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**EMBARGO UNTIL 0001 HRS GMT 22 SEPTEMBER 1995**

**MYANMAR: TORTURE AND APPALLING CONDITIONS CONTINUE IN LABOUR  
CAMPS AND PRISONS**

New information about torture and appalling conditions in labour camps and prisons in Myanmar are highlighted in an Amnesty International report released today.

Unofficial sources report details of torture, prolonged shackling, lack of proper medical care, and insufficient food for both criminal and political prisoners.

"Torture techniques, which include beatings – sometimes to the point of unconsciousness, being forced to crawl over sharp stones and being held in the hot sun for prolonged periods, are used by Myanmar's security forces to punish and intimidate prisoners," the organization said.

Amnesty International has also received new information about nine labour camps throughout the country where hundreds of prisoners have died from ill-treatment, lack of food and medical care. Thousands of criminal prisoners are forced to work on infrastructure projects breaking rocks and constructing roads for long hours, often to the point of exhaustion.

The organization is further concerned about the transport of convicted criminals from prisons to act as porters for the military during counter-insurgency operations, many of whom die as a result of ill-treatment and disease.

Myanmar's military government has stated publicly that prisoners can reduce their sentences by contributing voluntary labour. Although Amnesty International recognizes that some prisoners do volunteer for such work, it remains concerned at current reports of thousands of other prisoners who are forced to work in terrible conditions.

Thousands of political prisoners remain in prisons throughout Myanmar, including at least 800 in Insein Prison near Yangon, the capital. Some have been held in iron shackles for two months at a time. They are kept in overcrowded conditions and are given an inadequate diet. Prisoners sometimes die from untreated illnesses, receiving medical care only when desperately ill.

These new reports confirm a documented pattern of human rights violations. Amnesty International is calling on the Myanmar military government to end torture and ill-treatment and to allow international monitoring of its prisons.

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