

URGENT ACTION

PEACE ACTIVIST DETAINED FOR FACEBOOK POST

A Kachin peace activist in Myanmar has been detained in connection with a Facebook post mocking the army. He is a prisoner of conscience, who must be released immediately and unconditionally.

At around 7:30pm on 14 October, Kachin peace activist **Patrick Kum Jaa Lee**, 43, was arrested without a warrant at his home in Yangon – Myanmar’s largest city – and taken to Hlaing Township police station. Authorities told him he was arrested for an image he shared on Facebook showing an unidentified person stepping on a photograph of army Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. According to credible sources, he had commented above the post “Don’t share this post – if you do you will be arrested”. His phone and computer were confiscated, and the Facebook post has now been removed. He remains in detention at the police station, and has not been able to meet with a lawyer yet.

In the morning of 15 October, Patrick Kum Jaa Lee’s family and friends were informed by the Hlaing Township Police Chief that he was being investigated under Section 66(d) of Myanmar’s 2013 Telecommunications Act, which carries a maximum sentence of three years in prison for “extorting, coercing, restraining wrongfully, defaming, disturbing, causing undue influence or threatening to any person by using any Telecommunications Network”. The police also informed them that he would be presented before a court later that day and may be transferred to a nearby prison.

Please write immediately in English, Burmese, or your own language:

- Calling on the Myanmar authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Patrick Kum Jaa Lee;
- Urging them to ensure that, pending his release, he is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated; is not transferred to a remote prison; has regular access to family members and lawyers of his choosing; and is provided with any medical care which he requires;
- Calling on them to repeal or amend all laws which impose arbitrary or sweeping restrictions on the human right to freedom of expression, in line with international human rights law and standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 NOVEMBER 2015 TO:

President

Thein Sein

President’s Office

Office No.18

Nay Pyi Taw

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Fax: +95 1 652 624

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

Fax: +95 67 412 439

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Chairman, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

U Win Mra

27 Pyay Road, Hline Township

Yangon

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Fax: +95 1 659 668

Email: chmyanmarnhrc@gmail.com

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

While Internet penetration is still very low in Myanmar, Facebook is widely used by most Internet users, including human rights defenders, government officials and news agencies. On 12 October, Chaw Sandi Tun, also known as Chit Tha Mee, was also arrested in Yangon for a post she made on Facebook mocking the Myanmar Army. See: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ASA16/2669/2015/en/>. She is currently detained in Maubin prison, in Ayeyarwady Region. She is a prisoner of conscience who must be immediately and unconditionally released.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned by these cases which may be signs of a broader crackdown on freedom of expression online.

The Myanmar authorities continue to arrest and imprison activists and human rights defenders simply for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression which is enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Amnesty International is concerned about a number of laws in Myanmar which restrict the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Amnesty International notes that the human right to freedom of expression extends to ideas of all kinds, including those that may be considered insulting or offensive

Last week, Amnesty International released a briefing highlighting how Myanmar's authorities have intensified repression over the past two years and in particular by clamping down on freedom of expression in the lead up to general elections scheduled for 8 November. See: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa16/2457/2015/my/>

Name: Patrick Kum Jaa Lee
Gender m/f: m

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