

UPF Italy: Burmese Activist in Italy Pleads the Cause of his People

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Monza, Italy – "Do not forget the Burmese people." This was the appeal made by **Mr. Kim Aris** at a roundtable event in Monza on October 22, 2025. Mr. Aris is the son of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, who is currently imprisoned by the military regime in Myanmar.

A London resident engaged in advocating for the release of his mother and other political prisoners in his home country, Mr. Aris – after a lengthy meeting with Mayor Paolo Pilotto – shared his testimony at a roundtable held in the Sala del Decanato of the Monza Cathedral. The event was organized by UPF-Italy and the Italy-Burma Friendship Association "Giuseppe Malpeli."



The meeting, moderated by **Mr. Carlo Chierico** of UPF-Monza, featured **Ms. Thuzar Linn**, a representative of the Burmese community in Italy; **Ms. Albertina Soliani**, former senator and honorary president of the Italy-Burma Friendship Association; and **Mr. Roberto Rampi**, a two-term member of Parliament.

With **Mr. Mauro Sarasso** serving as interpreter, Mr. Aris described the situation in his country since the 2021 coup, which brought the military junta back to power. "Since then," he said, "the numbers show six thousand people killed; the resumption of capital punishment; and twenty thousand political prisoners, including my mother. Two of them die in prison every month, others are tortured and denied medical care. Cities and refugee camps have been bombed; more than three and a half million people have been

displaced into the forests. Over twenty million people – about half the population – need humanitarian assistance." Military violence increasingly targets civilians, he said.



This picture worsened after the 7.7-magnitude earthquake that struck Myanmar in March 2025. "The military blocked humanitarian aid, in blatant violation of international law. The regime's methods amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity," Mr. Aris said. "The UN has documented torture, sexual abuse, and summary executions of prisoners."

Another blow to the population was the reinstatement of conscription, prompting many Burmese to flee to avoid forced enlistment. Concern continues to grow for Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. "She is in prison but we don't know where," Aris said. "Her last letter dates back two years. She is eighty, in serious health, and entitled to an external cardiologist, which has always been denied. Her imprisonment symbolises the brutality suffered by all political prisoners." His conclusion was stark: "The time for mere condemnation is over. We have all the information we need; now we must act."



The junta relies on arms and jet fuel supplies from Russia, China, and India. Mr. Aris called for a global

arms embargo, unimpeded humanitarian aid, support for the Burmese pro-democracy movement, and no recognition of upcoming elections that would only reshuffle the military elite. With dissenting voices silenced, he urged civil society, including in Monza, to be the voice of the Burmese people.

Drawing on long-standing familiarity with Burma and a personal friendship with Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, **Ms. Albertina Soliani** broadened the lens to Asia's geopolitical scene, while underscoring the urgent plight of the Burmese people. "Myanmar can be saved if China intervenes in pursuit of its core interest – primarily economic – of regional stability. Inside Burma, the people resist and fight the military regime. Resistance, driven by ethnic groups, has freed seventy per cent of the territory, though the three major cities remain under military control. In liberated areas, health and school services were immediately set up."

Ms. Soliani stressed that revolutions succeed when animated by a spiritual force: rebels must preserve their humanity, avoiding the likeness of their oppressors, an idea central to Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, who is still regarded as a beacon of hope. Her book *Freedom from Fear* teaches that fear sustains dictatorships, both the people's fear of the powerful and the powerful's fear of losing power.



Mr. Roberto Rampi expanded the discussion to the universality of human rights: "Managing great issues with a heavy hand, through weapons, leads nowhere," he said. "Labelling good guys and bad guys solves nothing. Human rights either work for everyone or for no one." If compassion fails, reason suffices, he said, pointing out that in an interconnected world, seeking one's own security at others' expense is self-defeating. Today's wars often take the form of resistance against state armies, as in Burma. The majority of humankind lives under non-democratic regimes, deprived of freedom, and without freedom there are no rights, only concessions. Despite a deep crisis even in major democracies, renewal often begins when things are at their worst, he said, as seen in new generations with a radical desire for justice.

Questions from the audience highlighted a shared conclusion: the ball is in our court. In answer to moderator Mr. Carlo Chierico's opening question – what can Monza and we do for Burma? – the response was simple: "Talk about it." Civil society in Italy and Europe can give voice to the Burmese people, their yearning for democracy, and their resistance to oppression, which was the very purpose of Mr. Kim Aris's visit: to ensure the international community does not forget his mother, who is the living symbol of her people's democratic aspirations.