

Burma Action Group (South Australia)
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(Witness Ko Naing Naing)

Tabayin Killings

The following is translation from the testimony given by witness Ko Naing Naing. Ko Naing Naing's original testimony in Burmese language appeared in the December 2003 second report by the Ad Hoc Commission on Depayin Massacre, Pages 94-103.

Name: Ko Naing Naing (aka)
Ko Thein Naing
Date of Birth: 16 May 1969
Parents: U Khin Ko and Daw Than
Education: B.A. (Geography)
Profession: Trader
Address: Mandalay,
Aungmyaytharzan Qtr.

I, Mr. Naing Naing, sworn before the Commission and testified regarding the incident on 30 May 2003 that:

I, I, Mr. Naing Naing, National Registration Card No. 9/Manama -051359, was born on 16 May 1969 from parents U Khin Ko and Daw Than.¹ I graduated from Mandalay University with a Bachelor of Arts in Geography. I work as a trader and live in Aungmyaytharzan Township Mandalay Division. In the four eight (8/8/88) uprising, I participated in the student union movement. In 1989, I joined Democratic Party for New Society (DPNS). After the DPNS was declared as an illegal party by the government, I continued to participate in the political activities with the National League for Democracy, of which the only legal party that remains operating in Burma.

¹ Burmese people usually address another person with a proper title based on age and sex. The titles used are: "U", "Ko" and "Maung" for male and "Daw" and "Ma" for female.

2. On 26 May 2003, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (Daw Suu) and her entourage returned from Madaya. Ko Aung Aung and I had taken scout duty. By scout duty, I mean we investigate the road and traffic condition ahead of the entourage on our motorcycles. When we pass across Daw Suu's car, she reminded us not to use horns, not to switch headlights on and to observe road rules. I passed her message on to all other motorcyclists. As we went across Kyanigan Village, the NLD youth group who took charge of Daw Suu's security began singing the National Anthem. When the entourage went past the Mandalay Prison, we all sung our National Anthem to show our support for the political prisoners held there. When we arrived back to Mandalay, there was a huge crowd waiting to welcome us.

3. On the next day, the entourage took a day's rest in Mandalay. On 28 May 2003, we organized a welcoming party for Daw Suu who was visiting the Mandalay NLD office and Yadana Myitzu Pagoda. The welcoming party was a great success. After giving a short speech at the NLD office, the entourage went to Tadaoo Town. Ko Aung Aung and

myself along with a few others from NLD headquarters went to *Tadaoo* by car. We saw local dignitaries as well as the general public in *Tadaoo* warmly welcoming *Daw Suu* and the NLD entourage.

4. On the evening of 28 May 2003, *Daw Suu* called a meeting to plan the trip to *Monywa*. *Ko Tun Zaw Zaw*, *Ko Tin Htut Oo*, myself and *Daw Suu* were at that meeting. *Daw Suu* and *Ko Tin Htut Oo*² had asked me to take scout duty to report on any potential disturbances on the trip to *Monywa*. *Daw Suu* also told us to follow the NLD's policy in dealing with deliberate provocation by the government-backed crowd. *Ko Tin Htut Oo* explained to me in detail about the NLD's non-violent policy guidelines on dealing with the violent provocations on the trip. In the event of deliberate provocation or violent attack, the NLD members must not use any force in response. Even if the NLD members were beaten unprovoked physically, they should not respond with force. I was told that these policy guidelines had been explained to the members of NLD youth from all four districts within *Mandalay Division*. Because I was going as a scout, I would not need to wear a penny uniform. I was to meet with *Ko Tin Htut Oo* at 8:00am the next morning.

5. On the morning of 29 May 2003, myself, *Ko Aung Aung* and another friend from the *Mandalay* NLD headquarters went ahead of the entourage in a car. The entourage was scheduled to leave *Mandalay* at 9:00am and we left 8:30am. When we arrived *Sagaing*, we saw that a huge welcoming billboard had been erected and the NLD party members and the general public were waiting for *Daw Suu* and the entourage. We (the scouts) informed the NLD office in *Sagaing* that *Daw Suu* and her entourage will be arriving in an hour.

