

**September 23, 2008**

**Shan groups denounce regime's mass prisoner release as a publicity stunt**

We, community based organizations from Shan State, denounce the regime's recent mass prisoner release as a mere publicity stunt, and demand the immediate, unconditional release of all political prisoners in Burma, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the nine Shan State leaders imprisoned since 2005.

Although four political prisoners, including U Win Tin, have been released, there still remain 2,100 prisoners in Burma. While 79-year-old U Win Tin appears to have been released because of his age, we question why the ailing 73-year-old Shan leader Sao Hso Ten, sentenced to 106 years in Hkamti Prison, has not also been released.

It is also highly ironic that the regime is claiming that the prisoners were released so that they could "contribute to the building of a new nation" and "participate in the 2010 election," when elected Members of Parliament from the last 1990 elections continue to languish in prison on trumped-up charges. For example, 65-year-old Hkun Htun Oo, leader of the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, the party which won the second highest number of seats in 1990, is serving a 93-year prison sentence in Putao, northernmost Kachin State. He is suffering from prostate problems, diabetes and high blood pressure, but has been denied proper medical treatment.

Meanwhile, activists who took part in the Saffron Revolution and in Nargis relief efforts have continued to be unjustly arrested and sentenced to long imprisonment. It is thus very clear that this recent mass prisoner release is a mere sham, aimed to present a benevolent face to the international community and gain support for their roadmap to "disciplined" democracy in Burma.

The regime has repeatedly orchestrated such publicity stunts to ease international pressure. We therefore urge the international community to maintain pressure on the regime, and demand the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners in Burma.

Signed by:

- Shan Health Committee
- Shan Human Rights Foundation
- Shan Overseas Community, Australia
- Shan Refugees Organization, Malaysia
- Shan Relief and Development Committee
- Shan Sapawa Environment Organization
- Shan State Nationality for Democracy, Japan
- Shan State Organization
- Shan Women's Action Network
- Shan Youth Network Group
- Shan Youth Power

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