

Chronology

1998

- January 4:** The Petroleum Authority of Thailand Exploration and Production Public Company, Ltd. (PTTEP) announces that it is seeking Thai military cooperation to build the Yadana natural gas pipeline project. A celebration of fiftieth anniversary Independence Day is organized at Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's compound.
- January 6:** The NLD accuses the SPDC of obstructing religious affairs by forcing party members and families to seek permission from the authorities to enter the monkhood, saying that Buddhist members are now required to get permission from the local authorities when they wish to be ordained.
- January 7:** The SPDC warns the NLD to stop issuing statements and seeks to curtail the activities of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
- January 14:** Mr. Fujita Satoris, Manila-based bureau chief of *Mainichi Shimbun* is deported from Burma as an illegal immigrant for not revealing his true occupation to the relevant authorities.
- January 16:** Thailand announces that it will deport about 300,000 illegal immigrants, mostly Burmese; 150,000 from the industrial sector and 150,000 from the non-service sector within three months.
- January 17:** The SPDC-sponsored National Working Committee for Women's Affairs holds its work coordination meeting in Rangoon. Its leadership notes that "... Myanmar women have no need to demand their rights for they can enjoy their rights on equal terms with men....".
- January 20:** The UN special envoy Alvaro de Soto arrives in Burma on a three day visit for talks with SPDC and opposition figures.
- January 21:** Only 19 political prisoners remain in Insein Prison; the rest are transferred to different jails because of the visiting UN envoy.
- January 22:** The UN special envoy to Burma, Mr. de Soto, meets with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and members of the NLD in Rangoon.
- January 23:** Eighteen students are arrested in Rangoon for handing a letter of protest against the military regime to the UN special envoy, Alvaro de Soto.
- January 24:** A Danish group alleges that some 66 per cent of refugees from Burma now living in Thailand have been tortured.
- January 25:** Ten exiled Burmese students are arrested and detained in Bangkok at a meeting with Thai student activists on Ramkhamhaeng University campus.
- February 2:** Thailand and Burma agree to withdraw their troops from the two disputed islands in the Moei River at Mae Sot district. A team of UNHCR officials holds talk with Bangladeshi officials on resuming the repatriation of 21,000 Burmese refugees.
- February 4:** The SPDC lashes out at "certain Western nations" for criticizing its drug

- record, despite what it called its success in restricting the narcotics trade.
- February 5:** The SPDC attacks the US for its condemnation of the country's poor human rights record, saying Washington is using democracy as a weapon against the country.
- February 7:** The SPDC frees Thai prisoners from Burmese jail and sends them home.
- February 9:** Burma claims that Thailand must pay thousands of dollars a day in compensation if the launching of the gas pipeline linking Burma and Thailand is delayed.
- February 12:** The Thai authorities mobilize 1,000 members of their security forces and officials to transfer more than 12,000 Karen refugees from the Salween National Park to a refugee camp in Sop Moei district.
About 100 Karen refugees stage a rally at Mae Yae Hta refugee camp to protest against the Thai government's plan to move four refugee camps.
- February 13:** Recently released Thai prisoners from Rangoon's Insein Prison state that 23 Thai inmates have died there since 1994 because of poor conditions.
- February 14:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi appeals on foreign governments and humanitarian organizations to give priority to aiding refugees who have fled military oppression.
- February 17:** Thailand estimates that it has repatriated around 30,000 illegal foreign workers, predominantly from Burma, in the past three months.
- February 19:** General Than Shwe ends a three-day state visit to the Philippines during which he was dogged by Filipino human rights activists calling for democratic change in Burma.
- February 25:** Four hundred ethnic Shan civilians flee fighting in Burma between SPDC troops and the SSA to Pang Mapha district, Thailand.
- February 26:** The Thai Foreign Ministry lodges a letter of concern with the Burmese embassy over an alleged shooting incident on the Salween River.
- March 1:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi tells *The Nation*, an English language newspaper in Thailand, that she is "keeping all options open" and this includes sharing power with the military junta.
- March 3:** Thailand gives an April 30 deadline for all illegal foreign workers to be repatriated or face eight years imprisonment and a fine.
- March 4:** Norwegian Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik urges all Norwegian companies to follow voluntarily the appeal from the government to stop all dealings with Burma.
- March 8:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi marks International Women's Day in Burma with a call for equality for women, saying discrimination hurts the human race.
- March 10:** Malaysian Foreign Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi meets Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other top leaders of the NLD for about two hours.
- March 11:** DKBA attacks Huay Kaloke refugee camp torching 1,000 dwellings, killing two and leaving 50 injured. About 8,000 refugees flee in panic.
- March 15:** DKBA fires more than 10 mortar rounds into the Mae La refugee camp in Thailand sheltering 30,000 refugees.
- March 19:** The leader of Burma's ethnic Karen armed group urges the UN to help nearly 100,000 refugees living in fear following recent attacks on camps

