



SHOWCASE BY PLATON

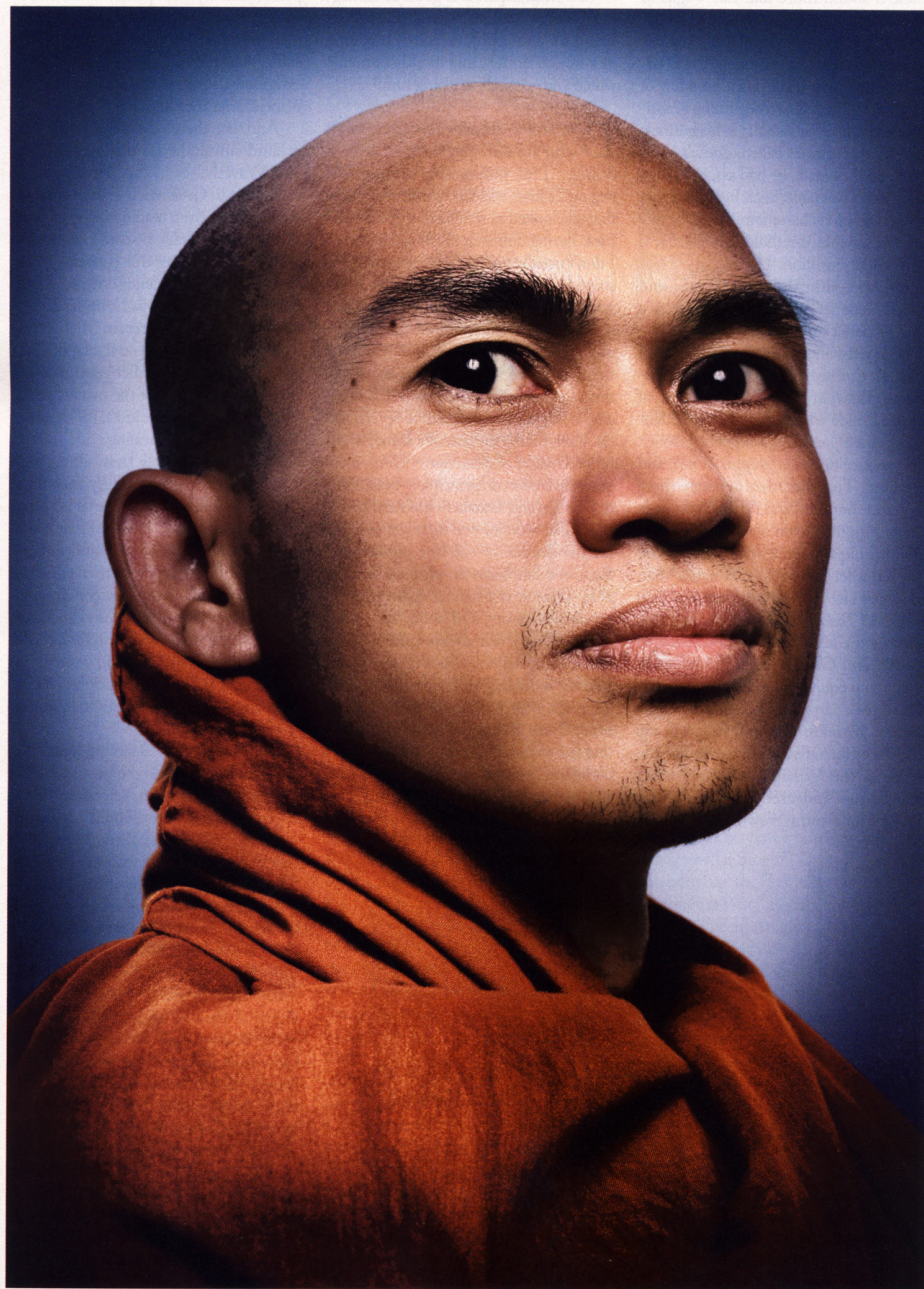
## EXILED

Ashin Issariya is one of the young Buddhist monks who, in September, 2007, led peaceful demonstrations in Burma that were crushed by the country's military regime. I met him a few months later, in a sweltering monastery in Rangoon, where he had gone to hide from the authorities. Following the custom of many Burmese, he had adopted a pseudonym, King Zero, while underground. By then, many of his friends had been arrested. Restrained and bookish, he was still trying to organize his fellow-monks. "Democracy is something similar to the Buddha's teachings," he told me. Poverty and oppression have made Burma's monks anything but otherworldly—they are among the regime's most determined opponents. In late 2008, Ashin Issariya exchanged his saffron robe for civilian clothes and fled the country, one step ahead of arrest. He is now among the two hundred thousand Burmese refugees living in Thailand.

