

An event organised by a coalition of several organisations and private citizens

# Free Zarganar !



a Burmese comedian and film director,  
a political prisoner,  
sentenced to 35 years in prison

for sending information about cyclone Nargis to foreign media

Trafalgar Square, London  
Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2-4 pm

World Press Freedom Day  
+ 2<sup>nd</sup> Cyclone Nargis anniversary

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A colourful afternoon of poetry, performance and dance in honour of Burmese comedian Zarganar.

Burma's most famous comedian, Zarganar, is currently serving a 35-year prison sentence, after criticising the Burmese government's handling of Cyclone Nargis in 2008.

The cyclone devastated the country - more than 140,000 people died and millions were made homeless. Zarganar organised relief for many villages which had received no official help. He was convicted of "public order offences".

Zarganar is best known as a comedian but he is also a poet, writer and filmmaker.

Zarganar is an outspoken critic of Myanmar's military government. He was arrested on 4 June 2008 for his public criticism of the government's response to the humanitarian crisis that emerged in the wake of Cyclone Nargis. After it emerged that the Myanmar government was obstructing international aid that was to be distributed to the devastated Irrawaddy Delta and the surrounding areas, Zarganar began to lead efforts to raise and distribute aid from private donors. Despite assurances from the authorities that private donors would be given free access to cyclone affected areas, Zarganar and at least 21 others were arrested for their participation in the voluntary aid effort.

<http://zarganar.blog.free.fr>

Free Zarganar !



Zarganar was regarded as a reliable source of information from within Myanmar by the Burmese exile media and regularly gave interviews to journalists abroad. Through the interviews he exposed the devastation which had not been reported by the tightly-controlled Myanmar media. Zarganar and other volunteers documented the devastation caused by the cyclone and the voluntary relief operations that followed. They collected video footage and photographic evidence from the affected areas. Two days after his arrest, state-controlled media published warnings against the production of video footage of relief work for foreign news agencies.

Zarganar has insisted that humour in Burma will prevail. *"Burmese people love to laugh. If I can't speak, jokes will still spread. People will make them up themselves."*

**Let's dance, laugh, speak and make jokes together, in support of Zarganar.**

**When ? 3 May, World Freedom of Press Day**

**Where ? Trafalgar Square, London**

**Who ? The Free Zarganar Campaign** mobilizes several organisations and private citizens from Europe and the Burmese community in exile, in order to demonstrate support and solidarity to Zarganar and to freedom of expression in Burma. Colourful umbrellas will open the event: please bring yours along!

**What ?** a Burmese show combining theatre dance, music and comedy, given by the Burmese community in exile, and testimonies from people who have known Zarganar.

With the participation of :

Bo Bo Lansin, Burmes journalist, writer and researcher  
Nita May, ex political prisoner, works at BBC Burmese Service  
Aung Thwin from DVB/Burma VJ, former political prisoner  
Dr Win Naing, Chair of NLD-LA London  
**The Burmese Theatre Workshop**  
actress **Camila Fiori**

[The Burmese Theatre Workshop](#) is a non-political London based Burmese touring theatre company, the only one in the world. The Company was established at the Drill Hall in June 2009 by ten Burmese actors and one wheelchair using Brit who wanted to create well crafted, challenging theatre that would empower Burmese people to change themselves and the people around them and to raise the profile and standing of Burmese theatre in the UK. Their work promotes the creativity, culture and heritage of Burmese people, promotes new writing, emerging artists and new audiences. They will be performing a 10 minute long "movement piece" (physical theatre) with recorded music.

[Camila Fiori](#) is an actress with a performance and visual arts background. Her work explores boundaries and cross-overs in both content and form. Her work encourages integration and celebrates the right to share our voices. As a PEN aficionada and Equity member with a personal and political interest in freedom, exile and imprisonment, she supports the campaign to free Zarganar.

**Free Zarganar**



**FREE BURMA**

for information please contact [zarganarblog@gmail.com](mailto:zarganarblog@gmail.com)

<http://zarganar.blog.free.fr>

**Free Zarganar !**

