

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 16/003/2006

1 March 2006

**Further Information on UA 15/06 (ASA 16/001/2006, 20 January 2006) – Possible "disappearance"/
Fear of torture/Arbitrary detention**

**MYANMAR/
(BSO)
INDIA** **Chit Thein Tun (m), aged 42, liaison officer of Burmese Solidarity Organization**
Ma Hnin Hnin (f), aged 24, his wife
Ei Po Po (f), aged 4, their daughter
Maung Maung Oo (m), aged 40, BSO representative

New names: Ko Po Zaw (m), aged about 23, rice trader
Ma Aye Myint Ma (f), aged about 19, rice trader, his wife

Four-year-old Ei Po Po is reported to have been released in mid-February and to be in the care of relatives. Her mother, Ma Hnin Hnin, is reported to have been moved to a prison in Monywa, Sagaing Division. Amnesty International has learned of two further related arrests that took place in mid-January, and is concerned that all those in custody are at risk of torture.

The Myanmar Minister for Information told a 22 February press conference that Chit Thein Tun and Maung Maung Oo had been arrested on 15 January in connection with two bombs detonated at a market in Tamu on 8 January. He stated that the pair were arrested by the Myanmar authorities at "a border near Tamu" (a town near the Indian border in Sagaing Division), but did not specify on which side of the border. The minister said that they had confessed that Maung Maung Oo had been involved in planting explosives concealed inside a cassette player and a radio. He said Chit Thein Tun and Maung Maung Oo were members of the outlawed All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF) and that the explosions had been intended to harm cross-border trade between Myanmar and India.

Rice traders Ko Po Zaw and his wife Ma Aye Myint Ma were reportedly arrested in Tamu, Sagaing Division on 15 January, and are believed to be held in Monywa Prison, where Ma Hnin Hnin is held. Ma Aye Myint Ma is reportedly in the late stages of pregnancy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The 8 January explosions in Nanthphalon Market reportedly killed one person. In press conferences in 2005 and 2006, the Myanmar authorities have accused opposition groups in exile, including the ABSDF, of carrying out bombings in Myanmar, which the organizations have denied.

Torture and ill-treatment are common in detention before trial, particularly where detainees are alleged to have been involved in bombing or other acts of violence, or are suspected members of outlawed opposition groups in exile. Political prisoners have been convicted after unfair trials, some of them on the basis of confessions extracted during torture or ill-treatment. Under international standards such confessions are not admissible as evidence.

Prison conditions in Myanmar are poor, and prisoners often have health problems exacerbated by inadequate prison diet and medical treatment. The Myanmar authorities have not authorised the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit political prisoners since late 2005.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:
To the Myanmar authorities, in Burmese or your own language:**

- welcoming the release of Ei Po Po;
- noting the Minister of Information's statement that Chit Thein Tun and Maung Maung Oo, Myanmar refugees resident in India, have been detained in Myanmar, and urging the authorities to allow them to return to India;
- urging the authorities either to charge Ma Hnin Hnin, Ko Po Zaw and Ma Aye Myint Ma with a recognizably criminal offence, and bring them to trial in proceedings which meet international standards of fairness, or release them immediately and unconditionally;
- urging the authorities to give Ma Hnin Hnin, Ko Po Zaw and Ma Aye Myint Ma immediate access to lawyers, their families and medical care;
- urging the authorities to ensure that they are not tortured or ill-treated, and that no statement made as a result of torture is used as evidence in any legal proceedings against them.

To the Indian authorities, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern at the reported abduction of Burmese refugees Maung Maung Oo and Chit Thein Tun from Indian territory;
- calling on the authorities to investigate this incident and bring those found responsible to justice;
- urging that they make urgent enquiries with the Myanmar authorities regarding the situation of Maung Maung Oo and Chit Thein Tun and request their immediate return to India;
- urging that they allow Ei Po Po and Ma Hnin Hnin to re-enter Indian territory and to re-avail themselves of international protection.

APPEALS TO:

General Than Shwe

Minister of Defence/Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council
c/o Ministry of Defence, Ahlanpya Phaya Street, Yangon, Union of Myanmar

Salutation: Dear General

Brigadier General Tha Aye

Chairman Sagaing State Peace and Development Council, Commander Northwest Military Command
c/o Ministry of Defence, Ahlanpya Phaya Street, Yangon, Union of Myanmar

Salutation: Dear Brigadier General

Shivraj Patil

Minister of Home Affairs

Government of India, 104-107 North Block, New Delhi 110 001, India

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Major General Maung Oo

Minister of Home Affairs and chairman of the Myanmar Human Rights Committee
Ministry of Home Affairs, Corner of Saya San Street and No 1 Industrial Street,
Yankin Township, Yangon, Union of Myanmar

E. Ahamed

Minister of State for External Affairs, 172 South Block, New Delhi 11001, India

Fax: + 91 112 309 4221

and to diplomatic representatives of Myanmar and India accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 April 2006.