

*The Moustache Brothers*

*The last issue of mailout had a very moving, and as it turned out, topical piece by Cilla Baynes about the Moustache Brothers – a comedy performing arts troop in Burma. As so often happens with these things the problems in Burma have dropped off the news agenda. mailout has invited Cilla to give readers an update.*

When the recent September pro democracy demonstrations in Burma reached Mandalay the police once again arrested U Par Par Lay, lead comic actor of the Moustache Brothers. He was reportedly cooking food for the protesting monks when military police burst into his home at midnight. The comedian was among thousands of people arrested as part of the junta's brutal crack down on pro-democracy protests. On this occasion it was for giving water to and applauding Buddhist monks who demonstrated against the junta in late September

Shortly after his arrest a Sunday Telegraph reporter posing as a tourist, spoke to Lu Maw, (Moustache Bros no 3) who said that ' Last week they arrested my brother. But we don't care. We are dead meat already. They know my brother is good at organising people. That's why they arrested him," Lu Maw went to try and find out his whereabouts but the Military Police refused to speak to him.

The Good news is that U Par Par Lay has recently been released. Some believe that because of his international profile he was released in order to jazz up the junta's tattered image before UN envoy Ibrahim Gambari, arrived in Yangon for his second visit.

This is a second time for U Par Par Lay. On his release from prison on 1994 he traveled to India to see a dentist. When asked by the dentist 'why do you have to come all the way to India, do you have no dentists in Myanmar', U Par Par Lay replied ' Oh yes, but we are not allowed to open our mouths'

Cilla Baynes 28/11/2007