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From the Office of

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Akbayan Rep condemns brutal killing of former Burmese political prisoner

"The Burmese government contradicts itself to its claim that it has been instituting democratic reforms in the country when its local officials have been involved in the public killing of a former political prisoner," said Akbayan solon Mayong Aguja on the reported murder of Thet Naing Oo by a number of police and fire brigade members last March 17. Thet Naing Oo was a student from Rangoon University when the nationwide pro-democracy uprising occurred in 1988. He was sentenced for his role and he was released at the end of 2003. Reports say that he was accused of being a pick-pocket and beaten up to death by people from the municipal and fire brigade at a tea shop in the local marketplace in Burma.

"Such blatant disregard for human rights by municipal officials manifests the national government's lack of genuine commitment to work towards reform", Aguja added. "If the military government is to prove its dedication to institute reforms, it should properly investigate this case and hold accountable public officials who have been responsible for the death of Thet Naing Oo", said Aguja who is an active member of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC), a group of ASEAN Legislators from Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines and Cambodia which has been consistently calling on the military government in Burma to bring about changes and democratic reforms in the country.

"This adds to our growing list of demands as the Burmese government continues to show no sign of development", said the party-list representative. "If this deteriorating state is to continue, no pro-democracy advocate in Burma is ever safe whether or not they are under detention by the military government," added Aguja as he reiterates the call for the release of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi who, among other political prisoners, has been for a number of years been unjustly detained.

Together with the release of Suu Kyi, the congressman also called for the military government to convene a People's Parliament for a transitional period, the length of which is to be determined in a dialogue among political parties including the ruling party State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Suu Kyi. "It is only through an inclusive political process that genuine reform can be instituted in Burma", added Aguja who, together with Akbayan Citizen's Action Party and Laban ng Masa, has likewise been calling for a transitional revolutionary government in the Philippines upon the ouster of GMA Arroyo.

"The Burmese government's behavior is not so much different from the Arroyo regime with the way it has been treating the opposition but we will not wait for a Thet Naing Oo to happen in this country," exclaimed Aguja.