- by pro-SPDC armed groups.
- March 22:** SPDC Lt-Gen. Khin Nyunt gives the go-ahead to Thai forces to take action against the DKBA if it persists with attacking refugee camps in Thailand. He denied that the SPDC has anything to do with the DKBA.
- March 23:** The Maw Kel refugee camp in Tak province is attacked early in the morning by the DKBA. One refugee was killed, nine others, including four Thai soldiers, were wounded.
- March 25:** The Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai orders all-out retaliation against any intrusion on Thai soil by armed groups from Burma.
- March 27:** The Thai regional office of the UNHCR affirms its willingness to help the Thai Government ease the burden of assisting refugees on the Thai-Burma border.
- March 30:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi strongly criticizes the British Premier Oil investment in Burma, saying its deal with the SPDC “does a great disservice to the cause of democracy” and “contributes to repression in Burma.”
- April 1:** Thailand’s Army Commander-in-Chief Gen. Chettha Tharajaro supports a proposal that the UNHCR take care of Burmese refugees and be responsible for their resettlement in a third country.
- April 14:** Senior General Than Shwe says that the junta will not rule the country forever. “Our armed forces will not take up the responsibilities of the state forever.... It would be improper to do so,” he says.
- April 17:** The SPDC would relinquish power and allow a return to civilian rule once “a strong constitution and strong foundation for democracy” were in place, says the SPDC Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaw.
- April 23:** The SPDC expresses worries over prospects for all nations to ensure secure food supplies and food aid as the economic climate worsens and foreign aid declines.
- April 27:** The European Union agrees to extend sanctions on Burma for a further six months. The sanctions, which include a ban on issuing visas to members of the junta, was imposed in 1996.
- April 30:** The SPDC sentences Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw and two others to 10 years imprisonment for assisting a student writing a history of the Burmese student movement. Two female student leaders are given seven year prison terms under the same charge.
- May 1:** Japan demands that the SPDC open a dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and insists that Tokyo’s aid freeze in respect of the SPDC will remain in place.
- May 3:** As part of their annual list of the top ten enemies, the Committee to Protect Journalists names Burma’s Senior General Than Shwe and Indonesia’s President Suharto as the two top enemies of the press in 1998.
- May 5:** Thailand protests to Burma about the shooting of a Thai villager by a Burmese soldier in Thai waters near the disputed area of Mae Nao islet.
- May 6:** The SPDC denies India’s claim that China has built an electronic surveillance base on a Burmese island from where Beijing could monitor Indian defense activities.

