

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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"Disappearance"

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THAILAND: Ye Soe Aung, aged 18

Amnesty International is concerned for the physical safety of Ye Soe Aung, a Burmese national, who was reportedly arrested by Thai police on 4 November 1991 in Nat Ein Daung, the Burmese name for a village on the Thai side of the country's border with Myanmar (Burma). Ye Soe Aung, a member of the insurgent All-Burma Students' Democratic Federation (ABSDF), was allegedly beaten by Thai police, and has not been seen since his arrest. Thai authorities at first denied that he was in their custody, but there are increasing allegations that he was killed. Amnesty International is urging the Thai Government to take immediate action to determine what has happened to him. It is calling on the authorities to secure his safety if he is still alive, and bring to justice those responsible for his death if he has been unlawfully killed.

On 4 November 1991, Ye Soe Aung reportedly came to Nat Ein Daung from Camp 102 of the ABSDF to buy supplies together with other members of the ABSDF. Although Nat Ein Daung is in Thailand, it is understood that the ABSDF and other Burmese insurgents frequently visit the village through arrangements made with local Thai authorities.

At around eight o'clock in the evening, three ABSDF members reportedly became involved in a fight at a Nat Ein Daung restaurant with a number of Thai, possibly including plainclothes police officers. The Burmese fled, but police then raided the ABSDF office in Nat Ein Daung and arrested Ye Soe Aung, who was staying there. They reportedly took him to the home of the Thai village headman. Ye Soe Aung was allegedly beaten and kicked by the in front of the ABSDF office, along the way, and in the headman's house. According to one report, a gunshot was heard after Ye Soe Aung had been in the headman's house for some time.

The next morning members of the ABSDF and another Burmese insurgent group, the Karen National Union (KNU), approached the police to ask for Ye Soe Aung's release. The police are alleged initially to have said he had already been released. The ABSDF and KNU are understood also to have made inquiries about Ye Soe Aung's whereabouts with other Thai authorities, including the village headman, local militia leaders, regular Thai army officers, military intelligence officers and the Border Patrol Police, who allegedly also said that Ye Soe Aung had been released. However, the ABSDF and KNU have been unable to locate him, and according to some reports the police have now said they will give Ye Soe Aung's body to the ABSDF if it hands over to them the ABSDF members who were involved in the fight at the restaurant.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The ABSDF was set up after the military coup in Myanmar in September 1988. It groups former students and other young people who have decided to take up arms against military rule in Myanmar. It is allied with the KNU and other ethnic minority insurgent groups that have bases along the Thai-Myanmar border.

These bases also contain the headquarters of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, which was set up in December 1990 by people elected in the general parliamentary elections held by the Burmese military in May 1990. The military has never convened parliament, and most of the leaders

of the party that won the elections, the National League for Democracy, are currently imprisoned.

Thousands of Burmese students and other young people fled into Thailand after the military coup in Myanmar in September 1988. Some are currently members of the ABSDF. Others have joined different political organizations.

Some have no political affiliation. Almost 1,500 have been recognized as refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed concern that these and other Burmese asylum-seekers in Thailand have no effective guarantees against being returned to Myanmar against their will and about allegations that they have been ill-treated while detained for "illegal immigration". In July 1991 the organization expressed concern that a Burmese refugee who was shot to death while attempting to escape from police custody may have been unlawfully killed.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern for the physical safety of Ye Soe Aung, who was reportedly arrested by Thai police in Nat Ein Daung village of Kaanjanaburii province on 4 November 1991 and may have been ill-treated or killed in custody;

- urging that an independent investigation immediately be launched to determine what has happened to Ye Soe Aung;

- urging that if he is still alive, the authorities secure his safety and bring to justice any authorities who have ill-treated him;

- urging that if he has been unlawfully killed, any authorities responsible be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO

1. Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun
Government House
Nakhorn Pathom Road
Bangkok 10300, Thailand

Dear Prime Minister

Telegrams: Prime Minister Panyarachun, Bangkok, Thailand
Telexes: 84791 IMFODEP TH (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Faxes: + 66 2 280 1443

2. General Itsaraphong Nunphakdii
Minister of Interior
Atsadang Road
Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Dear Minister

Telegrams: Minister Interior, Bangkok, Thailand
Telexes: 84791 IMFODEP TH (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Faxes: + 66 2 224 6191
+ 66 2 223 2215

3. The Governor
Sala Klang
Jangwat Kaanjanaburii
Kaanjanaburii 71000, Thailand

Dear Governor

Telegrams: Same address

COPIES TO:

Arsa Sarasin
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Saranromya Palace

Bangkok 10200, Thailand
Faxes: + 66 2 224 7095

and to diplomatic representatives of Thailand in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 23 December 1991.