6. We then left *Sagaing* for *Myinmu* and on the way we stopped at *Ohndaw* Village for a break. In that village we saw the Military Intelligence personnel with their communication equipments and the car registration number is (Nagyi-6456 –

White Toyota Hilux). From there on, we noticed military intelligent were presence along the route. However, we still had not met with any disturbances. At *Myinmu*, we saw a *Dyna Truck* fitted with loud hailer that was parked near the NLD office. People onboard that truck shouted slogans against *Daw Suu*. When *Daw Suu* came into to the *Myinmu* NLD office, the public and NLD members inside chanted with even louder voices, "Long live *Daw Suu*, Long live U Tin Oo" etc. We saw that *Dyna Truck* went about *Myinmu* NLD office and making protests. *Daw Suu* launched an NLD youth branch at the *Myinmu* office. We left *Myinmu* after staying outside the NLD office for about 1 hour and 45 minutes.

7. Near *Yepoesar Village* between *Myinmu* and *Chaung-U* Towns, there was a crowd with a possible 1,000 people waiting with banners such as "We don't want axe-handles"³. Near that crowd there were 15 or 20 piles of rocks by the roadside, a total volume of about a 3 Ton truckload. When our car went past that crowd, we saw an army major and a motor vehicle police had set up a roadblock. Our car therefore could not be turned back. We decided to drive on as much forward as we could. Then, we first saw 50 motorcycles from *Chaung-U* came out to welcome the NLD entourage. More people and Buddhist monks from *Chaung-U* had arrived as we waited. We reported the dangerous situation to the people from *Chaung-U* and we also told them the NLD entourage would be coming in about an hour. Firstly, five motorcycles had tried to pass through the roadblock back to NLD entourage and it was unsuccessful. Again we tried with more than 1,000 people and motorcycles and we were able to pass through that roadblock.

8. I was told that authorities in *Monywa* had blocked many people on motorcycles who had come out to welcome the NLD entourage. Because about 200-300 students from *Monywa University* on motorcycles had been able to pass the blockade, we were crowded amongst thousands of people. Because there were so many people from *Monywa* coming out to welcome the NLD entourage, we have to drive slowly. I had never seen such a welcome party for a political leader. There were

² U Tin Htut Oo is elected representative for Leway (1) Township.

³ Axe-handles or Foreigner's stooges.

many elderly who came from quite a distance to welcome NLD. At the entrance of *Monywa*, we sang the National Anthem and chanted “Long live Daw Suu, Long live U Tin Oo” etc. The trip from the town outskirts to NLD office would normally take 20-25 minutes to drive. However, it took four hours to reach NLD office in the *Monywa Town*.

Because the electricity was cut in the town, the people lit candles and welcomed Daw Suu and the NLD entourage. Daw Suu was so moved by the welcome that she took a pick-up (open) car and personally greeted the crowd. She was also accepting flowers from the public. I saw some people were moved to tears. I also heard some elderly persons asking, “Where is our *Bogyoke*'s⁴ daughter? I want to see her.” Never in my knowledge was such public support given to a political leader. If the military government were to jail those who welcomed *Daw Suu*, then the whole town of *Monywa* would have to be put behind barbed wire.

When the entourage reached *Monywa* NLD office, U Tin Oo and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi addressed the public. Daw Suu then went to the household of the former Colonel Kyi Soe, who is also an elected representative, and held a meeting with NLD youths. She then retired for the day. We also went to *Phonesoe Monastery* to sleep for the night.

9. The next morning (30 May 2003) *Ko Tin Htut Oo* suggested we (the scout group) should go early to escape the crowd. Our scout group first went to *Zawtika Monastery*. Some NLD members from *Monywa* joined with us at *Zawtika Monastery*. We scrapped plan to visit *Okkan Tawya Monastery* because the monk in charge was not there. We then went to *Budalin Town*. Between *Budalin* and *Monywa*, the car assigned for *Daw Suu*'s security broke down. Our car therefore took the task for security also. Anywhere Daw Suu was to address the public, the NLD youths who were on the task of security got down from our car. Then, *Ko Myo Naing* and I (scout group) had to look around the city and check road conditions etc.

Near *Budalin Town*, we saw people who were wearing white armbands on sixteen Trucks. We also saw a group of Buddhist monks who wore similar white armbands. As on our way back to the entourage, we also heard the news that the 70 motorcyclists who went back to *Monywa Town* had been detained near *Zeetaw Village*. We reported the arrests and developing situation to Daw Suu and the NLD. Daw Suu was so concerned about the arrests that she asked *Budalin Township Chairman U Aung San* to look into them. *Ko Tin Htut Oo* also told me to keep an eye on the situation of the people with white armbands. He also said to make contact with *U Saw Hlaing* who went ahead of us towards *Tabayin*.

