

RELEASE IN PART B6

**From:** Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 12, 2012 11:39 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Fw: Burma developments/prisoner release update

This is quite something.

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**From:** Sonnek, Douglas E  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 12, 2012 11:15 PM  
**To:** Sonnek, Douglas E; Murphy, Erin L; Campbell, Kurt M; Sullivan, Jacob J; Mitchell, Derek J; Patel, Nirav S; Yun, Joseph Y; Murphy, W Patrick; Nanavatty, Katharine Bernsohn; Barboriak, Eric M; Handog, Jennifer G  
**Cc:** Nagy, Eleanor; Thurston, Michael E  
**Subject:** Burma developments/prisoner release update

Assistant Secretary Campbell,

Charge Thurston asked me to respond to you directly with this update in response to your message to him. He and Congressman Crowley are now meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi and he'll respond as soon as he gets back, but wanted you to have our latest understanding.

Reports from Embassy contacts are coming in from across the country that a real and substantial release of political prisoners appears to be underway, including high-profile political prisoners – like Min Ko Naing and U Gambira – that we have consistently pressed the GOB to release. Prominent social activist and former political prisoner Zaganar told us this morning he believes the GOB's announcement that 651 convicts will be released represents the 591 political prisoners on the NLD's list along with 60 other prisoners (associated with former Military Intelligence chief General Khin Nyunt).

Prominent political prisoners reported released as of 10:30 a.m. Rangoon time (11:00 p.m. EST) include:

- **Min Ko Naing**, a top 88 GS leader, and his brother, Aung Myo Naing (his sister confirmed)
- **U Gambira** and his brother **Aung Kyaw Kyaw** (confirmed by family)
- **Htay Kywe**, a top 88 GS leader (confirmed by Embassy contact)
- **U Sai Nyunt Lwing**, SNLD General Secretary (confirmed by contact from Kalay prison)
- **U Nyi Pu**, prominent NLD MP from Taung Gup, Rakhine State (confirmed by contact from Kalay prison)
- **Nay Lin Aung**, 88 GS from Pantanaw, Irrawaddy Region (confirmed by contact from Kalay prison)
- **U Khun Tun Oo**, Chair of the SNLD (confirmed by SNLD)
- **Ms Tharaphe**, freed from Pyay prison (confirmed by Embassy contact)
- Monk **U Khay Mar Win Tha**, freed from Pyay prison (confirmed by Embassy contact)
- **Ko Myint Lwin** aka Ko Thar Gyi, freed from Pyay prison (confirmed by Embassy contact)

Press are also reporting that the following prisoners will be released, organized by prison (duplicating some of the above):

**Taunggyi prison:** 33 political prisoners including Ko Jimmy, Ko Mya Aye, Kyaw Ko Ko, U Gambiya's brother Ko Aung Kyaw Kyaw and Ko Zaw Thet Htwe (Yangon Press International)

**Sittwe prison:** Dr. Thet Lwin, Ko Than Tin @ Ko Gyi Than, Pyi Phyto Hlaing, Aung Aung Kyaw, Zeyar Oo, Kyaw Zin Win and U Pu Yit (Eleven Media)

**Pa-an prison:** Nay Hpone Latt, U Nyi Pu, Nanda Sid Aung, Thant Zin Aung, Kyaw Kyaw Naing, Pyi Phyto Aung and Nyan Linn (The Voice)

**Taungoo prison:** 24 political prisoners including U Khun Tun Oo. (Messenger Journal)

**Thayarwady prison:** Saya Ye, U Win Myint, U Lwin Moe Myint, U Aung Than, U Khin Hlaing, U Kyaw, U Win Htike, Bo Bo, Ma Kyi War, Ma Nilar Thein (Yangon Press International)

**Myingyan prison:** 12 political prisoners including Ma Htet Htet Aung (Eleven Media)

**Kalay prison:** U Sai Nyunt Lwin (Shan leader) (Messenger Journal)

We'll continued to building our list of political prisoners reported to have been released, and plan to send in flash reports as more information becomes available. We'll also report by front channel cable with summary and analysis this afternoon.

Best regards,  
Doug

Doug Sonnek  
Pol/Econ, Embassy Rangoon

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SBU  
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

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**From:** Sonnek, Douglas E

**Sent:** Friday, January 13, 2012 8:59 AM

**To:** Murphy, Erin L; Campbell, Kurt M; Sullivan, Jacob J; Mitchell, Derek J; Patel, Nirav S; Yun, Joseph Y; Murphy, W Patrick; Nanavatty, Katharine Bernsohn; Barboriak, Eric M; Handog, Jennifer G

**Cc:** Nagy, Eleanor; Thurston, Michael E

**Subject:** RE: Burma developments//what next?

Erin – Our feelers are out through the country with channels established to report information back in on the rumors of an impending release. The next information point – at which we can start to evaluate to what extent the rumors are true – will be between 9:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Rangoon time (10:00 p.m. -10:30 p.m. EST) when the prisons' normal business hours begin. We'll send a flash update from Embassy Rangoon at that point to share what we're hearing. Best regards, Doug

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**From:** Murphy, Erin L  
**Sent:** Friday, January 13, 2012 8:46 AM  
**To:** Campbell, Kurt M; Sullivan, Jacob J; Mitchell, Derek J; Patel, Nirav S; Yun, Joseph Y; Murphy, W Patrick; Nanavatty, Katharine Bernsohn; Barboriak, Eric M; Handog, Jennifer G; Sonnek, Douglas E  
**Subject:** Re: Burma developments//what next?

