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## ELECTION MONITOR NO. 2

### **MORE POLITICAL ACTIVISTS SENTENCED**

Sentences ranging from 5 to 10 years were passed to eleven political activists including one Buddhist monk by the Rangoon Northern District Court in Insein Prison. Ashin Sandimar, Tun Naung, Kyaw Zaw Min, Zaw Moe, Wunna Nwe, Zin Min Shein were sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for violating the Explosives Law (Section 3) and Unlawful Association Law (Section 6), while Saw Maung, Aung Moe Lwin, Moe Htet Nay, Tun Lin Aung, Zaw Latt, Naing Win and Tun Lin Oo were sentenced to five years for violating Section 6.

### **FOUR ACTIVISTS RELEASED**

Four political activists who had been charged under Articles 122 - Punishment of High Treason, Article 149 - Unlawful assembly guilty of offence committed in prosecution of common object and Article 302 - Punishment for Murder, have been released after serving their sentences respectively. The four had reportedly been sentenced for their alleged involvement in the 1988 demonstrations.

### **PRO-JUNTA DEMOCRATIC KAREN BUDDHIST ARMY (DKBA) MOVES TOWARDS ROLE AS BORDER GUARD FORCES**

Plans are now underway for the pro-junta Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) to be transformed into Border Guard Forces under the direct control of the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services. According to DKBA officials, the number of battalions to be formed have not been finalized, but upon completion the DKBA members appointed to the Border Guard Forces would be given military and administration training in December in Mawlamyaing, Moulmein in the Mon State. The new battalions will be comprised of 360 personnel, 30 Burmese Army members in each battalion, with the highest ranking position being a Major for the DKBA, and the age range of 18 to 50 for personnel in each battalion. However, some members within the group were disappointed with the age limitations and rank, many of whom rank above major, would face demotion once the transformation takes place.

### **AUNG SAN SUU KYI MEETS DIPLOMATS**

Opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met with three Western diplomats on Friday 9 October at the Seinle Kantha Government State Guest House. The meeting was attended by the British Ambassador, Mr. Andrew Richard Heyn, the Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the US Embassy, Mr. Thomas L. Vajda, and the Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the Australian Embassy, Mr. Simon

Christopher Starr. The meeting was arranged on the request of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, with discussions focused on sanctions imposed on Burma, according to NLD spokesman U Nyan Win.

### **NLD LEADERS MEET EU DELEGATION IN RANGOON**

Central Executive Committee (CEC) members of the National League for Democracy (NLD), U Than Tun, U Nyunt Wai, U Hla Pe, U Soe Myint, U Win Tin and U Khin Maung Shwe hosted a delegation of diplomats representing the European Union (EU) at the NLD Headquarters on 14 October 2009. The talks between the two sides were focused on the 2010 Elections, Aung San Suu Kyi's recent offer to work with the SPDC and the NLD Party's calls for a review of the 2008 Constitution. The 20-member EU delegation was headed by the Swedish Ambassador to Burma/Myanmar, acting in his capacity as the current chairman of the EU. The delegation included Rangoon-based Ambassadors from Germany, Britain, France and Italy, as well as Bangkok-based Ambassadors from Spain, the Netherlands, Poland and Finland.

### **ANALYSIS**

The continued purge by the authorities of political activists continues as the 2010 Elections draw closer. The government's aim is to paralyse and remove all opposition which could pose as threats in the run up to the 2010 Elections. The sentencing of the 11 political activists in the past week can be regarded as part of this objective. Young activists have now become the main targets of this purge by the government and many more will follow in the run-up to the elections. After the recent clashes with the Kokang, the DKBA is now in the process of transforming itself into the Board Guard Forces to avoid any clashes with the Burmese Army – the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). However, some differences on the composition of the battalions within the DKBA itself could become issues which would need to be address prior to any official agreement with the SPDC and the DKBA. The meetings between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, NLD CEC members and diplomats can be regarded as good signs and future meetings on a regular basis could help the present political impasse. The EU delegation's visit was more of a fact-finding mission rather than being substantive. However, the opportunity to raise and discuss such critical issues is a positive development. Meetings between the SPDC, the NLD and the ethnic nationalities are critical in paving the way for dialogue and to bringing all sides to the discussion table to achieve peace, national reconciliation and democracy.