



Joint Statement on the 8th World Youth Day for Democracy

(All Burma Federation of Student Unions-Foreign Affairs Committee, The Nationalities Youth Forum and The Student and Youth Congress of Burma)

Today, October 18, 2011, marks the 8th World Youth Day for Democracy, a day when students and youth around the world stand in solidarity with young people worldwide for taking part in pro-democracy activities. On this day, three student and youth alliances are urging the international community to put pressure on the Burmese regime to:

1. Release all students and all youth political prisoners effective immediately, along with all other political prisoners.
2. Stop the oppression of democratic student and youth activists who are seeking freedom and human rights protection.
3. Stop attacks in the ethnic areas where students and youth have to face difficult situations.
4. Commence an authentic dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and promote this in an all inclusive dialogue with democratic and ethnic forces to stop the root causes of current problems, which brings hardship and injustice to students and youth throughout Burma.

Although, the new so-called civilian government (regime) has announced two amnesties since they came to power, it only released a few political prisoners and most of them were about to due to be released. At this moment, there are still so many political prisoners in the Burmese prisons and they live under an extremely poor health care system. Most of the political prisoners are students and youth and the government is simply using them as hostages, readily available as a bargain when the pressure of the international community becomes high. All these young political prisoners are thirsty for democracy, freedom and human rights.

In many parts of the country, young people are deeply affected by an increasing poverty level. They lack educational opportunities and adequate healthcare. Often times these youngsters are forced to work as child laborers or are recruited to become child soldiers. Growing up in these dire conditions leaves them to be subjected to many human rights violations, especially in the armed conflict areas where there are increasing attacks by the Burmese army on the ethnic armed groups.

To be able to solve all the political problems in Burma, we truly need a genuine dialogue between the regime and the opposition forces, including the democratic and ethnic forces. The so-called civilian government is portraying itself as the real reformists, as the real democratic leaders who respect the democracy and human rights. So the Burmese regime meets with our leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and is pretending as if they will have a legitimate dialogue soon.

Nevertheless, as long as they keep talking that they will work under the scope of the 2008 constitution, which was drafted to make sure their military influence in the future of Burma, there is nothing to be trusted that they will carry on the meetings with opposition leader into genuine dialogue. Therefore, it is time to push the regime to go forward from the meetings with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to the genuine dialogue so that it can bring the national reconciliation. Therefore, we, All Burma Federation of Student Unions-Foreign Affairs Committee, the Nationalities Youth Forum, and the Student and Youth Congress of Burma strongly urge you to put more pressure on the regime regarding the launch of a genuine dialogue.

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