

Appendix B: Timeline of Harassment of NGOs in 2003

Thai policies have made movement, security and political organizing difficult for Burmese pro-democracy activists. Many have been quietly told to “lay low” both for their personal security as well as that of their organization. The level of fear has been raised by publicly reported crackdowns on activists and threatening statements by Thai authorities reported in the media.

September 16, 2003: Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra told Thailand’s National Security Council and the Immigration Police Bureau to blacklist foreign organizations that conduct activities in opposition to their home countries from Thai soil. Kyaw Ko, the general secretary of ABSDF, said, “The APEC Summit is a good excuse for Thailand to blacklist rebel groups.”⁹⁵

August 27: Deputy Director for International Security Operations Command Gen. Panlop Pinmanee said that thousands of refugees and political exiles would be rounded up and confined in a variety of detention centers during the APEC meeting.⁹⁶

July 22: In the Thai border town of Mae Sot, the Secretary-General of the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners Burma (AAPPB) reported that Thai officials said opposition members could live in town but they could not travel. Thai authorities reportedly visited the offices to photograph and record personal information about the workers and take stock of their office equipment.⁹⁷

July 4: NLD members and Black Friday witnesses, Wunna Maung and Khin Zaw, submitted an affidavit to the U.S. Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, detailing their accounts of what happened on May 30 in Burma. However they were denied an opportunity to speak at the Foreign Correspondent Club in Bangkok and threatened with deportation if they spoke out publicly against the SPDC.⁹⁸

June 26: The Thai Government used the SPDC’s claim of a plot to kidnap the SPDC Ambassador in Thailand by various opposition groups to justify another crackdown on Burmese political dissidents. Thai Defense Minister Gen. Thammarak Issangkura na Ayuddhya said Thai officials had a list of all Burmese students living in Thailand and it was doubtful any of them would try to mount a violent attack. “But we can’t be careless,” he said. “We must make preparations before anything happens.”⁹⁹ Than Khe, Chairman of the All Burma Students’ Democratic Front, denied that students in

⁹⁵ “Burmese Rebels Under Watch,” *Irrawaddy*, September 17, 2003.

⁹⁶ “Thailand to Confine Refugees to Camps during APEC,” Agence France-Presse, August 27, 2003.

⁹⁷ “Burmese Opposition Checked,” *Irrawaddy*, July 22, 2003.

⁹⁸ “Two Witnesses to Myanmar Violence Seek UN Protection in Bangkok,” Agence France-Presse, July 4, 2003.

⁹⁹ “Thai PM Calls for Release of Suu Kyi, But Warns Myanmar Dissidents,” Deutsche Presse-Agentur, June 26, 2003.

Thailand were planning any action against Burmese embassy staff, and western diplomats in Bangkok privately denounced the SPDC's claims as spurious.¹⁰⁰

June 9-17: Burmese began a fifty-eight-hour hunger strike in front of the Burmese embassy. Thai authorities forced them to relocate to the UNHCR building to hold their protest.¹⁰¹

May 27: After meetings with Thai officials and Burmese and Thai human rights defenders, Hina Jilani, the U.N. Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders said that human rights defenders face a "climate of fear" in Thailand caused by threatening statements made by high level government officials and the use of the state security apparatus and the courts to harass and intimidate human rights defenders, through false and unjust prosecution.¹⁰²

February: Prime Minister Thaksin said support from NGOs for Burmese ethnic groups was interfering with the government's effort to mediate peace talks between Rangoon and the rebels. A senior military source said the NGOs would be closely watched as authorities tried to bring the parties to the negotiation table.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ "Plans to Raid Embassy Denied," *Irrawaddy*, June 26, 2003.

¹⁰¹ "More Hunger Strikes for Suu Kyi's Release," *Irrawaddy*, June 18, 2003.

¹⁰² "Rebuke for Bangkok over Human Rights," *Financial Times*, May 27, 2003.

¹⁰³ "NGOs Hampering Burmese Peace Effort," *Bangkok Post*, February 24, 2003.