

01 November 2007

Further information on UA 250/07 (ASA 16/008/2007, 26 September 2007)- Fear of torture or ill-treatment/health concern

MYANMAR	Myint Myint San (f), National League for Democracy (NLD) member Tin Aung Aung (m), NLD Member of Parliament (note amended name) Tin Ko (m), NLD youth member in Meiktila
Released:	Paik Ko (m), NLD leader in Pakokku Par Par Lay (m), comedian, aged 60 Zargana (m), also known as Ko Thura, comedian Amyotherwei U Win Naing (m), politician (note amended name)

Par Par Lay, Zargana, Paik Ko and Amyotheryei U Win Naing have recently been released. However, Myint Myint San, Tin Aung Aung, Tin Ko and possibly thousands of others are still detained in the ongoing crackdown. They are at grave risk of torture and ill-treatment.

Former prisoner of conscience and popular comedian Par Par Lay was released from Ohbo Prison in the city of Mandalay on 30 October. Speaking to the media after his release, the 60-year old recounted that he was blindfolded and taken from his home to a police station in Mandalay on the day of his arrest. Par Par Lay said that authorities suspected him of links with the organisers of the monk-led protests. However, he said he had simply been an onlooker during the marches in his hometown.

Par Par Lay's fellow comedian Zargana was released from Insein Prison in Yangon, Myanmar's main city, on 17 October. He was briefly detained again on 29 October but was released the following day. It is believed that he was taken in for questioning after he gave several interviews to the international media about the poor detention conditions in Insein Prison. In the media interviews that Zargana, also a former prisoner of conscience, gave after his release on 17 October, he said he was held incommunicado in a cell guarded by about 30 dogs, in unsanitary conditions, for about a week. He said he had developed a lung infection. Zargana has reportedly been under tight surveillance since his release.

Meanwhile, independent politician Amyotheryei U Win Naing was released on 30 October. According to a media report on 18 October, he was suffering from hypertension while in detention. Amyotheryei U Win Naing and Zargana had reportedly offered meals to monks before they set out for their demonstrations. Amyotheryei U Win Naing was arrested on 25 September. U Paik Ko, leader of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) in Pakokku, Magway division, the town where the monks' demonstrations started, was released on 24 October.

Over the past week, more than 100 protesters have been released, among them some 55 members of the NLD. Most of them were released from Insein prison in Yangon, others in Mandalay. Accounts given by former detainees of the conditions at Insein paint a bleak picture of beatings, inadequate food, lack of health care and widespread ill-health, shackling and solitary confinement. This reflects testimonies provided to Amnesty International during the current crackdown.

Up to now, the Myanmar state media has indicated that nearly 3,000 people have been arrested and more than 2,500 have been released, but the true number of people still in detention is likely to be much higher. At the time of writing, arrests continue to be reported. In their announcements, the Myanmar authorities have also failed to provide details about who has been detained, where people are held and in what conditions; and why they have been arrested.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- welcoming the recent releases of Par Par Lay, Zargana, Paik Ko and Amyotheryei U Win Naing;
- expressing concern that Myint Myint San, Tin Aung Aung, Tin Ko and potentially thousands of other detainees continue to be detained in the ongoing crackdown;
- calling on the authorities to treat Myint Myint San, Tin Aung Aung, Tin Ko and all detainees humanely, and not subject them to torture or other ill-treatment;
- urging the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally along with all detainees arrested for taking part in peaceful demonstrations;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that, while they remain in custody, all the detainees are held only in an official place of detention, and are granted immediate access to lawyers, their families and any medical treatment they may require.

APPEALS TO:

Senior General Than Shwe
Chairman
State Peace and Development Council
c/o Ministry of Defence, Naypyitaw, Union of Myanmar

Salutation: Dear General

Nyan Win
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Naypyitaw, Union of Myanmar

Salutation: Dear Minister

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 13 December 2007.
