. After seeing my colleagues gunned down on the streets, I was very scared, but I knew I couldn't give up. I continued to organize demonstrations and protests, and eventually, I was captured by the regime.

When they arrested me, they handcuffed me, threw a hood over my head, and pulled me off the bus I was riding. I was taken to a military interrogation center, where I was held with no food, no drink, no toilet, and no sleep for one week. My hood was never removed. Successive shifts of interrogation officers beat, kicked, and hit me. When I asked for water, they laughed at me. When I asked to use the bathroom, they beat me even more. Many times I almost passed out, but they poured cold water onto my head to wake me up so my beatings could continue.

A month later, I was put in solitary confinement, where I stayed for over a year. In Burma, solitary confinement means no human contact. I was sent to military court and given a sentence of four years in prison. My trial took only fifteen minutes, and I had no lawyer. I spent the next four years of my life behind bars.

If there is a hell on earth, it must be Burma's Insein prison where I was jailed. For political prisoners such as myself, each day centered on interrogations, beatings, and mental torture. When the guards noticed I had written a calendar on my wall, I was thrown in pitch-black solitary confinement. When I forgot to stand at attention, I was forced to crawl on sharp, pointed stones for 100 yards while the prison guards beat me with sticks and belts. Many of my fellow prisoners were tortured even more. They were tortured for dropping a cup of water. They were tortured for teaching English—they were tortured for anything. Often, when I tried to sleep, I could hear the screams of those being tortured. Those screams haunt me to this day. They are the voices of my friends, many of whom were killed by the violence inflicted upon their bodies. It is for them that I have dedicated my life to freeing my country from the evil darkness that is the ruling military junta.

Our families did not escape either. My brother was also arrested for his participation in the freedom struggle. Many parents and families were forced out of their jobs by the regime. The regime through the military intelligence (MI) apparatus, conducts a scorched earth campaign against anyone associated with the democracy movement.

## **OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS**

I want to tell you about the other brave people of Burma. There are over 1,600 men and women political prisoners in Burma and many have been behind bars for over a decade. We talk so many times about numbers that it can be easy to forget their names and their stories.

My friend Min Ko Naing has been in prison since 1989. For the Burmese people, Aung San Suu Kyi is like George Washington. Min Ko Naing is like Sam Adams—he is a true hero.

Just as much as Aung San Suu Kyi, he was the main leader of our revolution. He spoke at rallies

across the country and called on the people to believe in freedom. I think that he understood freedom and democracy at its roots, far before many of the rest of us.

We were both arrested at the same time. He was also severely tortured. Unlike me, however, he has been held in solitary confinement for 14 years. It might be that the military regime will never release him.

In 1994, U.S. Congressman Bill Richardson met Min Ko Naing in prison. He told the Congressman to continue the struggle for freedom and democracy. The military punished Min Ko Naing by transferring him 500 miles away from his family. Now, his family can only visit him once a year. He has never been permitted to leave his 8 x 10 foot cell for more than 15 minutes per day.

The regime has offered to release Min Ko Naing if he will sign a document forswearing any political activity and condemning the democracy movement. He has refused. In the face of such brutal tyranny, he continues to fight back against the regime. His courage should inspire us.

I would now like to discuss the many different ways people are resisting the military regime in Burma. Aung San Suu Kyi is one person in a democracy movement that is broad and deep. There are hundreds of activists that are jailed and killed each year who never receive any attention. Most of my people struggle, suffer, and die without a word being raised by the international community.

## **INFORMATION**

One way that we are working to bring change to Burma is through information. The National Endowment for Democracy gives money to organizations along the Thailand-Burma border that help to get information inside the country, including this newspaper, the New Era Journal. Every month, we distribute thousands of copies inside Burma through a courier network. Keep in mind that possession of this newspaper is an automatic seven-year jail sentence.

We are also very grateful for services from the Voice of America and Radio Free Asia. Even though many people have been sentenced to long prison terms for listening to the radio, the people of Burma listen to these radio programs almost every night in order to find out what's going on in the world and in our own country.

## **PROTESTS AND POLITICAL DEFIANCE**

My people also continue to organize protests around the country. Last August, two of my colleagues were arrested for organizing a protest in downtown Rangoon. In September, 30 more people were arrested for protesting. In November, a man was arrested for making an NLD symbol, and in January, two Buddhist nuns were arrested for organizing a demonstration. In February, one dozen people were arrested for planning a demonstration, and in May another man was arrested.