- May 9:** The SPDC appoints three civilians as deputy ministers in an attempt by the military to bring more civilian expertise into the government.
- May 11:** Secretary-General of ASEAN, Rodolfo Severiono, visits Burma to discuss the financial crisis in Asia, economic cooperation and development of the Greater Mekong region with Burmese officials.
- May 12:** A senior UN official meets SPDC officials to discuss Government efforts to eradicate opium production, combat drug abuses, cultivate opium-substitute crops and development matters.
- May 13:** The SPDC sentences James Rupert Russell Mawdsley, aged 24, a British-Australian national, convicted of illegal entry and suspected of “terrorist” activities, to five years in prison and a fine of \$ 7,812.
- May 18:** US President Clinton vows to maintain economic sanctions against Burma as long as the Asian nation is guilty of large-scale political repression.
- May 21:** Thai authorities raid the Human Rights Documentation Unit and arrest 16 Burmese dissidents and charge them with illegal entry. Police also seize computers and fax machines.
- May 25:** The SPDC warns the NLD not to celebrate the anniversary of its landslide victory in the 1990 general election.
- May 27:** Several hundred members of the Burmese opposition party gather at the home of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, to commemorate their party’s 1990 election victory. The NLD set a deadline of August 21 for the SPDC to convene parliament based on those election results.
- May 28:** Burmese soldiers take three Thai officials hostage and demand the release of a Burmese man detained for drug trafficking in Thailand.
- May 29:** Japan pledges another two billion yen grant in debt relief to Burma, three months after extending a grant of the same amount to the country.
- June 3:** The authorities in Thailand and the UNHCR agree in principle to expand the UNHCR’s role in assisting Burmese refugees along the Thai-Burma border.
- June 7:** The SPDC warns school teachers to curb alleged attempts by dissidents to spark political unrest in the country’s education system. Lt-Gen. Khin Nyunt urges teachers to be aware of “subversive elements” seeking to create disturbances.
- June 8:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi hosts a tea party at her home for women from Asean countries.
- June 9:** During a visit to Beijing by members of the SPDC, the Chinese Defense Minister announces intentions to develop further the friendly relations between the armed forces of China and Burma.
- June 10:** US narcotics control officials announce that drug control efforts have made no real headway in reducing heroin production in Burma.
- June 11:** UNHCR announces that it will be allowed to participate in the administration of all 12 border camps for displaced Burmese as a “co-partner” with Thai authorities.
- June 16:** The SPDC sends reinforcement battalions to the border near the Three Pagodas Pass in an onslaught against the KNU.

- June 19:** Three hundred guests arrive at Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's home to celebrate her fifty-third birthday. They are not prevented from gathering by the military, but are checked by soldiers posted outside her compound.
- June 23:** Classes resume at the Rangoon Institute of Technology after a year and half suspension.
- June 24:** The NLD sends a letter to the ruling military junta demanding that parliament be convened within two months.
- June 26:** Military intelligence officials block students entering Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's compound for a bi-weekly study session. A commander orders military police to hit NLD members. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is slightly injured in the scuffle.
- June 27:** The SPDC begins detaining scores of elected MPs.
- June 30:** The Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pisuwan says ASEAN foreign ministers will try to solve the problem of bringing Burma into the framework of cooperation between ASEAN and the EU.
- July 1:** The NLD sends a letter to the SPDC protesting at the on-going restrictions and arrest of its MPs. The letter says that NLD candidates were made to sign pledges which limited their movements to their respective townships.
- July 2:** UNICEF and its Burmese partner agencies meet in Rangoon to review the implementation the country's program of cooperation for 1996-2000 and the progress made in health and nutrition.
- July 3:** The NLD releases a statement objecting strongly to the treatment of its MPs by the SPDC.
- July 5:** SPDC warns of a possible "head-on collision" with the NLD. A senior official said authorities had clamped down on the NLD as "a preventive measure with a view to avoid unnecessary and unwanted head-on collision, confrontation and instability."
- July 7:** A car carrying NLD leaders, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is prevented from travelling to Min Hla township, Pegu Division, at about 10:20 a.m., near Shwe Mya Yar village 40 miles (about 65 km) from Rangoon. A local official calls in 30 soldiers, who lift the car- with the passengers inside and turn it around in the direction of capital. The NLD leaders remain in their car throughout the night.
- July 8:** The NLD leaders return to Rangoon after the SPDC allows Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to meet Daw Hla Hla Moe, an NLD member.
- July 9:** Thailand expresses concern at developments in Burma and urges restraint in what is seen as a test of the Thais call for "flexible engagement" among ASEAN members.
- July 10:** The SPDC issues a new warning to the opposition that its activities would land its members in trouble.
- July 14:** Lt-Gen. Tin Oo, Secretary 2 of the SPDC, warns against destructive elements who are physically pushing the country into servitude.
- July 19:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and members of her party are stopped by military authorities 32 km from the capital en route to Pantanaw township, Irrawaddy Division, 80 km from the capital, to meet local officials of the NLD. After

