

AI INDEX: ASA 16/21/98  
10 AUGUST 1998

## **PUBLIC STATEMENT**

### **Myanmar**

#### **18 arrested – no freedom of expression**

Amnesty International is dismayed to learn of yesterday's arrest of 18 foreign nationals in Myanmar, for distributing leaflets in Yangon, the capital. The leaflets reportedly commemorated the 10th anniversary of the 8 August 1988 violent suppression of the pro-democracy movement.

Amnesty International believes they are detained in violation of the right to freedom of expression and calls for their immediate release.

The Myanmar authorities are reported to have stated that the 10 men and eight women -- one Australian, two Filipinos, three Indonesians, three Malaysians, three Thais, and six USA nationals -- will be charged and tried for attempting to incite unrest. Officials mentioned two laws under which they may be tried, the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act and the 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration, both frequently used to detain political prisoners in Myanmar.

While attention is focused on the arrest of these 18 men and women, Amnesty International urges the international community to call not only for their immediate release, but to remember the hundreds of Burmese political prisoners still detained in Myanmar, some of them for the last 10 years.

ENDS.../