

Harn Yawngghwe: Ethnic efforts not in vain

Recent award given to a detained Shan leader indicates that ethnic leaders are not forgotten and their dedication and their work are not also in vain, according to Harn Yawngghwe, Director of the Brussels-based Euro-Burma Office (EBO) and Advisor to the Ethnic Nationalities Council (ENC).

By Hseng Khio Fah
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Khun Htun Oo, leader of the largest party in Shan State, who had been sentenced to 93 year jail sentences at Putao prison, Kachin State, was named the recipient of the Honorary Citizenship Award by Monza, a town in Italy near Milan on 5 December. The ceremony was held on 9 December and the award was presented to Bodie Saw Min, Secretary of the EBO, on his behalf.



Harn Yawngghwe

“This is how the world acknowledges our Shan leaders’ efforts. They never give up their ideals even though they were imprisoned,” said Harn. “Our new generation must also be strong like them until democracy and genuine federalism are won whatever the dangers and difficulties are.”

Khun Htun Oo is President of the Burma’s second largest party Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD). He was arrested in 2005 together with Gen Hso Ten, leader of the ceasefire group Shan State Peace Council (SSPC), Sai Nood aka Sai Nyunt Lwin, SNLD General Secretary under several charges including defamation of the state, association with illegal parties and conspiracy against the state. All were separately imprisoned:

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| ■ Maj-Gen Hso Ten | 106 years | Khamti prison |
| ■ Khun Tun Oo (Hkun Htun Oo) | 93 years | Putao prison |
| ■ Sai Nyunt Lwin, | 85 years | Kalay, Sagaing division. |
| ■ Sai Hla Aung | 79 years | Kyaukphyu prison |
| ■ U Myint Than | 79 years | Sandoway prison (died on 2 May 2006) |
| ■ U Tun Nyo | 79 years | Buthidaung prison |
| ■ U Nyi Nyi Moe | 79 years | Pakokku prison |
| ■ Sai Myo Win Tun | 79 years | Myingyan prison |

Khun Tun Oo’s brother, Sao Oo Kya, was also sentenced to 13 years in prison. He is serving his time in Mandalay.