

Violence against Women Serious Problem in Burma

Friday 30 November 2007, by [Shah Paung](#) (Date first published: 28 November 2007).

Burmese authorities keep a careful watch on the home of Tar Tar and monitor her daily activities when she leaves her house. Pro-junta supporters stand around on the street corners of her neighborhood.

Tar Tar, who asked not to be identified by her real name, is one of many Burmese women who have been harassed, hounded, threatened and, in some cases, detained and tortured following the September uprising.

Tar Tar lives alone. Burmese authorities keep a close eye on her because they are searching for her sister, a National League for Democracy member who was active in the protest demonstrations.

Tar Tar herself was not involved, but she herself is now a target for the authorities because she has dared to speak to the international media.

"Some young women who live in my neighborhood came to my house and they told me to be careful because the authorities plan to raid my home and arrest me," Tar Tar said. "Whenever I receive this kind of news, it makes me so afraid. I just sit and look at the clock.

"When it's 11 pm, when I prepare myself for bed, I put on two or three different clothes and a longyi," she said, in case security forces come and arrest her in what's known as the Midnight Knock. If they don't give her time to pack a bag, she will at least be wearing a few extra clothes.

She seldom goes out, she said, because authorities follow her to see if she will contact her sister.

"I just live with a hope that I have a right to speak out," she said. "I will suffer from heart disease if I have to continue living under this horrible situation."

On Sunday, more than 25 women activists staged a brief demonstration in downtown Rangoon to mark the International Day of the Elimination of Violence against Women from now until December 10 and to call for the release of all detained women who took part in the September uprising.

The Women's League of Burma, a women rights group in exile in Thailand, also launched a 16-day campaign starting on November 25, calling on the junta to release all women activists arrested during the demonstrations as well as democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Nang Yain, the general-secretary of the WLB, said the group wants women in Burma to know the group supports their efforts, and that they are also working to raise the awareness of the problems of women in Burma.

According to the Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoner (Burma), 131 Burmese women were arrested, including six Buddhist nuns, during the demonstrations and at least 19 women are unaccounted for.

Recently, Su Su Nway, a prominent human rights activist, was arrested by authorities after two months in hiding. Earlier, Mie Mie, a member of the 88 Generation Students group, was arrested. They both played leading roles during the peaceful demonstrations.

Meanwhile, the Burmese authorities continue to hunt for other activists, including Nilar Thein, a member of the 88 Generation Students group. The mother of a 6-months-old baby, she has been in hiding since September.

Phyu Phyu Thin, a well-known HIV/AIDS activist and member of the National League for Democracy, was unable to attend her father's funeral because she has been in hiding since September.

"We are honored and encouraged by all our sisters who are working inside Burma in a very difficult and dangerous situation," Nang Yain said. "Their actions are for the true freedom of the Burmese people. They are also showing how much women can do for the people of Burma."

More than 100 women in conflict areas have been raped, killed or drafted into forced labor by Burmese soldiers, according to the women's rights groups.

P.S.

* From The Irrawaddy:

http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=9447