

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 16/07/96

5 February 1996

Further information on 04/96 (ASA 16/03/96, 10 January 1996) and follow-up (ASA 16/04/96, 19 January 1996) - Fear of ill-treatment / Legal concern

MYANMARU Pa Pa Lay, comedian
U Lu Zaw, comedian
U Myint Thein, NLD member
U Aung Soe, NLD member

Myodaw Win Mar (f), dancer
Ma Hnin Pa Pa (f), dancer
U Tin Myint Hlaing, musician
U Sein Hla, musician
U Win Htai, musician
U Htwe, manager of dance troupe
Daw Myaing (f), assistant to dancers
Ma Yin Tin Shwe (f), assistants to dancers

Amnesty International welcomes the news that eight members of the dance troupe *Myo Daw Win Mar Anyeint* - Myodaw Win Mar, Ma Hnin Pa Pa, U Tin Myint Hlaing, U Sein Hla, U Win Htai, U Htwe, Daw Myaing and Ma Yin Tin Shwe - have been released from detention.

However, the two comedians, U Pa Pa Lay and U Lu Zaw, and U Myint Thein and U Aung Soe, who arranged for the troupe's performance, have been moved to Mandalay Prison where they await trial. U Myint Thein and U Aung Soe are members of the National League for Democracy (NLD), the opposition party founded by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Amnesty International remains concerned for the well-being of the four, as torture and ill-treatment is common both during interrogation and after sentencing.

U Pa Pa Lay, U Lu Zaw, U Myint Thein, and U Aung Soe have been charged under the Section 5(j) of the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act, which provides for a seven-year prison sentence and fine for anyone who: "*causes or intends to disrupt the morality or the behaviour of a group of people or the general public, or to disrupt the security or the reconstruction of stability of the Union...*".

The Emergency Provisions Act is frequently used by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC, Myanmar's military authorities) to criminalize peaceful political activity. In view of this, Amnesty International remains concerned that U Pa Pa Lay, U Lu Zaw, U Myint Thein, and U Aung Soe are being held solely for the peaceful political activities.

Since the NLD withdrew from the SLORC-convened National Convention in late November 1995, there has been increasing harassment of the party by the SLORC, including the arrests of dozens of party members. Many people have been detained for possessing videotapes of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's weekend speeches, others for writing a poem commemorating the death in custody of an NLD colleague. Amnesty International is concerned by a growing pattern of arrests aimed at silencing any NLD activity.

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

- welcoming the release of eight members of the dance troupe, *Myo Daw Win Mar Anyeint*;

- seeking assurances that the treatment of the remaining four detainees, U Pa Pa Lay, U Lu Zaw, U Myint Thein, and U Aung Soe, conforms to international standards, and that they are being given proper access to family, lawyers of their own choice and medical personnel;
- urging that, if they have been arrested solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association, they be immediately and unconditionally released;
- expressing your concern about the increasing arrests of NLD members for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

APPEALS TO:

Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman
State Law and Order Restoration Council
c/o Ministry of Defence, Signal Pagoda Road
Yangon, Union of Myanmar
Telegrams: General Than Shwe, Yangon, Myanmar
Telexes: 21316
Salutation: Dear General

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: Dear General

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 27 March 1996.