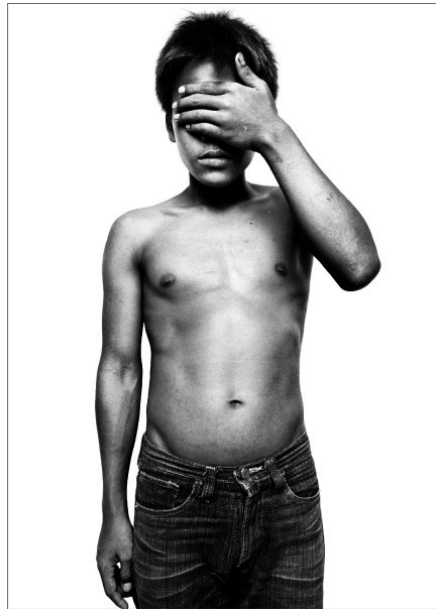
In May, Human Rights Watch sent the photographer Platon to Thailand, where he made portraits of Ashin Issariya and other Burmese. (A gallery is available at [newyorker.com](http://newyorker.com) and in the magazine's tablet edition.) At first, I didn't recognize the face. Platon, who often photographs celebrities, turns the hunted monk I met in Rangoon into an icon of glowing defiance—a true king. It's as if only in exile could Ashin Issariya give full expression to the personality that had to be kept under wraps in the generals' Burma.

On November 7th, the military rulers will hold national elections designed to perpetuate their grip on power. Both the American and the British governments have condemned the vote as a sham, and the opposition, led by Aung Sang Suu Kyi, is boycotting it. The country's real leaders remain in prison, in hiding, in exile, under wraps, waiting for their chance.

—George Packer







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Dieser 16-Jährige will sein Gesicht nicht zeigen. Er wurde als Kindersoldat für die burmesische Armee rekrutiert und floh schließlich nach Thailand. Die Militärjunta regiert Burma mit eiserner Hand, die Bevölkerung lebt in Armut. Für die Menschenrechtsorganisation Human Rights Watch portraitierte der renommierte Fotograf Platon Exil-Burmesen.



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2007 demonstrierten Zehntausende gegen die Regierung - angeführt wurden die Proteste von buddhistischen Mönchen. Die Junta knüpfelte den Aufstand in der Stadt Rangun nieder, viele Menschen starben, genaue Opferzahlen sind nicht bekannt. Die drei Mönche Ashin Sopaka, Ashin Issriya und U Teza sind nach Thailand geflohen.



## DIAPORAMAS PHOTO

### DIAPORAMAS À LA UNE

### DIAPORAMAS LES + VUS

### DIAPORAMAS PAR THÈME



#### Exilés birmans et défenseurs des droits de l'homme

Aung San Suu Kyi, que la junte pourrait libérer ce samedi, est la figure emblématique de l'opposition birmane. Mais à travers le pays, d'autres comme elle défendent les droits de l'homme, au péril de leur vie.

Portraits signés Platon, pour Human Rights Watch.

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#### Défilé d'anges affriolants chez Victoria's Secret

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#### Ils ont refusé l'Oscar

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## ODE, NETHERLANDS

**Leven**

# Niet langer stil

Portretten van de mensen die hun thuisland Myanmar willen hervormen. FOTO'S: PLATON

**D**E LUST VAN AANTUGINGEN AAN HET ADRES VAN DE MILITAIRE MACHTHEBBERS IN Myanmar (voorheen Birma) is eindeloos. Het gebruik van kindsoldaten, de opsluiting en marteling van politieke dissidenten, de handel in vrouwen, de aanvallen op etnische minderheden... Al bijna vijftig jaar leven de inwoners van Myanmar in een gesloten samenleving, die wordt geleid door generaals. Al en toe krijgt de wereld een glimp te zien. Begin november waren er voor het eerst in twintig jaar verkiezingen; de regeringspartij claimde al snel de overwinning, waarop onlusten uitbraken. Bij de verkiezingen in 1990 werd de overwinning voor de grootste oppositiepartij niet erkend en kreeg onder meer Aung San Suu Kyi, het boegbeeld van de vrijheidstrijd, huisarrest opgelegd. Ook nu twijfelen internationale waarnemers aan het democratische gehalte.