- stopping the car, the authorities put up barricades to prevent her from proceeding further. Then they make agreements for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to meet Dr. Tin Min Htut, a NLD member of Pantanaw township, at Anyarsuu village. After the meeting, the party returned.
- July 23:** Armed troops surround Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her two drivers about 15 km west of Rangoon. Her car is surrounded by soldiers, sandbags and barbed wire barricades put there by the authorities to prevent her from going to Bassein, 160 km west of Rangoon.
- July 24:** Thailand officially agrees to allow the UNHCR to help tackle the problem of refugees along the Thai-Burma border.
- July 25:** Students take their examinations in the two largest cities, Rangoon and Mandalay.
- July 27:** A SPDC spokesman calls the July 19 and 23 episodes a publicity stunt and says Daw Aung Suu Kyi was being helped by Western embassies.
- July 29:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is dragged back to Rangoon by the military troops after a six-day standoff but vows to keep up efforts to meet her supporters outside the capital. She is led into the back of her car late on July 29 when two female officials enter the vehicle. She is sandwiched between the women as two male officials enter the car and drive her to Rangoon.
- August 4:** Six Nobel Peace laureates urge the SPDC to restore democracy in an appeal published ahead of the tenth anniversary of “8888”, the uprising of August 8, 1988 in Burma.
- August 7:** The Military Intelligence Unit stationed at the residence of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi leaves its post.
- August 9:** Eighteen foreign activists are arrested in Rangoon for distributing goodwill messages commemorating the August 8, 1988 uprising. They include three Thais, six Americans, three Malaysians, three Indonesians, two Filipinos and an Australian.
- August 12:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her party travel peacefully by car to Bassein. The road is blocked at Ayarsuu village, Htantabin township, and they are prevented from proceeding.
- August 14:** The 18 foreign activists are tried under the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act for attempting to incite unrest or disrupt the peace and stability of the State.
- August 18:** The NLD chairman U Aung Shwe announces previously he has met Gen.Khin Nyunt.
- August 20:** French journalist Philippe Grangereau is deported from Burma for entering the country under the pretense of being a tourist.
- August 21:** The NLD says it will convene the parliament elected in 1990.
- August 22:** the SPDC refuses to allow a physician of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to visit and attend her. It also says the NLD’s decision to convene its own parliament is illegal.
- August 24:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi returns home from ending a 13-day standoff, after trying to travel to Bassein.
Up to 150 students stage a demonstration at Hledon junction in Rangoon. Dozens are arrested.

