Myanmar nationals, Singaporeans petition for end of violence in Myanmar

By Wong Siew Ying, Channel NewsAsia | Posted: 04 October 2007 2100 hrs

SINGAPORE: Myanmar nationals and Singaporeans have organised several petitions calling for peace to be restored in Myanmar, and also calling for the international community to do more.

Kyi Min Than, 26, has been studying in Singapore for the past five months, but his heart is always with his family and people back home in Myanmar.

"Sometimes I feel safe here – when I look at the pictures of dead bodies or the persons being beaten, (I think) 'oh I am lucky'. Sometimes I pity them, I think maybe I can run back and pull them out," he said.

He is among more than 170 Myanmar nationals who turned up at DanDarYi Shop in Peninsular Plaza to sign a petition.

Yaza, one of the organisers, said the petition letter will be submitted to the Prime Minister’s Office on Monday.

Supporters urged the prime minister to take stern action against the military regime in Myanmar and oppose the violent crackdown on demonstrators.

The petitioners also hoped that the Myanmar government would release all political prisoners.

Those who organised the petition said it is not easy getting Myanmar nationals to sign it, but every effort counts. And top of their wish list is for the UN to send troops to Myanmar to control the situation there.

Singaporeans also lent their support.

Businessman Edwin Loh said, "I feel that the international community should take very strong action this time. If not, they are actually just postponing the problems; they are not solving the whole issue. And Myanmar is going to be a stumbling block to the whole of ASEAN and the whole world."

However, many supporters felt that it will take more than economic sanctions and dialogue to restore peace on the streets.

Students at the National University of Singapore (NUS) also signed a petition on its "Myanmar Peace Awareness Day" to remember those who were killed in the crackdown.

Many who signed the petition said this is the next best way to express their thoughts and contribute to the peace process.

Choo Zheng Xi, a petition organiser from NUS, said: "Obviously, we’re not going to change the diplomatic situation overnight, what we hope to achieve is... to supplement the strong diplomatic language that has been coming out with visible and clear expression of grassroots outreach and revulsion at what is going on." - CNA/ac