



## Nyi Nyi Aung Burma

Nyi Nyi Aung (Kyaw Zaw Lwin) is a Burmese-born American citizen (born 28 October 1969) and democracy activist detained by the Burmese junta on September 3, 2009. On March 18, 2010, after a sustained campaign by Freedom Now, the Burmese junta released Mr. Aung and he returned home to Maryland and his fiancé, Wa Wa Kyaw.

Mr. Aung has been a significant force in the Burmese pro-democracy movement since 1988, when Burma's ruling military junta first detained and tortured him, then age 18, for his efforts organizing peaceful student protests. After his release, Mr. Aung was one of the leading organizers of the country-wide demonstrations against the junta that culminated in the junta's violent crackdown against the citizens of Burma on August 8, 1988.

Mr. Aung was subsequently forced to flee to Thailand and, in 1993, resettled in the United States as a political refugee. He received a B.S. in computer science from Purdue University and continued to work on Burmese pro-democracy issues as an independent, non-violent activist. Prior to his 2009 arrest, Mr. Aung delivered a petition to the United Nations with over 680,000 signatures calling for the release of all political prisoners in Burma. Mr. Aung's mother and two cousins are currently imprisoned for their involvement in the 2007 Saffron Revolution.

On September 3, 2009, Mr. Aung flew to Burma to visit his imprisoned mother, who the junta is denying treatment for cancer. Mr. Aung was detained immediately after exiting the aircraft. The junta failed to acknowledge to Mr. Aung's family or the U.S. Embassy that it detained Mr. Aung until September 20, 2009. Upon receiving consular access, U.S. Embassy officials learned that Mr. Aung had been tortured. Mr. Aung later spent over one month in military dog cell confinement.

After a trial that violated both Burmese domestic and international law, Mr. Aung was convicted on February 10, 2010, and sentenced to five years imprisonment, including hard labor, commuted to three years. Mr. Aung was found guilty on false charges of forging a national identity card, failing to declare currencies at customs, and failing to renounce his Burmese citizenship.

Mr. Aung was released on March 18, 2010, and continues to be a strong advocate for democracy and human rights in Burma.