Eerder dit jaar nam Human Rights Watch, een internationale organisatie die schendingen van mensenrechten aanpak, de befaamde Britse fotograaf Platon mee naar het grensgebied bij Myanmar en Thailand, om portretten te maken van oud-gevangenen, maatschappijhervormers en andere critici die zijn gevlucht of in ballingschap leven. Zij hebben de hoop op een betere toekomst voor de 50 miljoen inwoners van Myanmar niet opgegeven. En ze weigeren zich stil te houden. | MARCO VISSCHER



De Kachin vormen een etnische minderheid in het noorden van Myanmar die geregeld het slachtoffer van geweld is. Shirley Seng, Mary Labang en Nan Pying zijn leden van Kachin Women's Association Thailand, die strijdt tegen de handel in vrouwen van minderheidsgroepen.





Journalistene Thiri Htet San (30) og Moe Myint Zin (34) jobber for Democratic voice of Burma. Foto: HRW

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

02/07

## Portretter fra Burma

Den verdensberømte fotografen Platon reiste til grensen mellom Thailand og Burma sammen med Human Rights Watch. Se bildene her.

Prøv en av våre andre bildeserier:



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## Unikátní kampaň Human Rights Watch před volbami v Barmě

« PŘEDCHOZÍ

10/15

DALŠÍ »



Hary Lay je barmský umělec, malíř, satírik a dvorní karikaturista barmského exilového magazínu Irawaddy.

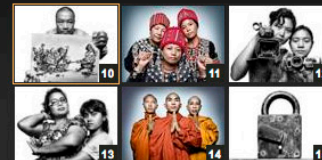
AUTOR: PLATON FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

5. 11. | 17:00

**Rangún** - V jedné z nejtvrdších diktatur světa se v neděli uskutečnil parlamentní volby. Volit může více než 28 milionů voličů. Děje se tak po dvaceti letech od chvíle, kdy v roce 1990 vyhrála volby Národní liga za demokracii opoziční vůdkyně Au Schan Su Ťij. Vojenský režim jí však odmítl předat moc a ovládá zemi dosud. Lidsko-právní organizace Human Rights Watch vzala k barmsko-thajským hranicím jednoho z nejlepších fotografů-portrétistů magazínu The New Yorker - Platona, aby nafotil bývalé politické vězně, novináře, členy barmských etnických minoritních skupin nebo osobností barmského exilu. Všichni portrétovaní zažili barmský režim na vlastní kůži, dokázali utéct do exilu, kde se sjednotili a společnými silami se snaží pomáhat své zemi. Ačkoli jsou nuceni žít mimo svou vlast, barmský režim je neumlčel.

Autor: Lucie Kalivodová

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KINYOBI, JAPAN

金曜アンテナ

# NLD他民主派の多くは不参加

ビルマ(ミャンマー)で約二〇年ぶりの総選挙が一月七日に実施される。この選挙では、二〇〇八年に制定された憲法に基づき、上下両院及び一四の地方議会の議員(合計一六三議席)をめぐって三七の政党、三〇〇〇人以上の候補者が争うことになっている。だが民主化運動の中心を担ってきたアウンサンスーチー氏率いる国民民主連盟(NLD)は、この選挙が民主的正義を有していないとして不参加を表明し、憲法の規定により解散となった。その他の民主化団体の多くもNLDに倣い選挙をボイコットすることを決めている。

この選挙は、この非民主的といわれるのか。まず、そもそもこの選挙を実施する根拠となる憲法の制定過程自体に問題がある。一九九〇年の総選挙においてNLDは議席の八割を獲得して大勝するも、軍政は政権を譲り、議会を開くことを求めたNLDを激しく弾圧し、九二年からは、一方的に新憲法の作成に取り掛かり、一五年後の二〇〇八年、軍政は書き上げた憲法案の承認を問う国民投票を実施する。

しかし、この国民投票が行なわれる直前にサイクロン「ナルギス」がビルマ南部を直撃し、死者・行方不明者あわせて一四万人という大惨事をもたらした。そうした状況下で軍政は選挙を進行し、結果、投票率九八%、賛成率九二%という驚異的な数字で憲法案が承認された。票の操作が行なわれたとの批判が噴出したものの、軍政は一切耳を貸さなかった。ここで、この憲法の内容の問題点をいくつか指摘したい。今度の総選挙後に設置される国に於いては、上院に於いて国民議会の定数は二四議席、また下院に於いては人民議会の定数は四四議席と憲法は規定している。だが議席の四分の一は必ず軍人のために割り当てられる。

残りの一六八議席、三〇議席が投票に付されることになる。つまり今回の総選挙の場合、親軍政派は両院ともに三分の一の議席を獲得すれば過半数に達する。また憲法を改正するためには両議席の四分の三以上の賛成が必要とされるため、事実上軍は拒否権を持つことになる。さらにはこの両院議員によって、政権を担う大統領が選出されることとなる。つまり、国会だけでなく行政府にも非民主派である軍人たちの影響力が及ぶのは確実だ。このように、制度上圧倒的に有利な立場の軍政は、選挙戦でも勝利に戦いを進めている。八月六