I know that it doesn't make it in the news very often, but not a month goes by that the people of Burma aren't trying to organize a nationwide uprising. There are also many actions taking place in a coordinated manner that are directed at fostering support for the democracy movement within Burma's armed forces. The Burma military is a force that is kept together through fear and terror. In the 1990 elections, voting precincts in major military areas delivered overwhelming majorities for the NLD. It is a military that has no ideological commitment to the ruling regime. The outreach effort is aimed at convincing military leaders that the future of the country lies with the democracy movement, and not with the regime.

Other actions by underground groups inside the country allow freedom activists to travel and conduct organization work with key groups such as monks and rice farmers. Aung San Suu Kyi's speeches are copied and distributed by the thousands on audiotape in Burma. I would be happy to talk about these efforts with you in a more private setting. I also want to point out that the Open Society Institute, Norwegian-Burma Committee, and several other organizations—some government sponsored—are assisting our movement.

### **ATTENDING PRO-DEMOCRACY SPEECHES**

The Burmese people are also defying the military regime by attending speeches of Aung San Suu Kyi. These are really more than just speeches--they are democracy rallies.

In December, 20,000 people came to see her speak in Arakan state. In March, 30,000 people came to watch her speak in Chin State. And on this latest trip, tens of thousands of Burmese people risked their lives and their livelihoods to participate. Even when the regime has threatened them with weapons and guns, they refused to turn back.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

I would like to close my testimony by making a few recommendations for future policy on Burma. First and foremost, we must make it clear that, as Senator McConnell has said, we need REGIME CHANGE in Burma. The United Nations has attempted to foster a dialogue that can lead to a political transition, and events have shown this to be a failure. Sanctions will serve to cut the regime's access to hard currency that it uses to finance its instruments of repression. We must now work on empowering activists inside the country to allow them to bring maximum internal pressure against the regime. Either way, they must be removed. The United States is in a unique position to help bring about change in the world because Americans believe in freedom and democracy.

In order to accomplish regime change, we must do three things:

#### ***1) Increase resources to the struggle inside***

We need increased resources to fund the struggle inside Burma. Sanctions will help us very much, but they should be seen as a first step. The people of Burma need to be given the tools to effect change, including money, communications equipment, food and humanitarian support to refugees internally displaced and in Thailand and India.

**2) *Pressure other countries to stop supporting Burma's regime with military sales and business investment***

The United States needs to pressure ASEAN, Japan, and India to end their political support for the military regime. China will enjoy economic benefits from a free-market, politically stable Burma. Clearly, a democratic Burma will be better for the entire region.

**3) *Push the United Nations Security Council to act on Burma***

The United Nations Security Council must act now on Burma. So far, the United Nations has been worthless in helping my country. The Burmese regime has played the United Nations like a dancing marionette. A Security Council resolution should seek to duplicate the actions contained in the Burma Freedom and Democracy Act.

If the Security Council refuses to act, the U.S. must help the Burmese people overthrow the illegitimate junta through the use of a nonviolent, mass mobilization campaign. I want to stress that we are not asking for military intervention, but we are asking for political and moral support directed to activists inside the country.

The regime has been given 2 and 1/2 years to bring change to Burma. **Now, it is time to change the regime.** We must bring unremitting pressure against these thugs. The same economic and political conditions that led to the 1988 uprising are still present in Burma. The regime is hated by the people and, if enough political space can open, I can envision another people power mobilization that can sweep this regime from Rangoon and condemn it to the ash heap of history.

We know that freedom isn't free. It's cost is measured in the bodies of dead democracy activists, broken families and years stolen from the lives of political prisoners. We are willing to pay the price and we do so every day. We want people around the world to know that we are freedom fighters, not victims.

Mr. Chairman, this regime will not last. I look forward to the day, when I am able to rejoin my family and friends in Burma, about telling them that during our darkest hour, when our fight was far from certain, when despair had almost overcome hope, that it was the people of the U.S. and their representatives sitting in this Congress, that lifted the torch of democracy and lit our path to freedom.

Thank You.

