

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

AI Index: ASA 16/006/2004 (Public)  
News Service No: 149  
15 June 2004

**Embargo Date: 15 June 2004 01:00 GMT**

## **Myanmar: Sports journalist Zaw Thet Htwe sentenced to three years in prison**

Amnesty International and Reporters Without Borders are calling on sports journalists to give their support to imprisoned Burmese sports editor Zaw Thet Htwe and seven law students during the European Football Championships in Portugal.

Zaw Thet Htwe is the editor of a popular Burmese sports magazine, First Eleven. He was initially sentenced to death in November 2003 but his sentence was reduced to three years imprisonment on 12 May 2004. International pressure helped to contribute to the commutation of his sentence. With your help we could secure his full release.

The military junta accused Zaw Thet Htwe of involvement in a "conspiracy" against the government and charged him with "high treason". However Amnesty International and Reporters without Borders believe that he is a prisoner of conscience, arrested for exercising his right to freedom of expression. He had reportedly taken the risk of exposing irregularities on the part of Burmese sports officials.

The seven law students, who have been in detention since June 2003, are believed to have been arrested because they set up a student sports union in their university without official permission. Aung Gyi, Aung Ko Lwin, Kyaw Maung, Myo Myint Tun, Myo Than Htut, Nang Siang None and Win Htut Lwin were sentenced to terms of between seven and fifteen years' imprisonment and were reportedly ill-treated after their arrest.

They are among more than 1,350 political prisoners detained in Myanmar, many of whom have been arrested for their peaceful political activities.

How can you help win freedom for Zaw Thet Htwe and the seven students?

1. By calling on Euro 2004 TV viewers, radio listeners and newspaper readers to sign an on-line petition calling for their release on the following website: <http://www.rsf.org> and to write letters on the following website: <http://asiapacific.amnesty.org/>. A special page will be devoted to their case throughout Euro 2004.

2. By urging sports journalists' organisations to collectively sign the petition.

