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PRESS RELEASE

Exhibition of Burmese Political Cartoons in Prague

Prague, 24 October 2007 – The Czech non-profit organization *Burma Center Prague* announces the opening of an exhibition of Burmese political cartoons in Prague on 2 November. This event will be the first time that these unique examples of "defiant humor" by the renowned dissident and artist Harn Lay can be seen in the Czech Republic.

Political cartoons play an important role in Burmese culture to criticize the regime, both inside the country and in exile. Especially during the past weeks, which were marked by a bloody crackdown of peaceful protests, the people of Burma lack the means to express their opinion on political issues in public. The exhibition in Prague also shows that people like here in the Czech Republic feel strong sympathy for the Burmese struggle for democracy.

The *Burma Center Prague* is looking forward to welcoming two important personalities at this event who will contribute a welcome note: the former Czech Ambassador to Burma, *Jiří Šitler* and the Czech cartoonist *Štěpán Mareš*.

Visitors will be able to enjoy a choice of Burmese food, receive information about Burma and purchase cartoons or the catalog.

The event will take place on **Friday, 2 November at 5:30pm** at "**Kulturní centrum Zahrada**", **Malenická Street 1784, Praha 4 - Chodov** (bus or 10 minutes walk from the metro station). For instructions how to find the place, please see www.kczahrada.cz/mapa/kudyknam.htm

The exhibition will be open **until 30 November**, admission is free.

Attached to this press release you find a poster and a sample cartoon.

about the artist:

Harn Lay, born in Burma's Shan State, began his professional career by drawing film posters for theaters in Taunggyi, Shan State. After fleeing Burma following the pro-democracy uprising in 1988, he began contributing his art to several exiled opposition organizations and media groups. He now works as a staff cartoonist for the magazine *The Irrawaddy*, based in Chiang Mai, Thailand. He occasionally does paintings and teaches drawing to young ethnic Burmese in Thailand in his spare time. His cartoons document with humor and depth the political struggle of millions of Burmese in the country he has been barred from visiting for nearly two decades.

about the organizer:

The **Burma Center Prague** was founded in 2006 by the Burmese exile community in the Czech Republic and their supporters to promote the Burmese issue on local and international level. Further information can be found on www.burma-center.org, or contact info@burma-center.org.

The exhibition was made possible by a grant from the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was arranged in cooperation with the Thailand-based magazine *Irrawaddy*. Food will be provided by the restaurant Orange Moon.