

## JUSTICE PETITION FOR MONKS INJURED AT LETPADAUNG

More than two years ago, we joined hundreds of other monks in a peaceful protest against illegal land grabs at Letpadaung copper mine, owned by Wenbao, a Chinese military company, and UMEHL, a Burmese military company.

We were inspired by *metta* – love of people, nation, and religion. We believed that poor hard-working farmers, who make up 70% of our population, should not be exploited simply to increase the huge profits of cronies and foreign interests. We also wanted to protect Ledi Sayadaw, a revered Buddhist shrine, from destruction by the mining operation.

Because company officials and local authorities refused to pay attention to our humble requests for dialogue, we decided to exercise our human rights of free speech and peaceful assembly, which are guaranteed in the new constitution. We did not expect to be treated worse than criminals and enemies of the state.

At 3am on 29 November 2012, we were assaulted with firebombs by riot police acting under orders from the Minister of Home Affairs.

As we sat chanting peace sutras, hundred of police in military formation marched in front of us and fired dozens of white phosphorus grenades directly at us, setting our robes and bodies on fire. We sat in front of the farmers to shield and protect them, and therefore suffered the worst injuries.

These chemical weapons cause deep burns and torturous pain. International law prohibits their use against enemy soldiers even in time of war. So why did our own government use them against peaceful monks and farmers?

The disfiguring wounds that we suffered two years ago will require medical treatment for the rest of our lives. However, the government has neither apologized nor provided any remedies. Instead we have been abandoned and even harassed. Authorities have pressured local monasteries to deny us residence and support.

If there is no justice and rule of law for these well-documented violations, how can we hope for justice and rule of law in countless other lesser-known cases across our country? When will our political and legal systems work for the common people instead of against them?

That is why we are speaking out today – to tell the truth of what happened to us, and to prevent it from happening again to anyone else.

We bear no ill will towards the perpetrators of this crime, nor do we seek personal gain. On the contrary, it is out of deep conviction that our sacrifice has not been in vain, and that the struggle for justice must continue, that we are launching this campaign.

**We respectfully request all people of good will to support our campaign for justice by signing this petition calling on the government to:**

- **Publicly apologize for using white phosphorus weapons, and promise to never use them again.**
- **Stop harassing us, and instead provide remedies according to the rule of law.**
- **Address the ongoing grievances of farmers in Letpadaung, who still face illegal land grabs and police repression.**

[Signatures of the monks injured at Letpadaung and civil society supporters – Saffron Revolution monks, farmers, students, CSOs, NGOs, etc.]