

URGENT ACTION

BURMESE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST ARRESTED

Kyaw Zaw Lwin (also known as Nyi Nyi Aung), a male Burmese human rights activist who works for the Thai-based campaign group, Forum for Democracy in Burma, was arrested on 3 September after flying from Thailand to Yangon, Myanmar's biggest city. He may be in police custody in Myanmar and is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Kyaw Zaw Lwin, aged 39, has been involved in the Burmese pro-democracy movement for over 20 years. He was a student activist during the popular uprising against military rule in 1988, which government security forces violently suppressed, killing an estimated 3,000 people. He subsequently fled to Thailand. He was later resettled in the United States and was naturalized as an American citizen. He returned to Thailand to continue his campaigning efforts in 2005. In June of this year, he travelled to New York as part of a delegation of Burmese activists representing the Free Burma Political Prisoners Now campaign. They delivered a global petition which called upon the United Nations to secure the release of all political prisoners in Myanmar.

He had tried to enter Myanmar with a US passport and a visa issued by the Myanmar embassy in Bangkok. Sources believe that Kyaw Zaw Lwin was arrested in Yangon because of his pro-democracy activities.

Kyaw Zaw Lwin's mother and sister, Thet Thet Aung, are serving a five-year and a 65-year prison sentence respectively for their involvement in the major anti-government demonstrations in August and September 2007. Kyaw Zaw Lwin's family are close associates of Htay Kywe, one of the leaders of a group of activists known as the 88 Generation Students Group. This group started the first protest marches against rising fuel and food prices in August 2007. The protests later grew in size and significance and became known as the "Saffron Revolution", after the monks who led thousands of peaceful protesters in the streets of Yangon and several other cities in Myanmar. The protesters added calls for the release of all political prisoners and demanded an end to the long-standing political impasse through a process of national reconciliation. The authorities brought the protests to an end with a violent crackdown in late September 2007. Htay Kywe is now serving a 65-year prison sentence for his role in the protests.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Burmese or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to release Kyaw Zaw Lwin immediately and unconditionally unless he is charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- urging the authorities to guarantee that Kyaw Zaw Lwin is not tortured or ill-treated while he remains in custody and that he has access to his family, legal counsel, and proper medical care;
- urging the authorities to provide information on his whereabouts, and the reasons and legal basis for his continued detention.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 OCTOBER 2009 TO:

Minister for Home Affairs
Maung Oo
Ministry of Home Affairs
Office No. 10
Naypyitaw, Union of Myanmar
Fax: +95 67 412 439
Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Information
Brigadier-General Kyaw Hsan
Ministry of Information
Bldg. (7), Naypyitaw,
Union of Myanmar
Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Nyan Win
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Naypyitaw, Union of Myanmar
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of Myanmar accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has long-standing concerns about the deprivation of basic rights during detention in Myanmar. People are frequently arrested for peaceful political activities without warrant and held incommunicado. Torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment are common in pre-trial detention. There are more than 2,200 political prisoners in Myanmar, almost double the number before the “Saffron Revolution” in 2007.

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