

EXTERNAL

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Fear for safety/Fear of ill-treatment 24 June 1997

MYANMARKhin Maung Win *alias* Ko Sunny
Cho Aung Than
Daw Khin Ma Than (f)
U Shwe Myint Aung
U Ohn Myint

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of five National League for Democracy (NLD, Myanmar's primary legal opposition party) supporters arrested since 13 June whose current whereabouts are unknown. Khin Maung Win *alias* Ko Sunny, is the official video-photographer for the NLD; Cho Aung Than is a cousin of and former assistant to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the NLD; Daw Khin Ma Than is the sister of Cho Aung Than and U Shwe Myint Aung is her husband; U Ohn Myint, an advisor to the NLD, is believed to be in his 80s.

The official reason for the arrest of the five detainees is not known, but unofficial sources have stated that they were arrested for allegedly smuggling abroad video-taped speeches by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Political prisoners in Myanmar often face ill-treatment during interrogation, which may include beatings and deprivation of sleep and food.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 1997 the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) has continued its policy of effectively silencing any opposition in Myanmar. In May, the authorities again temporarily detained or otherwise prevented more than 300 NLD members of parliament-elect and organizers from attending a meeting in Yangon to celebrate the seventh anniversary of their 1990 election victory.

This follows the mass arrests of more than 2000 political activists during 1996 in order to prevent them from attending meetings or for taking part in demonstrations. Although most of those arrested were released, dozens have been sentenced to long prison terms.

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

- calling on the authorities to immediately make known the whereabouts of the five detainees and the charges against them;
- calling on the authorities to release all five immediately and unconditionally if they are held solely for their peaceful political activities;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that all five are allowed access to their lawyers, doctors and family members;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that while detained all five are not ill-treated and are held in accordance with international minimum standards.

APPEALS TO:

Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman
State Law and Order Restoration Council
c/o Director of Defence Services Intelligence (DDSI)
Ministry of Defence, Signal Pagoda Road
Dagon Post Office
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 Director of Defence Services Intelligence (DDSI)

Ministry of Defence, Signal Pagoda Road

Dagon Post Office

Yangon

Union of Myanmar

Telegrams: Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Yangon, Myanmar

Telexes: 21316

Salutation: Dear Lieutenant 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 5 August 1997.