## **I. Arrest or Disappearance During Attack**

1. Aung Aung, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Southwest Township
2. Aung Aung Latt, (F) NLD youth, Mandalay Northeast Township
3. Aung Htoo, (M) NLD, Bohtahtaung Township, Rangoon
4. Aung Khin, (M) NLD, Mandalay Division
5. Aung Ko, (M) NLD, Northwest Township, Mandalay
6. Aung Kyaw Kyaw Oo (aka) Aung Kyaw Myint, (M), NLD youth in-charge, Mandalay (Age 32) (*Confirmed in the Khantee prison, Chin State*)
7. Aung Kyaw Myint, (M) NLD, Mandalay Southeast Township
8. Aung Kyaw Soe, (M) NLD, Mandalay Northeast Township
9. Aung Naing, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Northeast Township
10. Chit Yin, (M) NLD, Mandalay Southeast Township
11. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, (Female) General Secretary, NLD (Age 58) (*Confirmed in Yemon Military Camp*)
12. Dr. Hla Myint, (M) NLD, Amarapura Township
13. Dr. Hla Soe Nyunt, (M), NLD, Mandalay, Divisional Organizer
14. Dr. Win Aung (M), NLD, Amarapura Township
15. Hla Oo, (M) NLD, Amarapura Township
16. Hla Soe Win, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Southwest Township
17. Hla Than, (M) Mandalay Northwest Township
18. Hsann Lwin, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Northeast Township
19. Htut Soe, (M) NLD youth, Rangoon Division
20. Khin Aung Htwe, (M) NLD, Mandalay Northeast Township
21. Khin Aye Myint, (F) NLD, Mandalay Northwest Township
22. Khin Maung Oo, (M) Photographer, Mandalay
23. Khin Ma Ma Tun, (F) NLD youth, Mandalay Northeast Township
24. Khin Maung Thaug, (M) NLD, Mandalay Southwest Township
25. Khin Mya Win, (F) NLD, Mandalay Southwest Township
26. Khin Oo, (M) NLD youth, Sagaing Division
27. Ko Lay, (M) NLD, Mandalay Northeast Township
28. Kyaw Aun, (M) NLD, Mandalay Northwest Township
29. Kyaw Htike, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Northeast Township
30. Kyaw Kyaw, (M) Mandalay Northwest Township
31. Kyaw Myo Thu, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Southwest Township
32. Kyaw Myo Oo, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Northeast Township
33. Kyaw Soe, (M) Mandalay Northwest Township
34. Kyaw Soe Lin, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay (Age 25)
35. Kyaw Than, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Northeast Township
36. Kyaw Tin Win, (M) NLD youth, Rangoon Division
37. Kyaw Zwar Win, (M) Mandalay Northwest Township
38. Kyi Kyi Myint, (F) NLD, Mandalay Southwest Township
39. Lin Htut Soe, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Northeast Township
40. Myo Zaw Aung, (M) NLD youth, Kawlin Township
41. Minn Lwin, (M) NLD youth in-charge, Mandalay Division, (Age 34)
42. Min Lwin, (M) NLD youth, Rangoon, (*Confirmed in the Khantee prison, Chin State*)