日付「ニューヨーク・タイムズ」電子版は、関係者の話として、過去に例のない規模で国有資産の売却が軍政によって進められており、そこで得られた豊富な資金が親軍政派の選挙活動費用や公務員の給料増額といったブルジョア政策の原資となっていると伝えている。加えて、親軍政派は選挙の立候補者数でも他の政党を凌駕し、彼らに投票する以外選択の余地がない選挙区も多い。亡命ビルマ人による「ニュース・アラブ」(軍上級)によると、軍政の御用政党、連邦団結発展党(USDP)は上下両院および地方議会全ての選挙区で一七一人の候補者を擁立し、また同じく親軍政派と見られ、ネウ・マ社会主義計画党(BSP)の後継である国民統一党(NUP)も九九人を擁立した。興味深いのはNUPが予想以上の勢力を持つこ

Shukan Kinyobi NO.821 Oct 21, 2010 issue

今週の巻頭トピック

【写真説明】右から順に  
① 監房の鍵、タイ、メーソットにある政治囚支援協会の展示室にて。  
② マンダレー出身の元子ども兵士(16歳)。個人が特定されないよう顔を隠している。彼はカチン州の前線に送られた後、脱走した。  
③ 合掌する仏教徒。左からアシンパカ師、アシンイサリヤ師、ウーテザ師(通称「キンタ・セリ」)。  
④ 放送局「ビルマ民主の声」(DVB)の二人のジャーナリスト。ビルマでニュースキャスターをしていたティリチン(30歳、左)と、モーミン(34歳)。DVBは人工衛星を使ってラジオとテレビのニュース放送を行なっている。ビルマ国内で起きた事件を取材・記録し、そのニュースをビルマ国内に向けて放送し、かつ世界中にそれを配信することに命をかけている。DVBのあるビデオジャーナリストは、仏教僧とのインタビューを撮影したために、2009年に逮捕され服役27年の刑を科された。撮影/Platoon for Human Rights Watch



とにUSDPは危機感を抱いているとされ、今後両者の関係がどうなるのか注目される。その一方、非軍政系政党は、ビルマ国民の平均年収にも匹敵する高額の供託金(約五〇〇USドル)と、投票歴のある人間の立候補禁止(元



政治犯の排除のため、短い立候補受付期間といった条件をクリアできず、限られた数の候補者しか擁立することができなかった。選挙ボイコットを表明したNLDと袂を分ち、今回参加する民主派の政党の筆頭格である国民民主勢力(NDL)は、二六一人の候補者を擁立したと発表。それゆえNLDは、(〇)月補選、他の民主派政党と共同に政党連合を結成したが、そのわずか数日後にNLDの立候補者数名が軍政に近い実業家から献金を受け取った事実が発覚し、政党連合を構成していた小政党の

一つが早くも脱退する事態となった。「イラワジ」は伝えている。結局のところ軍政は、権力を維持し続けるという強固な意志を疑い選挙によって覆い隠そうとしてにすぎない。そうした軍政の満期に加担しないために、NLD等の民主化団体は選挙をボイコットしたのとはうしろさしと言え。だが国際社会またはビルマ国内でも、他は目には民主化への道筋も見えたらす、この選挙に決意期待を寄せる人々がいるのもまた事実である。

山本重三(ジャーナリスト)





JAPAN

**移民労働者**  
タイ北部のメーノートの農地で働く人。タイにはビルマ出身の移民労働者が20万人近くいるといわれる。ビルマでは習得困難な労働技能、軍国支配の地帯など人々に強制し、女性には暴力の支配を受けることも

**Picture Power**  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PLATON FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

**撮影:プラトン** 1988年ロンドン生まれで、キリンジャの父とイギリス人の母を持つ。英国版フォーアワードを経て1998年アメリカに移住し、ジョン・ドナティ・ジョーが創刊したジョー・ドナティ・ジョーで活動した。現在は自らの有力な海外に世界中の児童やレパリティーのポートレートを描き、高い評価を受けている。代表作は「Picture's Republic」(2004年)

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**政治犯**  
政治犯としてアムステルダムで暮らす。政治犯者連合会の共同設立者となったボー・デー。ビルマでは少なくとも100人以上の政治犯が殺害されている。ボー・デーは彼らの釈放を求めて奔走している