Whilst Daw Suu was launching the new branch of the *Budalin* NLD youths, we were repairing our cars and stopped near the cemetery where *U Thein Pe Myint* (Burma's famous journalist) was interred. There were also people on motorcycles who postponed their return trip to *Monywa*, having heard the news of arrests. At the time, *Ko Tin Htut Oo* came to advise us that he had arranged an additional scout person *Ko Kyaw Aung*, who would be in plain clothes, in case the scout group had difficulty in turning back. He also told us that *U Saw Hlaing*, an elected representative, would be in *Tabayin* waiting for us. He also advised us that if we had problems, we better relay the messages through *Ko Kyaw Aung*. Our scout group had left *Budalin* for *Tabayin* 45 minutes ahead of the NLD entourage.

10. At *Sai Pyin* village, we stopped at the house of *U Win Myint Aung* who is an elected representative under detention. A welcoming party was in progress for Daw Suu and NLD entourage in *Sai Pyin*. Between *Sai Pyin* village and *Budalin*, there were people waiting to welcome Daw Suu and the entourage. After spending an hour at *Sai Pyin* village, our scout group proceeded to *Tabayin* to contact *U Saw Hlaing*. As we drove on, we reached a place that was not far from *Sai Pyin* village where the *Tabayin Killings* had taken place. We saw the road had been barricaded. We saw a crowd of 5,000 people who lined up on both sides of the road. At the end of the line-up, there were 3 layers of barricaded fences laid on the road. We also noticed that the crowd on the left hand side had more than on the right hand side. These people, like those we had seen at *Budalin*, wore white armbands. Some

⁴ Bogyoke refer to the late General Aung San who is Burma's national independent hero and Daw Suu's father.

people were also holding banners. We also noticed that there were no females among the crowd. Our car drove past that crowd and it was stopped at the barricades. Three people wearing plain cloths approached our car and asked us where we were heading. I said we were going to *Tabayin* and *Ko Aung Aung* said we had come with *Daw Aung San Suu Kyi*. We then got down from the car.

11. At that time we also saw a person of medium height and strong build saying to Buddhist monks that Daw Suu Kyi and her entourage would be passing through this gate and that the crowd waiting here would be protesting against her. He asked the monks that if there were clashes between the crowd here and the monks who come along with Daw Suu Kyi's entourage, would they intervene. That man was wearing army trousers and a pair of shoes and a T-shirt. We heard it all because he was talking to the monks who were sitting near our car. The person who asked us our direction then addressed that man as "Major" and reported that we were the people who had come with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's entourage. The Major then said "Put them in detention". The police equipped with batons and armours directed our car into the Irrigation Department compound that is on the left hand side of the road. The police searched us and then searched the vehicle. The police then took our personal details. We were then put into a building within the compound. When we got into the building, we saw *U Saw Hlaing*, *U Myint Kyi*, *U Bo Maung*, *Ko Zaw Htun* and *U Sein Tin* who were all in NLD uniforms. We also saw a civilian (not NLD member) named *U Sein Linn* being detained at the place. I told *U Saw Hlaing* that Daw Suu asked us to contact him. *U Saw Hlaing* said he was unable to do anything at that moment. After a few moments, *Ko Kyaw Aung* who followed us on a motorcycle was with us in detention.

12. The police also took personal details from *Ko Kyaw Aung* and we were tied up with a rope. *Ko Kyaw Aung* told the police it was unnecessary to tie us up. However, they still tied us up. When it began to get dark, we were loaded onto a passenger bus parked 30 feet away from the building. On the trees in front of the Irrigation

Department compound, two powerful searchlights were set up. We also saw 15 Dyna Trucks parked inside the compound behind the crowd standing on the left hand side of the road with headlights beaming onto the road.

After about one and a half hours, we began to see the headlights from Daw Suu's entourage 400 feet away. The convoy had stopped near the crowd. *U Zawtika* (a Buddhist monk) and a student from *Monywa* came to investigate on a motorcycle. The monk was not attacked but the student was beaten and the two were put into the bus. When the convoy reached in front of the compound, the crowd waiting shouted, "Kill this woman, the traitor who has destroyed racial purity." The crowd then attacked the convoy. We also heard NLD youths shouting, "Protect our mother"⁵. No harm should come to her." At that time we heard someone commanded, "GET OUT. CHARGED." We then saw two Dyna trucks in the compound set off and accelerated towards Daw Suu's car. Daw Suu's car then drove through the roadblock. At that time we heard the command, "FIRE!" and we heard about 10 gunshots.