43. Min Thein, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Southwest Township
44. Min Zaw Oo, (M) Student, Government Technical College, Monywa—(**Confirmed dead**)
45. Moe Thaw (aka) Pho Thaw, (M) NLD youth, Rangoon (Age 32) (*Confirmed in the Khantee prison, Chin State*)
46. Myint Kyaw,(M) NLD youth in-charge, Rangoon (Age 37 (*Confirmed in the Khantee prison, Chin State*))
47. Myint Ngwe, (M) NLD youth, Yenanchaung Township, Magway Division (Age 38)
48. Myint Oo, (M) NLD, Mandalay South East Township
49. Myint Wai, (M) NLD youth, Yenanchaung Township, Magway Division
50. Myint Myint Kyi, (F), NLD, Mandalay Division
51. Myo Min, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Northeast Township (Age 31)
52. Myo Naing, (M) NLD, Mandalay Division Organizer
53. Myo Nyunt, (M) NLD, secretary, Ahlone Township, Rangoon Division, (age 37)
54. Myo Tint, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Southwest Township
55. Myo Zaw Aung, (M) NLD, Mandalay Northeast Township, (*Confirmed in the Khantee prison, Chin State*)
56. Nay Myo Lin, (M) Mandalay Northwest Township
57. Naing Naing, (M) Democratic Party for a New Society
58. Nyunt Nyunt, (F), NLD, Mandalay Northwest Township
59. Soe Soe, (M) NLD youth, Htuntone Myothit Township
60. Soe Win, (M) Driver
61. Thander Soe, (F) Mandalay Northwest Township
62. Than Tun, (M) NLD, Kamaryut Township, Rangoon Division
63. Than Htay, (M) NLD, Mandalay Southeast Township
64. Than Htun, (M) NLD, Mandalay Division Organizing Committee, (*Confirmed in the Khantee prison, Chin State*)
65. Than Tun Oo, (M) Mandalay Northwest Township
66. Than Win, (M) NLD, Mandalay Northeast Township
67. Thein Aung Lay, (M) Mandalay Northwest Township
68. Thein Soe, (M) Photographer, Sagaing
69. Thein Toe Aye, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Southwest Township
70. Thein Tun, (M) NLD youth, Yankin Township, Rangoon
71. Thein Zan, (M)
72. Thet Zaw (aka) Thet Tun, (M) NLD youth in-charge, Rangoon, (Age 30) (*Confirmed in the Khantee prison, Chin State*)
73. Thura (aka) Thi Ha, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay, (Age 29) (*Confirmed in the Khantee prison, Chin State*)
74. Tin Lin, (M) Mandalay Northwest Township
75. Tin Maung Oo, (M) NLD, Mandalay Southwest Township
76. Toe,(F) NLD, Mandalay Southwest Township
77. Toe Lwin, (M) NLD youth, Bahan Township, Rangoon Division (Age 32)—(**Confirmed dead**)
78. Tin Tin Myint, (F), NLD, Mandalay Division
79. Tun Tun, (M) Mandalay Northwest Township
80. Tun Win, (M) NLD, Mandalay Southwest Township
81. Tin Tun Oo, (M) NLD, Mandalay Division

82. Tun Tun Win, (M) NLD, Mandalay Northeast Township
83. Tin Maung Aye, (M) Mandalay Northwest Township
84. Tun Myint, (M) NLD, secretary, Bahan Township, Rangoon Division, (Age 36) (*Confirmed in the Khantee prison, Chin State*)
85. Tun Myaing, (M) Joint-secretary, Sagaing Division
86. Tun Naing Oo, (M) Mon Ywar Township
87. Tun Zaw Zaw, (M) NLD youth in-charge, Rangoon (Age 38) (*Confirmed in the Khantee prison, Chin State*)
88. U Aung Soe, (M) NLD, Organizer of Mandalay Division
89. U Chit Tin, (Male), Secretary, NLD, Mandalay Division
90. U Hla Min, (M) NLD, MP Elect, Kawthaung Township
91. U Htwe, (M) NLD, Mandalay Southeast Township
92. U Myint Kyi, (M) MP Elect, NLD, Kathar Township
93. U Paw Khin, (M) MP Elect, Myingyan Township
94. U Par Pa, (M) Vice-chairman, Sagaing Division
95. U Pinnya Thiri, (M) Buddhist Monk, Okkan Tawya Monestry, Monywa—(**Confirmed dead**)
96. U Saw Hlaing, (M) MP elect, NLD, Inn Daw Township
97. U Tin Aung Aung, (M) MP elect, NLD, Mandalay Northwest Township, (Age 59)—(**Presumed dead**)
98. U Tin Oo, (Male) Vice- Chairman, NLD (Age 75) – (Confirmed in the Kalay prison, Sagaing Division))
99. U Tin Tun Oo, (M) NLD, MP elect, Lewe Township, Mandalay Division, (Age 40)
100. U Thwae, (M) Mandalay Northwest Township
101. Wanna, (F) NLD, Mandalay Southwest Township
102. Wanna Maung, (M) NLD youth, Htuntone Myothit Township
103. Win Aung, (M) NLD, Divisional Organizer, Sagaing Division
104. Win Khaine, (M) Mandalay Northwest Township
105. Win Ko, (M) NLD, Mandalay Northeast Township
106. Win Mya Mya, (Female), NLD, Mandalay Divisional Organizer (*Confirmed in the Northwestern Military Command headquarter, Monywa*)
107. Win Myint Oo, (M) NLD, Mandalay Southeast Township
108. Win Phyu Ei, (F) NLD youth, Mandalay Northeast Township
109. Win Thiha Aung, (M) Student, Monywa Institute of Economy—(**Presumed dead**)
110. Yan Naung Soe, (F) NLD youth, Mandalay Northeast Township
111. Yee Yee Lin, (F) NLD youth, Mandalay Northeast Township
112. Ye Min Zaw, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Southwest Township
113. Ye Myint Aung, (M) NLD, Mandalay Northeast Township
114. Zaw Lay, (M) NLD, son of Hla Myint, Amarapura Township
115. Zaw Win Tun, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Southwest Township, (Age 27) (*Confirmed in the Khantee prison, Chin State*)
116. Zaw Zaw Aung, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Southwest Township
117. Zayar Tun, (M) NLD youth, Mandalay Southwest Township
- 118-124. Seven Buddhist Monks, From Yankin Monestry, MonYwar
- 125-138. 14 drivers, (M) names not known yet
- 139-144. 6 Divisional Executive members, Sagaing Division, names not known yet
- 145-158. 14 NLD youth members from Sagaing Division, names not known yet