**若者**  
ビルマ中部プロム出身で、以前はオーストラリアで働き、現在はオーストラリアのブリスベンに在住。ビルマでは少なくとも100人以上の政治犯が殺害されている。ボー・デーは彼らの釈放を求めて奔走している

**元少年兵**  
ビルマ中部プロム出身の少年兵。カチン州の国境にテロリストとシンガポールが関係するタイ兵と戦った。戦後、タイに渡り、現在はタイのバンコクで暮らしている

**女性人権団体メンバー**  
タイに住む女性人権団体メンバー。ビルマでは少なくとも100人以上の政治犯が殺害されている。彼女はビルマの女性人権団体のメンバーとして活動している

**知識人**  
ビルマの知識人に生まれたウィン・ミン・ミン。ビルマでは少なくとも100人以上の政治犯が殺害されている。彼はビルマの知識人の代表として活動している

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**ジャーナリスト**  
ビルマでニュースキャスターとして活動している。ビルマでは少なくとも100人以上の政治犯が殺害されている。彼はビルマのジャーナリストとして活動している

**アーティスト**  
ビルマの著名な画家。彼の作品はビルマの歴史や文化を描いている。彼はビルマのアーティストとして活動している

**地雷の被害者**  
ビルマ南部カチン州出身で、現在はタイ北部の国境に近いメーノートで暮らす地雷被害者。15歳の時に地雷に踏み、足に怪我を負った。現在はタイのバンコクで暮らしている

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**仏教僧**  
ビルマの仏教僧。彼はビルマの仏教僧として活動している

**In Exile From Burma**

**戦う亡命者、ビルマへの眼差し**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PLATON

**Picture Power**

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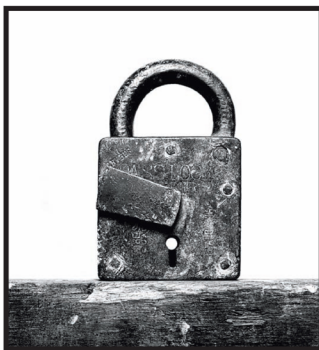


## TIME OUT, INDIA

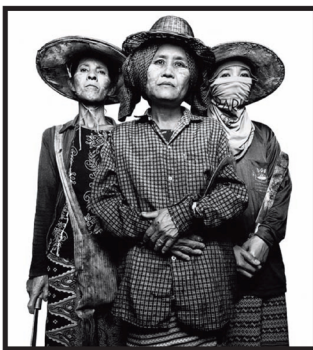
Platon

# Framed faces

New York photographer Platon turns his lens on the struggle of people of Myanmar. Zeenat Nagree interviews him about the experience.



**Prison break** (left) A lock from the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners Museum in Mae Sot, Thailand and (right) three of the estimated two million migrant Myanmar workers who live and work in Thailand



On November 7, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) held its first general elections in 20 years. But international observers don't expect significant political change in a country that has been under military control since 1962. The elections are a "sham process", according to David Mathieson, a senior researcher with Human Rights Watch, who cites "the restrictions of the electoral laws and marginalisation of political opponents".

As part of an ongoing focus on the resistance movement in Myanmar, Human Rights Watch took New York photographer Platon to the Thai border town of Mae Sot and surrounding areas that are home to Myanmar refugees. Over five days in May, Platon shot portraits of more than 90 refugees including

former child soldiers, journalists, landmine victims, monks and women's rights activists.

Marginalised people are becoming an important subject for Platon, who is primarily known for his portraits of world leaders. (He won the 2008 World Press Photo Contest for his picture of Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, which appeared on the cover of *Time*, and the 2010 American Society of Magazine Editors Award for *Portraits of Power*, a series of over 100 pictures of political figures.) A recent photo essay, *The Promise*, presented portraits of American Civil Rights-era figures.

Platon, who moved from London to the US in 1998, has shot for publications including *Rolling Stone*, *The New York Times Magazine* and *Vanity Fair*. He is currently a staff pho-

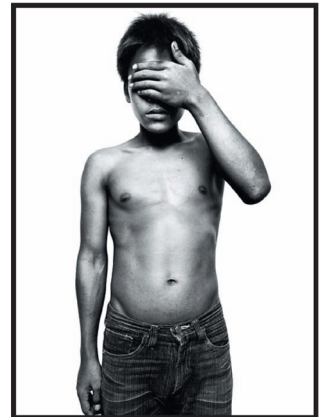
tographer for the *New Yorker* and told *Time Out* that hopes to use his stint there to turn his attention "away from the celebrated" to those who "should be celebrated".

**What led you to take pictures of refugees from Myanmar?**

In recent times, especially with my work in *The New Yorker*, I've been exploring new subject matter. It's no longer about people who are powerful but people who have been robbed of power and freedom. I think it's important to celebrate the brave and courageous. I am trying to divert my audience to the real heroes of the day.