All,  
Looping in doug sonnek here to provide on the ground info to us as he hears as well plus to hear our updates.

Just wrapping up meeting here with political and democracy activists, including bo gyi and former political prisoners. The said min ko naing is among those released but could not confirm others though they think those released jive with what nyi nyi aung sent. They received their info from their friends currently in prison; their correctional prison guard connections did not have any information. They did not see anything on state run media confirming names.

We're meeting with ethnic reps next so expect to hear info on ceasefires as well as news on their people in prison. Will provide update once meeting is complete.

Derek will be in touch with surin via phone in 10.

On nyi nyi aung's list- names on this are most of the key people we continue to press gob on- min ko naing, ko ko gyi, gambiran jimmy, khun ttun oo. These guys were imprisoned because of 2007 and other pol activity and are by far, the most organized and active. Their release, if true, means the gob is serious and is willing to take a risk. This is especially significant because it is before the election.

I will continue to provide updates throughout the day. Our meetings conclude at 630 and I will send a note with a summary of the day and analysis on the situation. Again- let's be cautious until names are confirmed and if the release is unconditional (ie didn't have to sign 401 form promising not to cause instability and refrain from politics).

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**From:** Campbell, Kurt M  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 12, 2012 09:00 PM  
**To:** Murphy, Erin L; Sullivan, Jacob J; Mitchell, Derek J; Patel, Nirav S; Yun, Joseph Y; Murphy, W Patrick; Nanavatty, Katharine Bernsohn; Barboriak, Eric M; Handog, Jennifer G  
**Subject:** Re: Burma developments//what next?

Guys -- fundamentally we will be in information gathering mode for the next 12 hours. Jake will speak with S at 830 Friday morning. We will try to put together our best estimate on developments by 800 Friday. Please pulse your contacts for information and let's hold off from public comment until we have clarity and coordination. Best Kurt

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**From:** Murphy, Erin L  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 12, 2012 07:46 PM  
**To:** Sullivan, Jacob J; Campbell, Kurt M; Mitchell, Derek J; Patel, Nirav S; Yun, Joseph Y; Murphy, W Patrick; Nanavatty, Katharine Bernsohn; Barboriak, Eric M; Handog, Jennifer G  
**Subject:** Re: Burma developments//what next?

All,  
Understand that there is thinly spread staff on burma back in dc. I have access to computers here on Chiang Mai and can help draft if necessary. Let me know as well as any outline of what is needed and I'd be happy to help.

Thanks,  
Erin

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**From:** Sullivan, Jacob J  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 12, 2012 07:39 PM  
**To:** Campbell, Kurt M; Mitchell, Derek J; Patel, Nirav S; Yun, Joseph Y; Murphy, W Patrick; Murphy, Erin L; Nanavatty,

Katharine Bernsohn; Barboriak, Eric M

**Subject:** RE: Burma developments//what next?

I strongly agree.

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**From:** Campbell, Kurt M

**Sent:** Thursday, January 12, 2012 7:30 PM

**To:** Mitchell, Derek J; Patel, Nirav S; Yun, Joseph Y; Murphy, W Patrick; Murphy, Erin L; Nanavatty, Katharine Bernsohn; Barboriak, Eric M; Sullivan, Jacob J

**Subject:** Re: Burma developments//what next?

We should also think about a more detailed statement from the podium setting context of all that has been done since August. We will need to get out and claim the story if releases are this significant. Kurt

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**From:** Mitchell, Derek J

**Sent:** Thursday, January 12, 2012 06:29 PM

**To:** Patel, Nirav S; Yun, Joseph Y; Murphy, W Patrick; Murphy, Erin L; Nanavatty, Katharine Bernsohn; Barboriak, Eric M; Campbell, Kurt M; Sullivan, Jacob J

**Subject:** Re: Burma developments//what next?

Completely agree on all this considering importance of latest developments if all pans out. Also need to discuss w/ASSK as well as coordinate w/EU and other intl in the process. Getting head nod from CODELS essential, as well as others on Hill. Believe Rep Crowley is still on the ground so that will help immensely. I will ask to talk to Surin today - I had promised him the last time I would call after every trip anyway. I'd welcome Burma Desk to outline what's on our list for consideration.

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**From:** Patel, Nirav S

**Sent:** Thursday, January 12, 2012 05:09 PM

**To:** Mitchell, Derek J; Yun, Joseph Y; Murphy, W Patrick; Murphy, Erin L; Nanavatty, Katharine Bernsohn; Barboriak, Eric M; Campbell, Kurt M; Sullivan, Jacob J

**Subject:** Burma developments//what next?

All,

If there is a major political prisoner release tonight we need to be ready to respond, particularly given ethnic announcements today.

If they do 655 (as AFP reports, or even a relatively smaller number) and that includes a decent amount from our list of notables, and a sufficient number of "political prisoners" we need to probably convene tomorrow on next steps. Challenge will be getting confirmation from multiple sources that the release is of the right composition. After post confirms, we probably need to move on the "action for action" ledger on Ambos, survey team, and other things on the list developed prior to S visit.

We need to determine if existing press guidance is sufficient if a major release happens. Could be as easy as just putting a warm statement at the top and using existing guidance, or being more robust and forward leaning.

With McConnell, McCain and Liberman in Burma in the next 7-9 days they will likely be our first line of senior-level validation with the government. We need to make sure we work with their teams to arm them with proper pressers and also help shape their messaging. Does Thurston deploy to NPT to note our support? Does Derek cycle back to NPT? We need to start the list of questions and issues to think through.

Nirav

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