## **II. Arrest or Disappearance After Attack**

1. U Aung Shwe, (M) Chairman, NLD, MP elect, Mayangone Township (*House arrest*) (May 31, 2003) (*Age 85*)
2. U Lwin, Secretary, (M) NLD, MP elect, Thongwa Township (*House Arrest*) (May 31, 2003) (*Age 79*)
3. U Than Tun, (M) CEC, NLD, MP elect, Taungtha Township, Secretary, CRPP (*House arrest*) (May 31, 2003) (*Age 82*)
4. U Nyunt Wai, (M) CEC, NLD, MP elect, Taungoo Township (*House arrest*) (May 31, 2003) (*Age 77*)
5. U Lun Tin, (M) CEC, NLD, MP elect, Mawlamyine Township (*House arrest*) (May 31, 2003) (*Age 82*)
6. U Hla Pe, (M), CEC, NLD, MP elect, Mawlamyine Gyun Township (*House arrest*) (May 31, 2003) (*Age 76*)
7. Thakin Soe Myint, (M) CEC, NLD, MP elect, South Okkalapa Township (*House arrest*) (May 31, 2003) (*Age 79*)
8. U Kyi Maung (M), Former Chairman of the NLD, MP elect, Mayangon Township (*House arrest*) (May 31, 2003) (*Age 80*)
9. U San Linn, (M) Chairman, NLD Mogot Twonship (June 3, 2003)
10. U Kyaw Htin, (M) Vice-chairman, NLD Mogot Township (June 3, 2003)
11. U Ko, (M) Vice-chairman, NLD, Mogot Township (June 3, 2003)
12. Ko Myo, (M) NLD, Yankin Township (June 4, 2003)
13. Thein Oo, (M) Office in-charge, NLD headquarter, Rangoon (June 4, 2003)
14. Soe Win, (M) Office in-charge, NLD headquarter, Rangoon (June 4, 2003)
15. U Andastiya, Buddhist monk, Kayah State (June 4, 2003)
16. U Soe Win, (M) MP elect from Bago Township, National Party for Democracy, member of CRPP (June 5, 2003)
17. U Ne Win, (M) Vice-chair, NLD, Kachin State (June 5, 2003)
18. U Naing Zaw Win, (M) Joint secretary, NLD, Kachin State (June 5, 2003)
19. U Maran Po Thar, (M) NLD, Kachin State (June 5, 2003)
20. U Hla Maung, (M) MP elect, Kyar Inn Seikkyi Township, CRPP member (June 5, 2003)
21. U Aye Win, (M) NLD, Bassein Township (June 6, 2003)
- 22-26. Another 5 persons from Bassein Twonship, were arrested together with U Aye Win on June 6, 2003.
27. U Thein Oo, (M) MP elect, Oak Twin Township, Bago Division, member of the National Party for Democracy, a new member of the CRPP (June 6, 2003)
28. U Saw Tun, (M) NLD Organizer, Monywa Township (May 30, sentenced two years imprisonment from a summary court)
29. U Myint Hlaing (M), Father of a political prisoner San San Maw (F) (June 10, 2003)
30. Tin Hla (M), Husband of a political prisoner San San Maw (F) (June 10, 2003)
31. Maung Maung Lay, (M) NLD, Kyimyingdaing Township (June 10, 2003)