**You shot over 90 portraits in just five days. Were you able to connect with**

Platon



**Show and tell** (left) Thiri Hui San and Moe Myint, journalists with the Democratic Voice of Burma TV station, risk their lives to report news from Myanmar and (right) a former child soldier hides his face to protect his identity

**your subjects?**

I didn't have that much time with them. But I've learnt through my work that the question is not how much time I have with someone but the connection I'm able to create. For instance, I had very little time with the leaders who are featured in *Portraits of Power*. With Hugo Chavez I had less than 20 seconds. Sometimes, it is better that there is less time. It creates an intense experience and enables me to get a really powerful picture.

**How did you want to present the Burmese people?**

I feel very inspired by people who stand up against oppression. It takes a lot of courage and sacrifice. I didn't want to depict them in a patronising way. I wanted my pictures to be a confident, honest presentation of their existence. So when I photographed King Zero [Ashin Isariya], the monk, I wanted to treat him with reverence, the way a leader should be treated. I wanted to make him look like a king. I've tried to celebrate these people and show the world their incredible human strength. Normally, they are just statistics. My job is to humanise statistics and show the world what's going on.

**What were the challenges you faced?**

We photographed a lot of people. The biggest

challenge was to maintain a constant level of energy. It's exhausting to work with so many people and to try and understand their vulnerabilities and strengths. It takes a lot of emotional energy. As hard as it was, I reminded myself of what these people have experienced. It kept me going, kept me inspired to dig deeper and do justice. There were a lot of chilling reminders of their situation. For example, the child soldier was frightened of revealing his identity and we finally shot the picture in a way that he had his face covered.

There were beautiful moments too. One of the video journalists had her young child with her and I said, "What you do is dangerous. It could put you in prison or have you killed, and your daughter will be left without a mother. As a mother do you feel guilty for leaving your daughter so vulnerable?" She said something very powerful: "But I am being a good mother by going out and risking my life to make the world a better place for my daughter to grow up in." It was so inspiring to hear that. I don't know anybody like that in New York.

**Were you able to gauge the mood on the election among these refugees?**

I got an incredible sense of hope and defiance – and the energy to continue the battle. I think people don't hold out much hope for this particular election. But the good thing is that it is

newsworthy and it's an excuse for the media to talk about Myanmar.

**Your portraits are characterised by cropped frames that focus on the faces of your subjects. But with this series, you have stepped back to let the viewer see a bigger frame.**

I'm a storyteller. Everything you see in a picture is a story. I do have a close shot in this series – of a former political prisoner. In that picture, I really wanted to get intimate and show the suffering in his eyes. So his body was less important to me. I wanted the viewers to look into his soul and see the struggle that this man is going through after being treated so badly.

In other cases, I was dealing with a different story. The victim of the landmine blast has lost his limbs and has terrible scars on his stomach. There's a story there. I needed to show his wounds and what has happened to him. If I would have gone closer, you wouldn't have been able to see that. For some people it's hard to look at that picture. It's uncomfortable and shocking. But can you imagine how shocking it is for the human being who has experienced it physically? I wanted to tell my viewers that there's no one who should have more rights than others, and remind them that we are all the same.





## ÉPOCA, BRAZIL

MUNDO MIANMAR

**REBELDES**  
Os monges birmaneses Aung Mye San Suu Kyi, Aung Mye Thee e U Nu foram presos em 2007 e tiveram de fugir para a Tailândia

### Os exilados birmaneses

Às vésperas de uma eleição de cartas marcadas - e da libertação da Nobel da Paz Aung Suu Kyi -, um renomado fotógrafo retrata as vítimas da ditadura

Fotos de Platon

Como toda ditadura que se preze, a junta militar que governa Mianmar (ex-Birmânia) desde 1992 tenta se livrar de todos os que clamam por democracia, seja pelo assassinato, prisão ou exílio. É por isso que as fotografias que ilustram esta reportagem foram feitas na vizinha Tailândia. Foi lá que o renomado fotógrafo britânico Platon, colaborador da revista americana *The New Yorker*, produziu um ensaio sobre as pessoas que lutam contra a brutalidade do regime do miserável país asiático, um dos mais fechados do mundo. Os retratados sofreram algum tipo de abuso do regime e fugiram de Mianmar.

Os monges ao lado estavam entre os líderes de um grande protesto que uniu religiosos e estudantes contra a junta em setembro de 2007, chamada Revolução do Aquário (o nome se deve à cor da vestimenta deles). Foram ameaçados e perseguidos, até se exilarem na Tailândia. As imagens foram registradas em maio deste ano, a pedido da ONG internacional de direitos humanos Human Rights Watch, mas só foram divulgadas agora. EPOCA as publica em primeira mão no Brasil.

