

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST REMAINS BEHIND BARS FOR PROTESTING

Three peaceful protesters have been released in Myanmar after completing their prison sentences, but Thein Aung Myint, an activist with the Movement for Democratic Current Forces (MDCF) remains in detention.

On 9 September, some Amnesty International activists received a response from the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) to their appeals, informing them that **Khet Khet Tin, Saw Hla Aung and Kyaw Moe Htun** had been released from Obo prison in Mandalay – Myanmar's second largest city – between 17 and 21 July after completing their prison sentences. Although the MNHRC did not agree in the letter that they were unjustly imprisoned, it is still positive that the appeals prompted a response and dialogue about the case.

They had been sentenced along with **Thein Aung Myint** on 23 March to six months' imprisonment under Article 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law for protesting without permission. Thein Aung Myint and Saw Hla Aung – both members of the MDCF – were arrested shortly after they began a candlelight vigil protest against planned electricity price rises in March 2014. Police 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 standing nearby and told the police not to use excessive force when she saw them arresting her husband.

Thein Aung Myint remains in detention in Obo prison in Mandalay, as he received an additional six-month sentence on 23 April under the same law for organizing a peaceful protest in Mandalay on 27 October 2014, calling for an investigation into the death in military custody of journalist Aung Kyaw Naing (aka Par Gyi). According to the MNHRC he will complete his sentence on 29 January 2016.

The letter from the MNHRC also states that according to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Thein Aung Myint is allowed to receive visits from his lawyer and family and has access to medical care.

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

- Calling on the authorities to release Thein Aung Myint immediately and unconditionally, and all other prisoners of conscience, and drop the charges against all those arrested for the peaceful exercise of their human rights;
- Urging them to ensure that pending his release, Thein Aung Myint is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, or transferred to a remote prison, that he continues to have regular access to his families and lawyer of his choosing, and is provided with any medical treatment that he requires; and
- Calling on them to repeal or else amend all laws which restrict the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, to comply with international human rights law and standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 OCTOBER 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 Number 10.
Nay Pyi Taw
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Chairman, National Human Rights Commission
Win Mra
27 Pyay Road, Hline Township
Yangon
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Fax: +95 1 659 668
Email: chmyanmarnhrc@gmail.com

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. This is the second update of UA 75/15. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa16/1528/2015/en/>

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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. Two of its members – Naung Naung and leader Htin Kyaw – 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/asa16/2435/2015/en/>).

Thein Aung Myint has been imprisoned in connection with his peaceful political activities in the past.

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. The restrictions on the right to freedom of expression imposed by this law are phrased in an excessively broad and vague manner, potentially resulting in both an overreach, and a discriminatory application of the law.

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: Khet Khet Tin (f), Saw Hla Aung (m), Kyaw Moe Htun (m) and Thein Aung Myint (m)
Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 75/15 Index: ASA 16/2458/2015 Issue Date: 16 September 2015