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29 November 2008

WLB issues urgent call for UN Representatives to visit Nilar Thein and other Women Human Rights Defenders in Burma

Today on the International Women's Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) Day, Women's League of Burma (WLB) is calling for the UN Representatives to visit Nilar Thein and other women activists in Burma who were recently unlawfully sentenced to lengthy prison sentences.

On the 11th of November 2008, Nilar Thein and other prominent women human rights defenders including Su Su Nway and Mie Mie were sentenced to 65 years' imprisonment by the SPDC courts. On top of this, they were transferred to various distant prisons as an act to further break down their spirits: Nilar Thein was transferred to Thayet Prison, Magwe Division, about 225 miles away from Rangoon, Su Su Nway to Mandalay Prison and Mie Mie to Bassein Prison in the Delta, Irrawaddy Division.

WLB condemns the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) for these unlawful verdicts, and for deliberately inflicting further mental torture on these courageous women by transferring them to remote prisons.

We reiterate our concerns for the safety and well-being of Nilar Thein, Su Su Nway and Mie Mie, given the regime's notoriously vindictive treatment of activists.

We call upon the international community to urge the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, and the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders to visit Nilar Thein, Su Su Nway, Mie Mie and other women human rights defenders to ensure their well-being and demand their immediate and unconditional release.

We call on all our sisters and human rights networks around the world to condemn the regime's unlawful verdicts and urge your governments, including China, India and the ASEAN, to support our call and exert influence on the SPDC to immediately release all women human rights defenders and political prisoners in Burma.

Annex:

Nilar Thein was one of the leading woman activists involved in the early protest marches in August 2007; she went into hiding leaving her 4-month-old baby behind to escape the regime's crackdown. Whilst in hiding, Nilar Thein continued to issue public appeals calling for the international community to take action in resolving the grave human rights abuses that women suffer under the military regime in Burma. But she was arrested on September 10, 2008.

Su Su Nway, a prominent labour activist who had been on the run for 3 months right after the regime's crackdown on Saffron Revolution, was arrested on 13 November 2007. She has been denied medical treatment for her heart disease, and has reportedly been kept in isolated confinement.

Mie Mi, a key activist involved in the 2007 August peaceful protests, was arrested in October 2007. She has been suffering from a heart condition and has been denied medical attention during detention.

Prisons to which WHRDs have been transferred

(21 November 2008)

Su Su Nway - Mandalay Prison

Win Maw – From Taungoo Prison to Insein Prison (retransferred)

Mie Mie - Bassein Prison, Irrawaddy Division

Mar Mar Oo - Thayarwaddy Prison, Pegu Division

Sandar Min (a) Shwee - Myaungmya Prison, Irrawaddy Division

Thet Thet Aung - Myingyan Prison, Mandalay Division

Thin July Kyaw - Prome Prison, Pegu Division

Nilar Thein - Thayet Prison, Magwe Division

(24 November, 2008)

Kyi Kyi War - Paungte Prison, Pegu Division

Ma Ei - Paungte Prison, Pegu Division

Ma Ngal - Tharawaddy Prison, Pegu Division

Honey Oo – Lashio Prison, Shan State

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