Long March and Hunger Strike for Freedom and Democracy in BURMA

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Day 12

September 12, 2004 (Twelfth Day)

The Long Freedom March is the first part of the activists' campaign to shed the light on the plight of the people of Burma. As of the eleventh day of the Freedom Long March the activists have marched a total of 130 miles.

On day twelve of their journey the activists began marching 8:30 in the morning, departing from New Burgh, New York, where they had concluded the previous day.

Several participants joined the three primary marchers. U Win Khet from National League for Democracy (Liberated Areas) and two of the pledge hunger strike activists, Daw Khin San New from National League for Democracy (Liberated Areas) and U Tin Ngwe, marched alongside the activists during the day's journey. Additionally, the activists were supported by many individuals during the course of day: Ko Sithu Kyaw Win and Ko Wai Hein from Utica, New York; and Ko Moe Chan, Ma Zorm, Ma Mya Mya Soe, Ko Aung Lwin, Ko Aung, Ko Jack, Ma Nyein, Ko Win Shein and Ko Moe Hein from the New York City Community.

At around 10:20 in the morning, the marchers proceeded to a Celebration of Peace and Hope prayer event. The event was held at the Stone Church in Cragsmoor, New York and attended by over two hundred people.

One of the programs included a prayer session with participants bearing different flags from around the world outside of the church. During that session, a prayer for Burma was also included.

The participants from Burma chose to bear a flag with six stars representing a free Burma instead of the one used by the despotic regime' State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). (The SPDC uses the flag that was officiated by the Burmese Socialist Party, led by the late notorious dictator General Ne Win.)

Ms. Manna Jo Greene from the Hudson River Sloop, Clearwater introduced the activists from Burma to the event's two hundred attendees. U Han Lin spoke to these people on behalf of all participants from Burma. He told them of Burma's struggle for freedom and democracy. Bearing democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's picture, the other activists explained to the prayer event participants how the people of Burma have suffered under the country's repressive military regime for years. They spoke of the total absence of basic human rights throughout Burma. While speaking they also handed out informational pamphlets.

The attendees of the prayer event came from all over the world. All appeared very much interested in Burma's struggle for freedom and democracy. They even offered a gesture of their support for the people of Burma by signing their names on the activists' petition forms.

After the end of the prayer event, the activists continue to march until 7:00 in the evening, stopping for that day at Cornwall, New York.

In the late evening, the three main marchers met with thirty people from the Peace and Human Rights group from Central America. During this meeting, the activists spent some time discussing issues relating to Burma.

All of the people that the activists met during the course of the day offered their addresses and contact numbers. They also promised to support and join the activists in New York for the upcoming Hunger Strike campaign. The fact that so many people from diverse backgrounds have taken an interest in the plight of the people of Burma is truly encouraging.

With regard to all the supportive and encouraging letters received from a broad range of organizations, U Han Lin said "To gain freedom and democracy in Burma for all of the people from different ethnic backgrounds, we cannot do so alone. Even though some couldn't come and offer support in person during this campaign, they have been sending their support and words of encouragement for our efforts through letters - and it means so much to us. We are really glad that our demands are the same as others. If we remain united like this in the future, I believe that we will gain freedom and democracy for all of the people of Burma in the very near future."

Note: For those who are unable to support the Freedom "Long March" activists in person, e-mails of encouragement and support can be sent to **freedomlongmarch@aol.com**
Please visit **http://longmarchandhungerstrike.odfb.org**

For more information please contact:

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Aung Kyaw Myint - 607-339-7054 freelight0@aol.com Yan Myo Aung - 585-576-8521 yanmyoag@yahoo.com
Min Sun Min - 718-434-5292 kominmin@yahoo.com Nang San Nun - 917-519-3771 shanpyithu@yahoo.com
Sandi - 917-445-9222 freeassk@yahoo.com Nyan Win Lett - 646-321-5311 nyanwlett@yahoo.com