O timing da publicação pela Human Rights Watch tem um motivo: chamar a atenção do mundo para as eleições presidenciais de Mianmar, previstas para 7 de novembro. Um pleito assim não ocorre no país desde 1990.

Poderia ser um esperançoso sinal de abertura democrática, mas tudo leva a

crer que o processo será uma grande farsa. A comissão responsável por organizar e referendar as eleições foi totalmente nomeada pela junta, cujo nome oficial (e irônico) é Conselho de Estado para a Paz e o Desenvolvimento. A Liga Nacional pela Democracia (LND), principal partido de oposição, decidiu boicotar o pleito.

Os generais vetaram a inscrição de candidatos que estão cumprindo sentença judicial. Na prática, é um golpe direcionado contra Aung San Suu Kyi, a líder da LND e maior opositora do regime. No dia 23, ela completou 15 dos últimos 21 anos em prisão domiciliar. Na última eleição de Mianmar, há 20 anos, a LND obteve a maioria das cadeiras no Parlamento. Suu Kyi se tornaria primeira-ministra, mas foi presa pelos militares. Seu ativismo pró-democracia lhe rendeu o Prêmio Nobel da Paz em 1991 e um forte apoio da comunidade internacional. Pressionado, o regime diz que vai liberá-la no dia 13, seis dias após as eleições. Deve usar o episódio como um suposto gesto humanitário, mas os advogados dela desconfiam. Assim como desconfia o cartunista birmanês Harn Lay, um dos retratados por Platon (confira na página seguinte), quando perguntado se voltaria a Mianmar. "Não ficaria livre por muito tempo. Se me derem um ano de cadeia por charge, vou ficar preso mais de mil anos", afirma Lay.

10 de novembro de 2010 EPOCA 101

MUNDO MIANMAR

**EXILADOS**  
1. O cartunista Harn Lay, de 44 anos, exibe uma de suas charges críticas à junta militar de Mianmar. 2. As jornalistas Thit San (à esq.), de 30 anos, e Moe Zin, de 34, fazem parte da emissora de rádio e TV Voz Democrática de Mianmar. Seus repórteres se arriscam ao veicular notícias sobre o país. 3. Um garoto de 16 anos esconde o rosto para proteger sua identidade. De fugas do Exército birmanês. Segundo a Human Rights Watch, Mianmar recruta soldados de até 11 anos, e 20% do contingente é de menores de 18. 4. Kio Say (à esq.), de 43 anos. Hla Ywe, de 19, e Par Tan, de 45. Todos foram vítimas de minas terrestres. Mianmar é considerado o único país do mundo a ainda instalar minas por conta de conflitos étnicos. 5. Crianças portadoras do vírus HIV, em tratamento na Tailândia. Elas usam no rosto uma pasta de madeira típica de Mianmar como efeito. 6. Camponesas de lavouras na fronteira com a Tailândia. Elas declaram o campo em Mianmar para fugir dos trabalhos forçados

“Se derem um ano de cadeia por charge, fico preso mais de mil” HARN LAY, cartunista birmanês

**Outras**  
Fotos do ensaio de Platon em [epoca.com.br](http://epoca.com.br)





## THE IRRRAWADDY, THAILAND

### PORTRAITS FROM EXILE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PLATON FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

**I**n May 2010, Human Rights Watch took leading portrait photographer Platon to the Thai-Burmese border to photograph former political prisoners, civil society leaders, ethnic minority group

members, journalists and other people in exile from their country, Burma. All of those in this portrait portfolio have experienced human rights abuses in Burma and sought refuge in Thailand. Instead of being

demoralized and defeated, they have united and use their shared experiences to educate and work for a better future for all of Burma's people. Although forced into exile, they have not been silenced.



**A**s a former political prisoner and co-founder of the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, Bo Kyi works tirelessly to secure the release of more than 2,100 Burmese citizens who have been jailed for their political independence and activism. After taking part in peaceful demonstrations during Burma's 1988 popular uprising, Bo Kyi was arrested in March 1990 as a college student for joining the human rights cause. He ultimately spent seven years and three months in prison, suffering interrogations, beatings, shackling and torture amid squalid living conditions. Throughout his long

ordeal, Bo Kyi resolved that he would work for the release of all those who remained unjustly held in Burma's prison network. On release, Bo Kyi escaped to Thailand where he helped found the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, pressing for the release of those still in prison and providing health services, guidance and care for them and their families.



**S**hirley Seng, 63, Mary Labang, 36, and Nan Pyung, 21, are members of the Kachin Women's Association in Thailand in Chiang Mai. They speak out against the multiple forms of violence in Burma that result in the displacement, trafficking and migration of indigenous Kachin women, as well as women belonging to other ethnic minorities such as the Karen, Lahu and Shan.

