ALTSEAN
BURMA
ALTERNATIVE ASEAN NETWORK ON BURMA
campaigns, advocacy & capacity-building for human rights & democracy

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BURMA'S REGIME DOES IT AGAIN: POLITICAL PRISONERS REMAIN IN JAIL

- **On 12 October, Burma's regime released 6,359 prisoners from jails across the country. However, only 220 political prisoners were among those released.**
- **The regime's routine mass releases of prisoners haven't resulted in the release of significant numbers of political prisoners. Political prisoners have accounted for about 1% of the prisoners freed by the regime during mass amnesties.**
- **The total number of political prisoners hasn't decreased – in fact, it has steadily increased since 2004. This is because the number of activists detained and imprisoned by the regime has largely outnumbered the number of those released.**
- **In September 2008, the regime released 10 political prisoners as part of a mass amnesty. However, a month later the regime sentenced 186 dissidents to harsh prison terms as long as 68 years.**
- **The regime has continued to arbitrarily arrest and imprison political activists and journalists, even after the new regime led by former junta PM Thein Sein took office on 30 March 2011.**
- **In the past six months, the regime has arbitrarily detained or imprisoned at least five activists and media persons.**
- **Burma's regime has typically released small numbers of political prisoners in order to stave off pressure and criticism ahead of important international events.**
- **In 2005, the regime released the largest number of political prisoners (253) since 2004, ahead of the 38th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Vientiane. The regime was trying to avoid giving up the ASEAN Chair, which was due to Burma in 2006.**
- **The 12 October mass amnesty saw the second largest number of political prisoners released by the regime (220) since 2004. The move came ahead of the planned 28 October fact-finding mission to Burma by Indonesian FM Marty Natalegawa and the ASEAN Summit in mid-November. During the Summit, ASEAN is expected to make a decision on whether to grant Burma the bloc's Chair in 2014.**

Most recent mass releases of prisoners

Date	Total Prisoners	Political prisoners	%	Major international event
18 Nov 2004	3,937	28	0.7%	10th ASEAN Summit (29 Nov 04)
29 Nov 2004	5,311	12	0.2%	10th ASEAN Summit (29 Nov 04)
13 Dec 2004	5,070	21	0.4%	-
3 Jan 2005	5,588	26	0.5%	-
6 Jul 2005	334	253	75.7%	38th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (26 Jul 05)
3 Jan 2007	2,831	50	1.7%	UNSC Burma resolution (12 Jan 07)
23 Sep 2008	9,002	10	0.1%	63rd UNGA session (Sep 08)
20 Feb 2009	6,313	24	0.4%	14th ASEAN Summit (27 Feb 09)
17 Sep 2009	7,114	128	1.8%	15th ASEAN Summit (23 Oct 09)
16 May 2011	14,578	55	0.4%	18th ASEAN Summit (7 May 11)
12 Oct 2011	6,359	220	3.4%	19th ASEAN Summit (17 Nov 11)
Total	**66,437**	**827**	**1.2%**	

P O BOX 296, LARDPRAO POST OFFICE, BANGKOK 10310, THAILAND
TEL ▼ 081 850 9008 ▼ [6681] 850 9008 EMAIL ▼ publications@altsean.org WEB ▼ www.altsean.org