



NATIONAL LEAGUE FOR DEMOCRACY

(Liberated Area – UK)

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Press-release on Recent Unlawful Convictions in Burma

In November 2008 about eighty pro-democracy activists were given very long and harsh prison sentences of upto 65 years. Those convicted include members of the National League for Democracy, pro-democracy student activists, 88-generation student leaders, labour rights activists, social activists, and even some musicians, poets, bloggers, comedians and Buddhist monks. Those sentenced have committed no crime, apart from exercising their right to express themselves and have at all times underlined their willingness to work with others for a better Burma.

They did not receive a fair trial, and many now face spending the rest of their lives in jail. Judges did not allow the defendants to question prosecution witnesses, many defendants did not have legal representation and those that did were not permitted to meet with their lawyers in private. According to United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Burma, Tomás Ojea Quintana, regarding these convictions, there is no independent and impartial judiciary system in Burma.

And even the defendants' lawyers were sentenced to between four and six months imprisonment for submitting a complaint about the unfair trial conditions.

Moreover, the recent constitutional referendum had produced very few rules to promote and protect free and equitable elections, and to provide for freedom of expression and assembly. No attempt had been made to prosecute those guilty of repressing the acts of peaceful protest from a year ago, and to halt the use of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance. There had been other human rights violations, including the recruitment of child soldiers, the use of forced labour and instances of forced displacements.

These situations again demonstrate that the Junta ruling Burma tolerates no dissent and have no respect for human rights, and it underlines the need for a genuine and inclusive political process starting with the lifting of restrictions placed on political parties and the early release of those in detention.

Here, we, the National League for Democracy (exile-UK branch), urge the international community to deal with that worrying situation and to call on Burmese military regime to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by the population.

The National League for Democracy (Liberated Area-UK)

Note: As a demonstration of our disappointment on current situations in Burma, NLD-LA-UK members are doing a Hunger Strike at Parliament Square in London: 26.11.08 09:00am – 27.11.08 09:00am. COME JOIN US!!!