

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission sends open letter to President

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Nov—Myanmar National Human Rights Commission sent an open letter dated 12, November 2011 to U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar today.

The full text of the open letter is as follows:

Mr President

1. Myanmar National Human Rights Commission had in an open letter dated 10, October, 2011 submitted an appeal for the release of prisoners by granting amnesty to them. In our submission, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission humbly requested the President, as a reflection of his magnanimity to grant amnesty to those prisoners, convicted for breach of existing laws, who do not pose a threat to the stability of the State and public tranquility, in the interests of national races to enable them to participate in whatever way they can in the nation-building tasks.
2. The Commission is greatly heartened that the President on 11 October, 2011 granted amnesty to 6359 prisoners.
3. The fact that the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission had made a submission for amnestying the prisoners and that the Government had granted the amnesty received widespread support and welcome both

domestically and internationally. It has, in our opinion, generated greater interest in and recognition of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission.

4. The Commission is cognizant of the fact and appreciates the position of the government that although among the prisoners there are those who had engaged in political activities, they are in prison for contravening existing laws. At the same time, there had been assertion by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and a number of countries that there were nearly 2000 of what is referred to as "Prisoners of Conscience". It has also been asserted that out of 6359 prisoners released, there were approximately 200 prisoners in the said category.
5. In this regard, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission had made enquiries with the relevant ministries. The result of the enquiries is that the relevant ministries had asked for the list from some western governments and other sources and upon checking, it was learnt that of the nearly 2000 prisoners on the list, only some 500 were actually in prison. We are therefore heartened that out of the approximately 500 on that list, some 200 were released under the amnesty.

6. The release of the remaining prisoners, including those cited above convicted for breach of existing laws who do not pose a threat to the stability of State and public tranquility, in the interest of national races, will not only enable them to participate in whatever way they can in the nation-building tasks but also will in a way help promote national unity.
7. Accordingly, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission again humbly requests the President as a reflection of his magnanimity to include those prisoners when a subsequent amnesty is granted.
8. If for reasons of maintaining peace and stability, certain prisoners cannot as yet be included in the amnesty, the Commission would like to respectfully submit that consideration be made for transferring them to prisons with easy access for their family members.

Respectfully,
Win Mra
Chairman

(for) Members of the Myanmar
National Human Rights Commission

Date-12 November, 2011
Yangon.