At that time Tabayin police station commander *U Sein Win* said to *U Bo Maung*⁶, "Lets put it this way. You are all lucky to have escaped from the attack." The Tabayin police station commander appeared to have had prior knowledge that such an attack may occur.

13. While the crowd outside the compound were shouting, "Attack, beat, kill", we heard a person reporting with communication equipment. He was near our truck and talking in code words. The person asked, "Is it the train? Is it the train?" Reply heard, "Yes. This is the train." The person continued reporting like, "GOT: Daywa Tin Hla. GOT: Daywa Tin Hla." "LOST: Daywa San Shar. LOST: Daywa San Shar." "STOP: Ye Oo. The first flow. STOP: Tant Se. The first flow." "GET machine gun ready. SHOOT if necessary." Etc.

As Daw Suu's car drove through the roadblock, the crowd continued to attack the people from NLD

⁵ NLD youths referred Daw Suu as their mother.

⁶ *U Bo Maung* is the elected representative for Tabayin Township. As Tabayin has been a small district town, the Tabayin Police Station commander, who detained the NLD members, knows *U Bo Maung* personally. Thus, the police commander is commenting on the incident casually.

entourage. We heard the crowd shouting, "Kill that woman who destroyed racial purity. Kill those who wanted to be Kala's wife." Etc. At the same time we heard continued reporting on communication equipment. The other end verified, "Is that the train? Is that the train?" The person near our truck replied, "Yes. This is the train." The other end asked, "How is Aung Khaing, How is Aung Naing." Person replied, "Killing unfinished. Beating unfinished." The other end continued to ask, "How is the COMMISSION? Have you returned?" Person replied, "Yes. We are arranging."

We then saw the police forcibly take people from the convoy to detention. Women were kicked from behind and men were beaten with batons. Some Buddhist monks and young novices were also among the arrested. Those arrested were loaded onto the passenger truck. About 70 persons arrested were put onto three trucks.

We continued to hear reporting on the communication equipment. The other end asked, "How is Aung Khaing? How is Aung Naing?" Person replied, "Aung Khaing and Aung Naing, COLD ICE." The other end asked, "How is COMMISSION? Have you sent it?" Person replied, "Yes. In progress".

14. At about mid-night, we heard shouting in protest from nearby villages. We also heard gunfire until 3:00am the next morning. At about 1:00am, the police put 20 people who were wounded onto another bus. Those who had no injury were left on the two trucks. When we left the compound at 5:00 am, we saw about 100 trucks and air-conditioned coaches which were to transport the attackers.

We the detainees, 44 persons including four females, arrived to Shwebo jail at 9:00am. Two of the female detainees were *Phyoe Mya Mya Soe (16)* and *Ma Toe Toe Win*. All four are said to be from *Monywa Town*. The Buddhist monks, *U Zawtika (Ahlone Monastery)*, *U Nyananda (Yankin Monastery)* and four novices were also among 40 male detainees. I saw *U Nyananda's* left arm was swollen from the injuries.

15. On 1st June 2003, *Ko Kyaw Soe Linn*, who is Daw Suu's car driver and another 7 NLD youths arrived at Shwebo Jail. I asked *Ko Kyaw Soe Linn*

about Daw Suu's situation. He said Daw Suu's right shoulder was swollen from the attack and she was injured on the neck by broken glasses. He also said Daw Suu's car went through the road block and arrived at Ye Oo town at about 10:30pm. There were 20 NLD youths with Daw Suu's car. The entrance to Ye Oo town was blocked and armed policemen were threatening to shoot. On 31 May 2003 at about 3:00am, the army came and took Daw Suu and the car to Ye Oo army headquarters.

16. On 1st June 2003 4:00pm, *Captain Linn Zaw Kan* from Military Intelligence branch No. 20 came to *Shwebo Jail*. The Military Intelligence began to take the photographs of the 146 detainees. Some detainees had injuries. On 2nd June 2003 9:00am the Military Intelligence began interrogating all detainees, one by one. On 2nd June, *Ko Htun Zaw Zaw*, *Ko Htun Myint*, *Ko Thet Htun*, *Ko Min Lwin*, *Ko Than Htun*, *Ko Myint Kyaw*, *Ko Toe Lwin*, *Ko Pauk Pauk*, *Ko Myoe Nyunt*, all from the NLD youth central office had arrived at Shwebo Jail. I saw *Ko Toe Lwin's* head was wounded.

