

Burma's election will be insignificant without the participation of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, according to Htay Kywe, one of the imprisoned leaders of the 88 Generation Students group, who is currently serving a 65-year sentence in western Burma.



The message was relayed by Htay Kywe's brother-in-law, Phyo Min Thein, who spoke to *The Irrawaddy* on Tuesday. Phyo Min Thein recently resigned from the Union Democratic Party and paid a family visit on Aug. 9 to Htay Kywe in remote Buthitaung Prison in Arakan State.

"There will be more confusion and disputes at an international level if the election is held without Aung San Suu Kyi," Phyo Min Thein said on behalf of his brother-in-law. "The disadvantages outweigh the advantages."

He said that Htay Kywe called on the army, political forces, pro-democracy parties and ethnic groups to work together toward an "all inclusive" solution to the country's political problems.

Phyo Min Thein said that while he spoke to Htay Kywe in prison, several officers from special

branch police monitored them.

Htay Kywe was first arrested in 1991 and incarcerated in Rangoon's notorious Insein Prison for 15 years. He was transferred to Tharrawaddy Prison in 1995 and finished his jail term in July 2001. But he was continually detained by authorities under the "Protection of the State from Threat Act" (10 A), which allows the military authorities the right to detain suspects arbitrarily.

After his release, Htay Kywe co-founded the 88 Generation Students group along with Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, Min Zeya and Pyone Cho. From 2005 to 2007, the group conducted several nonviolent activities, including group visits to political prisoners' homes and holding Buddhist ceremonies at Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon commemorating political prisoners.

Htay Kywe, Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, Pyone Cho (aka Htay Win Aung), Mya Aye, Htay Kywe, Hla Myo Naung, Aung Thu, Nyan Lin and Aung Naing (aka Myo Aung Naing) were each sentenced on Nov. 11, 2007, at a court session in Maubin, southwest of Rangoon, to 65 years in prison for their roles in the anti-government uprising in 2007.

Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi were transferred to Kengtung Prison in Shan State, 735 miles (1,175 km) northeast of Rangoon; Mya Aye was transferred to Loikaw Prison in Karenni State, eastern Burma; Pyone Cho was transferred to Kawthaung Prison in Tenasserim Division in southern Burma; Hla Myo Naung was transferred to Myitkyina Prison in Kachin State, 900 miles (1,440 km) north of Rangoon; Aung Thu was transferred to Putao Prison in Kachin State; and Aung Naing was transferred to Kalaymyo Prison in Sagaing Division, 680 miles (1,088 km) north of Rangoon.

Buthitaung Prison is notorious for its harsh treatment of political prisoners and its severely cold weather.

"Htay Kywe has lost a lot of weight and his eyesight is a little poor," said Phyo Min Thein. "He spends his time reading and meditating. He is also studying economics."