

To: Sections

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EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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EXTRA 62/91

Death Sentence

11 September 1991

MYANMAR:  
(formerly Burma)

Mai Pan Sein, aged 43  
Thein Myint, aged 30

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Amnesty International is concerned at reports that Mai Pan Sein and Thein Myint were sentenced to death on 30 August 1991 at Manerplaw, the headquarters of the insurgent Karen National Union (KNU) and National Democratic Front (NDF). The sentence is believed to have been imposed either by the KNU or the NDF, apparently because the two were accused of gathering intelligence and doing other work for the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), the military body that currently governs Myanmar. It is not clear whether the death sentence has been carried out, and Amnesty International is appealing urgently to the KNU and NDF and allied opposition groups that Mai Pan Sein and Thein Myint not be executed.

According to information received by Amnesty International, on 21 August 1991, KNU military intelligence officials seized Mai Pan Sein and Thein Myint at the market in Mae Sot, a town on the Thai-Burmese border. Mai Pan Sein is the former representative of the Palaung State Liberation Party to the insurgent National Democratic Front (*see background information*). On 17 July 1991, he flew from Thailand to Myanmar to surrender himself to the authorities of the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council. According to foreign news media reports, he said he was ready to tell the authorities everything he knew about opposition to them. He reportedly returned to Thailand in early August 1991 in the company of Thein Myint and visited a number of towns in which Burmese opposition groups are known to have offices.

After Mai Pan Sein and Thein Myint were seized, they were reportedly sent to Manerplaw. There they were apparently put on trial, although it is not clear by what kind of court or according to what body of law. Mai Pan Sein is presumed to have been accused of cooperating with the SLORC, and Thein Myint is believed to have been accused of being a corporal in the SLORC's Military Intelligence Service Number 9.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Karen National Union (KNU) has been in armed opposition to the central government for over 40 years. The National Democratic Front (NDF) groups the KNU and other ethnic minority insurgent groups. Another grouping of opposition forces, the Anti-Military Dictatorship National Solidarity Committee (ADNSC) was formed in March this year. It includes the NDF; the All-Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF), which has an armed wing; and the National League for Democracy (NLD) "liberated area" organization, which has no armed wing; and other groups opposed to the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC).

The SLORC seized power in a military coup in September 1988. In May 1990 it allowed national elections which were won by the NLD, but it has yet to convene

parliament and refuses to transfer power to a civilian government. A number of NLD members and others elected to parliament fled to ethnic rebel-held areas in late 1990 to establish an opposition government, the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB). The KNU, ADNDC, ABSDF, NLD ("liberated area") organization, and the NCGUB all have their headquarters at Manerplaw, an insurgent base in Myanmar near the Thai border.

The Palaung State Liberation Party (PSLP) was, until April 1991, allied with the KNU in the NDF opposition to the SLORC. However, in April

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1991 most of the leadership of the PSLP agreed after negotiations with the SLORC to give up armed opposition, and their political organization was legalized by the SLORC.

Since seizing power in September 1988, the SLORC has arrested thousands of people for their advocacy of a transfer of power out of military hands and for their opposition to the SLORC's martial law restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly. Political prisoners are believed to be routinely tortured by SLORC authorities, and government military units are alleged frequently to extrajudicially execute and ill-treat people they seize during counter-insurgency operations in ethnic minority areas.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Faxes and airmail letters:**

- expressing concern at reports that Mai Pan Sein and Thein Myint were sentenced to death on 30 August 1991;
- stating Amnesty International's total opposition to the deliberate killing of prisoners by anyone, including political opposition groups;
- urging that Mai Pan Sein and Thein Myint not be executed.

**APPEALS TO:**

**1. General Bo Mya**

Chairman of the ADNDC

President of the KNU

PO Box 168 Mae Ping

Chiang Mai 50001, Thailand

**Faxes: (66 2) 318 8697**

**2. Nai Shwe Kyin**

Chairman of the NDF

Member of the ADNDC Central Executive Committee

PO Box 183 Mae Ping

Chiang Mai 50000, Thailand

**Faxes: (66 53) 247 264; (66 53) 247 627**

**3. U Win Hket**

Secretary General of the ADNDC

Chairman of the NLD (Liberated Area) Central Executive Committee

1/8 Ramkhamhaeng 39

Bangkok 10310, Thailand

**Faxes: (66 2) 237 5793; (66 2) 331 8221**

**4. Moe Thi Zun**

Joint Secretary General of the ADNDC

Chairman of the ABSDF  
PO Box 1352  
Bangkok 10500, Thailand

**Faxes: (66 2) 318 8507**

**(NB: you must telephone and ask for this fax to be turned on before transmission).**

**COPIES TO:**

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Bangkok 10110  
Thailand

Dr Sein Win  
Prime Minister of the NCGUB  
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**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 23 October 1991.