- August 26:** Lt. Col. Hla Min meets 14 foreign military attaches to announce that it will neither allow the convening of Parliament nor enter into talks with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
SPDC closes off Shwe Dagon Pagoda on the tenth anniversary of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's famous speech which drew over 700,000 listeners.
- August 29:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi announces to 500 NLD members gathered at her house that parliament will be convened in September.
The SPDC threatens to dissolve the NLD if it attempts to convene parliament.
- September 1:** Three journalists an Australian, a Canadian and a Japanese are detained in Rangoon, as they prepare to interview opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
- September 2:** Three thousand students at Rangoon Institute of Technology and Rangoon University main campus hold demonstrations. Riot police seal off both campuses. Demands center on freeing student political prisoners and delaying exams. The Rangoon Institute Technology is shut down again by the authorities following the recent re-opening of this campus to arrange examinations.
- September 4:** Two hundred Buddhist monks gather near Phaya-Gyi Kyaung-tite Monastery in Mandalay to protest against the military government. Twelve monks are arrested. Buddhist monks from Zawtika Ywama Kyaungtike Monastery of Monywa township in Upper Burma stage a demonstration. The World Bank cuts financial ties to Burma, saying it will not consider giving the SPDC any more money because it has failed to make repayments on past loans, estimated at US\$ 14 million.
- September 12:** The SPDC arrests another 187 NLD members, bringing the total of 702 arrested since a crackdown began in May.
- September 16:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and nine members of her party form a committee representing the MPs elected in 1990 election.
- September 27:** On the tenth anniversary of the founding of the NLD, a low-key ceremony is held in Rangoon.
- September 30:** Thousands of SPDC supporters rally during the week against the political opposition and demanded the deportation of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
- October 7:** The SPDC announces that 54 people, including 23 NLD members, have been arrested in connection with a "conspiracy" to "incite unrest" by NLD members and students allied with an unnamed foreign organization.
- October 8:** A report by the US Labor Department says that French oil giant Total and the US-owned Unocal appear to have used forced labor in building a petroleum pipeline in Burma.
- October 14:** The UNHCR plans to open office in three Thai provinces, Mae Hong Son, Tak and Kanchanaburi, in an effort to help protect Burmese refugees.
- October 20:** The SPDC urges farmers to boost agricultural production to help other Southeast Asian nations which are facing food shortages.
- October 21:** The NLD accuses the SPDC of detaining elected MPs and forcing them to resign. Nine hundred and eighty-eight of its members, including 203 who

- were elected in the 1990 election, have been detained since May.
- October 22:** The UNHC begins registration of Burmese in Thai border camps under an agreement with the Thai authorities.
- October 27:** Mr. Alvaro de Soto, an assistant to the UN Secretary-General returns to Burma to make a four day visit.
- October 29:** The UN Special Envoy Mr. de Soto meets Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and General Khin Nyunt during his four day visit to Rangoon.
- October 31:** At the United Nations General Assembly, UN Special Rapporteur Rajsoomer Lallah expresses deep concern over continued human rights violations in Burma.
- November 3:** *The Myanmar Morning Post* begins publishing in Rangoon in the Chinese language.
- November 13:** The SPDC admits that the pace of drafting the new constitution is very slow, but says it dare not impose a deadline.
- November 14:** The SPDC announces a major cabinet reshuffle including Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaw. Five supreme court judges and two other deputy ministers are granted "permission to retire."
- November 19:** The United Nations General Assembly adopts without a vote a resolution deploring continuing human rights violations in Burma.
- November 20:** The ILO's governing body hears evidence from an ILO commission of inquiry on forced labor in Burma and calles on the SPDC to bring its legislation into line with the ILO convention on forced labor by May 1, 1999.
- November 24:** A spokesman of the SPDC says that opposition members currently detained are "being comfortably housed and well fed and that they are being treated with courtesy and respect."
- November 25:** Burmese troops arrest an American, a Canadian and a German for entering the country illegally via a jungle route from northwestern Thailand.
- December 3:** The SPDC extends a visa ban on Danish government officials, a measure seen as a retaliation to Denmark's support for the extension of collective European visa restrictions on Burmese officials in October.
- December 11:** Singaporean elder statesman Lee Kuan Yew warns that some SPDC leaders may face the same fate as former Chilean dictator Pinochet, fighting extradition in Britain for alleged human rights abuses.
- December 14:** The NLD strongly denounces the practice of the SPDC forcing its members to resign.
- December 15:** The SPDC's Senior General Than Shwe delivers an opening address at the ASEAN summit in Hanoi urging ASEAN not to abandon the group's policy of not interfering in each other's internal affairs.
- December 20:** The Thai Foreign Ministry spokesman Kobsak Chutikul urges the Burmese to prevent fighting from spilling over into Thai territory and violating Thai sovereignty.
- December 24:** Thai Foreign Ministry lodges a strong protest with Rangoon over an attack on a Royal Thai Navy vessel by a Burmese boat off Ranong province, an incident in which two navy personnel were killed.

December 31: The NLD files a criminal complaint against the Director-General of the Military Intelligence Services and SPD Secretary-1 Khin Nyunt. The MI units are held responsible for the illegal arrest and intimidation of NLD members, the NLD says.