

EXTERNAL

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Ill-treatment / Health concern

4 January 1996

**MYANMARSaw Naing Naing, member of parliament-elect  
Monywa Tin Shwe, lawyer  
U Win Tin, prisoner of conscience  
Myo Myint Nyein, magazine editor  
Dr Myint Aung, member of parliament-elect**

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Amnesty International is gravely concerned for the health and safety of Saw Naing Naing, Monywa Tin Shwe, U Win Tin, Myo Myint Nyein, and Dr Myint Aung, political prisoners held in Insein Jail, Myanmar's largest detention facility.

The five men, all members of the National League for Democracy (NLD), the main opposition party, have been subjected to severe ill-treatment since mid-November 1995.

In mid-November, prison officials began to interrogate the five about letters which had been smuggled out of Insein Prison to Professor Yozo Yokota, the United Nations Special Rapporteur for human rights on Myanmar. Such letters provided details about ill-treatment and poor conditions in the prison. Prison officials forced the five prisoners to sleep on concrete floors without mats or blankets in "military dog cells", which are small cells where military dogs are normally kept. The five have also been denied access to their families, which is usually granted every two weeks. Prisoners' families normally provide them with food and medicine, both of which are inadequate in the prison.

All five prisoners are in poor health and in need of proper medical attention.

U Win Tin, a prisoner of conscience since 1989 and member of the NLD Central Executive Committee, suffers from spondylitis, an inflammation of the vertebrae. Saw Naing Naing, NLD member of parliament-elect from Pazundaung, Yangon (Rangoon) Division, was arrested in October 1990. Dr Myint Aung, arrested in November 1990, is an MP-elect from Mandalay Division. Monywa Tin Shwe is a lawyer and Central Committee member of the NLD who was arrested in September 1990. Myo Myint Nyein is a magazine editor who worked for the Information Section of the NLD and also provided security for Aung San Suu Kyi before her arrest. He has been imprisoned since September 1990.

Reprisals against those who provide information to representatives of United Nations human rights bodies is contrary to the UN Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/70.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC, Myanmar's military government) took power following the violent suppression of widespread pro-democracy demonstrations in 1988. Hundreds of people were killed during the military crackdown, with hundreds more arrested and imprisoned in 1989. General elections held in 1990 resulted in an overwhelming victory for the NLD, the political party founded by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. However the SLORC refused to hand over power and has continued to rule by decree since 1988. Elected MP's were never allowed to take their seats in parliament; instead, dozens were arrested and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Currently 20 MPs elected remain in jail.

Freedom of expression, association and assembly are severely restricted in Myanmar, and anyone expressing opposition to the SLORC is at risk of arrest. Although over 2,000 political prisoners have reportedly been released since

April 1992, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, hundreds remain in prison. In the last 18 months, prisoners have been given long sentences for allegedly passing on information concerning the human rights situation in Myanmar to foreign groups and individuals.

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

- calling on the authorities to immediately stop the ill-treatment of U Win Tin, Saw Naing Naing, Dr Myint Aung, Monywa Tin Shwe, and Myo Myint Nyein, and to provide the five prisoners with proper medical care and access to their families;
- pointing out that reprisals against those who provide information to representatives of United Nations human rights bodies is contrary to the UN Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/70;
- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of U Win Tin and urging the authorities to review the cases of the other four prisoners, and to release them if they have been imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

*Appeals from health professionals would be useful.*

**APPEALS TO:**

1. Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman  
State Law and Order Restoration Council  
c/o Ministry of the Defence, Signal Pagoda Road  
Yangon, Union of Myanmar

**Telegrams: General Than Shwe, Yangon, Myanmar**

**Telexes: 21316**

**Salutation: Dear General**

2. Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Secretary 1  
State Law and Order Restoration Council  
c/o Ministry of Defence, Signal Pagoda Road  
Yangon, Union of Myanmar

**Telegrams: Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Yangon, Myanmar**

**Faxes: + 95 1 229 50**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:** diplomatic representatives of Myanmar accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 19 February 1996.