

# URGENT ACTION

## IMPRISONED FOR CORRUPTION INVESTIGATION

**On 7 April two men, video journalist Zaw Pe and Win Myint Hlaing, were each sentenced to one year in prison in Myanmar because of their attempted investigation and criticism of education authorities in Magwe Region. Amnesty International considers them prisoners of conscience who must be immediately and unconditionally released.**

**Zaw Pe** (aka Thu Ya Thet Tin), a reporter for the media organization Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), and **Win Myint Hlaing** were arrested on 25 August 2012 after they attempted to film an interview with an education department official in Magwe city, Magwe Region about allegations of corruption. At 12pm on 24 August 2012, Zaw Pe went to the education department office in Magwe Region to investigate suspicions that Japanese-funded scholarships were being given to relatives of education department officials. He was accompanied by Win Myint Hlaing, the father of a student who had applied for a scholarship. Zaw Pe began filming as Win Myint Hlaing spoke to a district education official about the award of the scholarships. The official objected, terminated the interview and later filed a police complaint.

The next day, 25 August 2012, police detained and questioned the men. Zaw Pe's video camera, memory card and press badge were confiscated. Both were charged with "house trespass" and "assault or criminal force to deter a public servant from discharge of his duty" under Articles 448 and 353 of Myanmar's Penal Code. On 7 April 2014, they were found guilty under both charges and each sentenced to one year in prison and transferred to Thayet prison, Magwe Region. An appeal lodged at the Magwe district court by Zaw Pe's lawyer was rejected on 9 April.

Zaw Pe and Win Myint Hlaing are prisoners of conscience and should be immediately and unconditionally released. Amnesty International considers the charges against them to be an attempt to dissuade or prevent them from investigating the authorities' alleged corrupt practices. They have been jailed on the pretext that they have committed a crime while in reality they were charged and imprisoned solely because of their attempted criticism of the authorities.

### Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Zaw Pe, Win Myint Hlaing, and all other prisoners of conscience detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to ensure that, pending their unconditional release, both men are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, that they are kept in conditions which meet international standards, and are granted access to lawyers, family members and medical professionals, according to their wishes;
- Calling on them to drop all charges against those who have been arrested or detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 JUNE 2014 TO:

President

Thein Sein

President's Office

Nay Pyi Taw

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Home Affairs

Lt Gen. Ko Ko

Ministry of Home Affairs

Office No. 10

Nay Pyi Taw

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Salutation: Dear Minister

**And copies to:**

Chairman, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

U Win Mra

27 Pyay Road, Hline Township

Yangon

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:**

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Zaw Pe has been detained for his journalistic activities in the past. In 2010 he was sentenced to three years in prison after reporting a story about water shortage in the Nat Mauk area of central Myanmar. He had been charged with shooting video footage without a license under Article 32(A) of the 1996 Television and Video Law. He was released in 2012.

Amnesty International is seriously concerned about ongoing restrictions to the right to freedom of expression in Myanmar, in particular through the targeting of journalists and other media workers in connection with their work. These restrictions continue despite a series of political reforms. The right to freedom of expression is enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This right includes the right to “receive and impart information and ideas through any media”. Journalists and other media workers must be able to operate throughout the country and carry out investigations without fear of reprisal or arrest.

Amnesty International continues to receive reports about poor prison conditions in Myanmar, which fall below international standards. These concerns include lack of access to adequate medical treatment, clean drinking water, nutritious food, and water for bathing. Amnesty International calls on the Myanmar authorities to ensure that conditions of detention comply with those set out in the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

Name: Zaw Pe and Win Myint Hlaing  
Gender m/f: m

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