

URGENT ACTION

SIX MONTHS IN PRISON FOR PEACEFUL PROTEST

Two members of the Movement for Democracy Current Force (MDCF) and two other individuals have been jailed in Myanmar solely for their participation in a peaceful protest against proposed electricity price rises. They are prisoners of conscience who must be immediately and unconditionally released. One of the four is facing a further prison term for participating in a separate peaceful protest.

On 23 March **Thein Aung Myint**, his wife **Khet Khet Tin**, **Saw Hla Aung** and **Kyaw Myo Htun** were each convicted and sentenced to six months' imprisonment under Myanmar's Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law by a court in Mandalay, central Myanmar.

The four were arrested on 27 March 2014 during a candle light vigil protesting against planned electricity price rises. Thein Aung Myint and Saw Hla Aung – members of the MDCF – had organized the protest. According to reliable sources they applied to the local township authorities for permission to protest, but this was rejected with no reason given. The vigil went ahead and on 27 March around 100 people gathered to peacefully protest outside the Diamond Plaza in Mandalay. Shortly after the protest started, police arrested Thein Aung Myint and Saw Hla Aung. They also arrested Kyaw Myo Htun, a bystander who was watching the vigil and applauding the demonstrators, and Khet Khet Tin, Thein Aung Myint's wife, who was also standing nearby and told the police not to use excessive force when she saw them arresting her husband.

All four were charged with protesting without permission under Article 18 of Myanmar's Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law. They were each convicted and sentenced to six months in prison – the maximum sentence for the charge – and are currently serving their sentences in Mandalay's Oh Bo prison.

Thein Aung Myint has been imprisoned in the past in connection with his peaceful political activities. He is currently facing a further charge also under Article 18 for participating in a peaceful protest on 27 October 2014, calling for an investigation in to the death of journalist Par Gyi (aka Aung Naing) in military custody earlier that month.

Please write immediately in English, Burmese or your own language:

- Calling on the Myanmar authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Thein Aung Myint, Khet Khet Tin, Saw Hla Aung and Kyaw Myo Htun;
- Urging them to ensure that, pending their release, they are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated; are not transferred to remote prisons; have regular access to family members and lawyers of their choosing; and are provided with any medical care which they may require;
- Calling on them to repeal or amend all laws which impose arbitrary or sweeping restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, in line with international human rights law and standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 MAY 2015 TO:

President
Thein Sein
President's Office
Nay Pyi Taw
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Fax: +95 1 652 624
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Home Affairs
Lt Gen. Ko Ko
Ministry of Home Affairs
Office No. 10
Nay Pyi Taw
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:
Chairman, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission
U Win Mra
27 Pyay Road, Hline Township
Yangon
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Fax: +95 1 659 668
Email: winmra@mnhr.org.mm

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Movement for Democracy Current Force (MDCF) is a community-based organization which campaigns against human rights violations and promotes development in Myanmar. Six of its members are currently in prison for criticizing the government and staging peaceful protests. Amnesty International is concerned that members of the MDCF and their families are being targeted in an attempt to silence the organization (See Urgent Action: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ASA16/029/2014/en/>).

Thein Aung Myint has been imprisoned in connection with his peaceful political activities in the past. He is currently facing a further charge under Article 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law for participating in a peaceful protest on 27 October 2014, calling for an investigation in to the death of journalist Par Gyi (aka Aung Naing) in military custody earlier that month (See Amnesty International public statement: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ASA16/028/2014/en/>).

The Myanmar authorities continue to arrest and imprison activists and human rights defenders simply for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, rights which are enshrined in Articles 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Amnesty International is concerned about a number of laws in Myanmar which restrict the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, including the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law, which has been used to arrest and imprison scores of peaceful activists and human rights defenders since it was enacted in 2012. Following national and international pressure, the law was amended by Parliament, with the President signing the amendments in to law on 24 June 2014. However, the amended law still does not comply with international human rights law and standards and leaves human rights defenders and political activists at continued risk of arrest and imprisonment simply for the peaceful exercise of their human rights.

Amnesty International continues to receive reports about poor prison conditions in Myanmar, which do not comply with international standards such as those set out in the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. These concerns include a lack of access to adequate medical treatment, clean drinking water, nutritious food and water for bathing.

Name: Thein Aung Myint (m), Khet Khet Tin (f), Saw Hla Aung (m) and Kyaw Myo Htun (m)
Gender m/f: Both

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