

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of torture

10 August 1994

MYANMAR (BURMA)

**Khin Maung Swe, opposition politician
Daw San San Nwe (f), writer, & her daughter
U Sein Hla Oo, journalist**

Khin Maung Swe, Daw San San Nwe and her daughter, and U Sein Hla Oo were arrested in Yangon (Rangoon) on 4 or 5 August 1994. It is not known where they are being detained. Amnesty International fears for their safety, especially in view of the reliable reports it has received of the torture and ill-treatment of detained government opponents.

Khin Maung Swe is a prominent dissident MP-elect, and a member of the Central Executive Committee of the National League for Democracy (NLD), the main political opposition party in the country. Daw San San Nwe is a well-known writer, and U Sein Hla Oo is a journalist. All three are well-known in Myanmar as critics of the military government, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), and are prolific writers in support of their cause.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The SLORC took power in Myanmar in 1988 following the violent suppression of widespread pro-democracy demonstrations throughout the country, and hundreds of people who took part in the demonstration were arrested and imprisoned. The NLD, founded by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, was allowed to contest democratic elections in 1990. In spite of winning a landslide victory, the NLD has never been allowed to form a government, as the SLORC has refused to hand over power.

Large numbers of MPs-elect were arrested, more than 20 of whom remain in prison.

Since taking power, the SLORC has ruled by decree, and freedom of expression and assembly are severely restricted in the country. Writers and journalists are subjected to long terms of imprisonment if they are found guilty of breaking the laws on censorship. Although there were many releases in 1992 and 1993, hundreds of political prisoners remain in detention. In the last 12 months several prominent opposition politicians and activists have been arrested, some of whom are prisoners of conscience.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest of Khin Maung Swe, Daw San San Nwe and her daughter, and U Sein Hla Oo, and requesting details of their whereabouts;
- seeking assurances that their treatment in detention conforms to international standards, and that they be given access to their families, lawyers, and medical personnel;
- urging that all four be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence, or released.

APPEALS TO

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

Salutation: Dear Lieutenant General

General Maung Aye
Vice Chairman
State Law and Order Restoration Council
c/o Ministry of Defence
Signal Pagoda Road
Yangon, Union of Myanmar

Telegrams: General Maung Aye, Yangon, Myanmar

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 21 September 1994.