

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: ASA 39/01/93

Distr: UA/SC

Please bring this action to the attention of the refugee coordinator in your section.

UA 198/93 Ill-treatment/medical concern

17 June 1993

**THAILAND: Burmese asylum-seekers and refugees including:
 Maung Maung Than
 Par Pa
 Ko Htay Lwin**

Amnesty International learned today that Maung Maung Than and Par Pa, two Burmese refugees recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) have been arrested by Thai security forces and are being detained in the Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) in Bangkok. Both of them had reportedly been invited to attend the World Conference on Human Rights, which is being held in Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993. Maung Maung Than and Par Pa were university students in Myanmar (Burma) before they fled to Thailand after the military's suppression of the pro-democracy movement in 1988. Maung Maung Than was arrested in Bangkok on 19 May 1993 and was reportedly severely beaten and Par Pa was arrested sometime after that. It is not clear why they were arrested, but Amnesty International is concerned that they may be subjected to ill-treatment while in detention.

Amnesty International is further concerned at reports of other recent beatings of Burmese asylum-seekers and refugees in detention, although the organization is unable to confirm this information. At least six were reportedly severely beaten in detention at IDC on 29 April 1993, and on 15 May several others were also severely beaten. Amnesty International has received the names of those who were beaten, but in the interest of their safety is not making them public. The organization is concerned for the safety of all Burmese asylum-seekers and refugees held there, and calls on the Thai authorities to immediately investigate these incidents and to give clear instructions to prison officials in IDC not to ill-treat anyone detained there.

Amnesty International is also concerned that Ko Htay Lwin, aged 25, who was suffering from a fatal heart condition, died from heart failure on 24 April 1993 in the Police Hospital after he was brought there from IDC. He had been arrested on 9 April 1993 and was held at IDC until 22 April, when he was taken to the hospital. He was also a Burmese refugee recognized by UNHCR. Amnesty International is concerned that Ko Htay Lwin did not receive adequate medical care while in detention when his health deteriorated and calls on the Thai authorities to ensure that all those who are detained at IDC are provided with proper medical care. Amnesty International is further concerned about continuing poor conditions at IDC, including lack of sanitation and food, and severe overcrowding.

Amnesty International is also concerned that these Burmese asylum-seekers and refugees are being detained in Thailand. International standards dealing with the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers state that the detention of refugees and asylum-seekers should normally be avoided and should be resorted to only for certain specific reasons.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since 1988, when mass civil unrest erupted in Myanmar and was violently suppressed by the military government, thousands of Myanmar nationals fled to Thailand to escape large-scale human rights violations, which continue today. Since at least 1989 the Thai authorities have been arresting and detaining

Page 2 of UA 198/93

Myanmar nationals for "illegal immigration". In recent months the Thai authorities established a "safe area" in Raatchaburii Province, western Thailand, for Burmese asylum-seekers and refugees. Those who did not report to the camp by 30 November 1992 are subject to arrest and detention by the Thai authorities. Currently there are reportedly some 50 Burmese asylum-seekers and refugees in the camp, and dozens of others remain in detention both at the IDC and at the Bang Khen Police Academy in Bangkok.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:

- urging the Thai authorities to instruct prison officials at both the Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) and the Bang Khen Police Academy not to beat or otherwise ill-treat or torture Myanmar nationals detained there;
- expressing concern that Ko Htay Lwin, who died on 24 April 1993, was not given adequate medical care while in detention and urging the Thai authorities to ensure that detainees are provided with adequate medical care, sanitation, and food;
- urging the Thai authorities to conduct immediate and impartial investigations into all allegations of ill-treatment;
- expressing concern at the continued detention of Maung Maung Than and Par Pa and other Burmese asylum-seekers and refugees and calling on the Thai authorities to ensure that these individuals are brought promptly before a court to examine whether their detention is legitimate in light of Thai national law and international human rights standards.

APPEALS TO

1) General Chawalit Yongchaiyut
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Asdang Road
Bangkok 10200
Thailand

Salutation: Dear Minister

Telegrams: Minister of Interior, Bangkok, Thailand
Telexes: 84791 INFODEP TH (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Faxes: + 66 2 224 6191; + 66 2 223 2215

2) Chuan Leekpai, Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
Government House
Nakhorn Pathom Road
Bangkok 10300

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Thailand

Telegrams: Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, Bangkok, Thailand

Telexes: 84791 INFODEPT TH (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Faxes: + 66 2 280 1443

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO: diplomatic representatives of Thailand accredited to your country. The World Conference on Human Rights is being held in Austria this month and you can enhance the power of your appeals by also sending copies to the diplomatic representative of Thailand in Austria during June at the following address:

THAI EMBASSY:

The Ambassador

Königlich Thailändische Botschaft

Weimarer Str. 68

1180 Wien, Austria

Faxes: + 43 1 310 39 35

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 29 July 1993.