

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

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**Medical concern/prisoner of conscience 25 September 1992**

**MYANMAR (BURMA) U WIN TIN, politician, journalist**

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Amnesty International has recently obtained information that U Win Tin, a prisoner of conscience in his early 60's who was arrested in July 1989, is in very poor health and may die if he does not receive surgery.

U Win Tin is reportedly being denied proper medical treatment in Insein Prison, the largest detention facility in Burma where he is being held along with hundreds of other political prisoners. Amnesty International has no further details about U Win Tin's health, but is concerned that he is not receiving adequate medical care for a potentially life-threatening illness.

U Win Tin is one of the founding leaders of the National League for Democracy (NLD), Myanmar's largest opposition party, which was formed in 1988 in the context of nationwide protests at 26 years of one-party military rule. Although the NLD won the May 1990 general elections, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), Myanmar's ruling military authorities, has ignored the results of the election and continues to retain power itself. The NLD is led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and a prisoner of conscience who has also been detained since July 1989. Dozens of other NLD members were arrested in mid 1989 during a crackdown on all political activity by the SLORC. Although the SLORC has recently released some political prisoners, it continues to detain hundreds more, many of whom are prisoners of conscience.

U Win Tin is a journalist who was the editor of a daily newspaper until it was closed by the government in 1978. He worked closely with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other journalists, lawyers, and writers, in establishing the NLD in 1988. Among these founders was U Win Tin's colleague Maung Thawka, one of Myanmar's foremost writers, who died in custody in June 1991, allegedly after he had been denied medical treatment in Insein Prison.

In August 1989 the government alleged that U Win Tin had urged the NLD to adopt civil disobedience to defy martial law, citing the works of Henry David Thoreau and the example of Mahatma Gandhi. Despite the stated political motives for U Win Tin's arrest, two months later he was charged with having offered hospitality to an NLD member whose companion had allegedly undergone a criminal abortion. On 3 October 1989 he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment under provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code, which establishes sanctions for "harbouring an offender". However Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience, and believes that his arrest and prosecution was motivated solely by his lawful leadership role in a major opposition party and not for any real criminal act or commission. Although U Win Tin was due to be released in July 1992, there are unconfirmed reports that he had received

an additional seven years' sentence.

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

- urging that U Win Tin be granted immediate access to proper medical care, including surgery if required;
- asking that U Win Tin be immediately and unconditionally released.

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**APPEALS TO:**

1) General Than Shwe  
Chairman  
State Law and Order Restoration Council  
c/o Ministry of Defence  
Signal Pagoda Road  
Yangon (Rangoon)  
Union of Myanmar (Burma)  
**Telegrams: General Than Shwe, Yangon, Myanmar**  
**Telexes: 21313 MOFARN BM**

**Salutation: Dear General**

2) Major General Khin Nyunt  
Secretary 1  
State Law and Order Restoration Council  
c/o Ministry of Defence  
Signal Pagoda Road  
Yangon  
Union of Myanmar  
**Telegrams: Major General Khin Nyunt, Yangon, Myanmar**

**Salutation: Dear Major General**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS 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 6 November 1992.