**I**n Burma, the HIV/AIDS medication supply is so limited that only one in four people requiring treatment receives it. These children, who are HIV positive, were orphaned or sent by their parents to the Social Action for Women's safe house, the Children's Crisis Center in Mae Sot, for treatment or protection. SAW provides shelter, education and basic services for Burmese children including antiretroviral medication.



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**T**hree landmine victims: Kio Soy, 43, Hsa Ka Two, 15, and Par Taw, 45. Burma is one of the top remaining users of landmines as part of long-running armed conflicts between government forces and ethnic minority groups. According to the 2010 Landmine Monitor, Burma is the only country that continues to use landmines on an ongoing basis, having failed to sign the global anti-landmine treaty. The Burmese army routinely deploys landmines near borders with Thailand, Bangladesh and India, as well as in Burmese states with ethnic minorities such as Karen state and Shan state. Many of the non-state armed groups also use landmines and improvised explosive devices widely.



**B**urma has the largest number of child soldiers in the world. Here, a 16-year-old former child soldier from Mandalay hides his face to protect his identity. He fled after he was sent to the front line in Kachin state. The overwhelming majority of Burma's child soldiers are found in the national army, which forcibly recruits children as young as 11, although armed ethnic opposition groups use child soldiers as well. As many as 20 percent of Burma's active duty soldiers may be children under the age of 18.

**T**hese migrant laborers work in the fields near Mae Sot, Thailand. There are currently an estimated two million migrant workers from Burma living in Thailand. Many Burmese migrants previously suffered as forced laborers in Burma. The Burmese army has used forced labor to build roads, act as "porters" for the military, build infrastructure, maintain bases and serve troops and patrols. Women are routinely subjected to sexual violence. Villagers receive no pay, must supply their own food and are threatened with imprisonment should they refuse to cooperate. Porters have been beaten and killed when they tire under their heavy burdens.

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**H**am Lay, 44, is Burma's best-known cartoonist. His work is published in *The Irrawaddy*. A graduate of the Rangoon School of Fine Arts Academy and former rebel soldier, Ham Lay fled to Thailand following the 1988 protests and ensuing crackdown in Burma. In April 2010, he was awarded a Hellman/Hammett grant, administered by Human Rights Watch.



**A**bu Mayoe and Linda Desube are sex workers from Burma and members of Empower, a Thai organization of sex workers promoting rights, education and opportunities. Most sex workers from Burma provide the main source of income for their families, often supporting five to eight other adults. At Empower in Chiang Mai, migrant Burmese sex workers strive to improve working conditions and promote the dignity of migrants, women and sex workers.



**T**he comedic troupe Three Lay Thee: Mya Sabal Ngome, "Godzilla," and his wife, Chaw Su Myo. The creative community in Burma has been among the leading voices challenging military rule with art and humor and they are therefore frequently targeted for arrest and detention. The Three Lay Thee trio fled Burma after their colleague Zaraganar was arrested and sentenced to 59 years in prison in 2008.



**K**yaw Htet, 22, is a former motorcycle mechanic from Prome. Like many young people in Burma, his opportunities and education are limited, especially if the family has any association with the political opposition. Kyaw Htet left Burma to pursue his dream of being a musician and helping his community.



**T**hree exiled Buddhist monks (left to right): Ashin Sopaka, Ashin Issariya, known as "King Zero," and U Taza. In September 2007, hundreds of monks left the relative safety of their monasteries to lead street protests, which came to be known as the "Saffron Revolution." Burmese government security forces killed, beat, tortured and violently dispersed peaceful protesters, including monks. In the ensuing crackdown, Burmese courts sentenced hundreds of political activists and monks to prison terms of up to 65 years. Many monks subsequently fled the country.



**D**emocratic Voice of Burma (DVB) broadcast journalists Thiri Htet San, 30, a former newscaster in Burma, and Moe Myint Zin, 34. The DVB is a satellite radio and television news service, with highly professional reporters who risk their lives to report and record events inside Burma. One DVB video journalist was arrested in 2009 and sentenced to 27 years in prison for filming interviews with monks.



## SLIDESHOW

### Burma portraits

0 comments | [Post your comment](#)

In this collection of striking portraits by leading photographer Platon, the face of Burma is revealed following years of oppression and long standing human rights abuses by the government. Meet former political prisoners, civil society leaders, ethnic minority group members, journalists and other people in exile from their country.



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*Click the arrows at the bottom right corner of the slideshow to view the photos in full-screen.*

Burma is one of the most repressive and closed societies in the world, run by generals since 1962. Longstanding human rights abuses by the government include silencing of most of civil society, torture in