After completing interrogation, I was put into another room where *Ko Tin Htut Oo* was detained. *Ko Tin Htut Oo* said on 31 May 2003 7:00am that they went back to the place where the attack took place the night before. The army and police arrested them. They were then sent to Tabayin police station. At Tabayin police station, he saw the NLD Chairman *U Tin Oo*. He heard *U Tin Oo* repeatedly saying, "You had better kill me now. Or else I shall bring you to court martial." When *Ko Tin Htut Oo* and the NLD youths were about to be transported to Shwebo Jail, *U Tin Oo* said, "Where are you taking those boys? They should be placed with me. Or I should come along with them."

Ko Tin Htut Oo also met *Ko Htun Zaw Zaw* who reported the incident. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and NLD youth members were detained by the military at Ye Oo army headquarters. The military authorities firstly tried to separate NLD youths and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Daw Suu refused the order to abandon the NLD youth members. Daw Suu, while she herself was injured, was very worried about the injured NLD youth members and she tried to nurse them throughout the night. The next day, 31 May 2003, an army major tried to separate the 9 NLD youth members from Daw Suu. Daw Suu refused. The army major rudely said, "If you want,

keep two of them (NLD youths)". Daw Suu kept with her *Ko Tun Zaw Zaw and Ko Htun Myint*. P102.

Next morning, 1st June 2003 2:00am, the army said they were taking *Ko Tun Zaw Zaw and Ko Tun Myint* just for 15 minutes from Daw Suu. But the two were sent to Shwebo jail along with 9 other NLD youth members. Two days after meeting with these NLD youth members, I did not see them again inside Shwebo jail.

17. In Shwebo Jail, I saw 30 students from Monywa University and high schools. Some students had injuries. One Buddhist novice had a knife wound, which I could see was cut through to the bone. Another Buddhist novice had broken arms.

I saw *U Hla Myint (Chairman, Amarapura Township)*, *Ko Tauk Htun Oo (Budalin Township committee member)*, *Ko Thein Zaw (Tundone Township, NLD)*, *Ko Thein Aung Lay (Northwest Mandalay Division NLD)* and *U Thwe*, who were seriously injured in the attack, also arrived at Shwebo Jail as they were discharged from No.7 Army Hospital. They told us that *Daw Win Mya Mya (Mandalay Division organizer)*, *U Chit Tin* and *Ko Zaw Lay (aka) Ko Zaw Khin* were still at the hospital with serious wounds.

18. On 9 June 2003, 25 students from Monywa were released. On 12 June 2003, another 21 detainees including myself were released. I believe we were released early because we were not central committee members of the NLD. We were released on the bond, signed in front of the Commander of the Military Intelligence No. 20. The paper I signed stated that the incident was a national security issue on which I must not disclose to any other person or persons. On the case the matters were disclosed, I will be charged

and rearrested. The Commander of Military Intelligence 20 also told that we were released at the mercy of the superiors. We had had committed no crime and that we must not disclose the incident or the arrest to anyone else. If we disclose the incident, the Commander warned, the foreign media will manipulate the information.

19. *Myself, U Thaung Nyunt, U Sein Yi, Ko Myo Min and Ko Aung Aung* were taken on a bus and transported to the branch office of Military Intelligence No. 20 in Sagaing. *Captain Linn Zaw Aung*, one military intelligence personnel and 6 fully armed policemen transported us to the *Sagaing* Military Intelligence office. From there, the Military Intelligence No. 1 in *Mandalay* was informed. From *Mandalay*, *Captain Aung Zaw* and 4 military intelligence persons in civilian clothes came to collect us. *U Thaung Nyunt* and *U Sein Yi* were taken by Military Intelligence No. 16. At the Military Intelligence No.1 office in *Mandalay*, the officers took our photograph again and we also had to fill out form with our personal details. We also had to sign the bond again not to disclose the incident. The Chairperson of Amarapura USDA had taken *Ko Myo Min* home. A local military intelligence personnel named *U Lwin Oo* brought me home.

The military intelligence took a family photo with me, including MI personnel *U Lwin Oo* and two other persons from USDA. After the photographic record was taken, my father had to sign an acknowledgement form that I was brought to family home safely. After our release, there were about 80 detainees still remaining in Shwebo Jail.

I certify that above stated information (1-19) is true that I am the witness. In disclosing above information, I have done so in my own free will and not by coercion or by any other form of pressure.

Ko Naing Naing
7 August 2003.

(Translated by Burma Action Group in South Australia)