

URGENT ACTION

MEDICAL TREATMENT NEEDED IMMEDIATELY

Three male Prisoners of conscience, U Gambira, Min Ko Naing and Zaw Htet Ko Ko are in need of immediate medical treatment. The three men have all been denied adequate medical treatment.

Buddhist monk and protest leader, **U Gambira** has contracted malaria. He is being held in Kale Prison, Sagaing Division, northern Myanmar, over 1,000 km away from the country's biggest city, Yangon. It is not known whether he is currently receiving any medical attention for malaria. U Gambira is in poor health generally and also suffers from asthma. He has previously been denied access to medical treatment in prison and has been subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment. U Gambira is currently serving a 63 year sentence for his role in leading major anti-government demonstrations in Myanmar in August – September 2007.

Veteran pro-democracy leader, **Min Ko Naing** is suffering from high blood pressure (hypertension). He has also been suffering from an eye condition, numbness in his hands, and gout. He is being held in a small, dark cell and the conditions are said to be affecting his eye condition. Initial requests for treatment were denied and he has still not received adequate medical treatment. He is being held in Kengtong Prison, Shan State, northern Myanmar, where there is no regular doctor. Kengtong Prison is located over 1,100 km away from Yangon where his family lives. Min Ko Naing was sentenced on 11 November 2008, to 65 years' imprisonment for his role in starting the large anti-government protests in 2007.

Zaw Htet Ko Ko, 88 Generation Students group activist, has been suffering from stomach pain and has lost a significant amount of weight. He has received some medical treatment for his problem, but it is not clear whether the treatment is sufficient or appropriate. He also has high blood pressure. He is being held in Kyaukpyu Prison, in the western state of Rahkine, over 1,000 km away from his family in Yangon. Zaw Htet Ko Ko is serving 11 years in prison, with hard labour, for his involvement in the 2007 peaceful anti-government protests.

The lack of medical treatment and poor conditions in Myanmar's prisons has severely harmed the health of many prisoners, of whom a significant number have serious medical conditions that remain untreated.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to ensure that U Gambira, Min Ko Naing and Zaw Htet Ko Ko are immediately given the necessary medical treatment and care for their health problems;
- Calling on the authorities to release the three men immediately and unconditionally, once they have received the urgent medical treatment that they require;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure that all detainees are treated humanely, with full respect for their human rights, and ensuring that no one is subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 JANUARY 2010 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

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

U Gambira is a founding member of the All Burma Monks Alliance (ABMA), which was formed in September 2007 to further the protests against rising fuel and food prices. The 88 Generation Students group, which Min Ko Naing and Zaw Htet Ko Ko belong to, started the 2007 protests the month before. Those protests later became known as the "Saffron Revolution", after the AMBA mobilised tens of thousands of monks to join the protests.

After his arrest on 4 November 2007, U Gambira was forcibly disrobed and sentenced in an unfair, closed trial in Yangon's Insein Prison. In Insein Prison, U Gambira was denied medical attention despite suffering from bronchitis and asthma. He was placed in solitary confinement on 13 January 2009, and his health deteriorated further when he staged a hunger strike to call on the ruling military government to release the detained pro-democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners, as well as to start a dialogue and a national reconciliation process with the country's opposition groups.

U Gambira was transferred from Insein prison to Hkamti prison in Sagaing Division shortly afterwards on 18 January 2009. At Hkamti Prison, he endured sustained torture and other forms of ill-treatment. He was handcuffed and his ankles were shackled. He was also subjected to regular beatings and his mouth was stuffed with cloth to silence him. He was also denied food and water for several days. When he was transferred to Kale prison on 13 May 2009, U Gambira was so weak that he was unable to speak.

As a founding member of the 88 Generation Students group, Min Ko Naing has been singled out for harsh treatment and is allowed out of his cell far less than other prisoners. Before he was transferred to Kengtong prison in Shan State in north-eastern Myanmar, he had spent more than a year in Yangon's Insein prison where he was held in solitary confinement for over 23 hours each day. Min Ko Naing was arrested on 21 August 2007, two days after leading a peaceful march in Yangon, to protest at increased fuel prices.

Min Ko Naing is one of the best-known political dissidents in Myanmar. As chair of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU) he was at the forefront of the pro-democracy uprising that took place across Myanmar in 1988. The uprising was brutally suppressed by the military junta and an estimated 3,000 people were killed and thousands more imprisoned or disappeared. For his part in the demonstrations Min Ko Naing was imprisoned for 15 years, many of them spent in solitary confinement. He was not released until 2004.

At least 220 political prisoners have been moved to remote prisons within Myanmar since October 2008, when the Myanmar government began sentencing on mass those who had peacefully taken part in the August – September 2007 anti-government protests. The remote locations make it difficult for families to visit their relatives in prison and provide them with basic food, medicine and clothing.

In the absence of regular contact between political prisoners and their families, and of independent monitoring of prisoners' welfare, individuals are even more vulnerable to harsh prison conditions which amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The International Committee of the Red Cross has not been able to visit prisons in Myanmar since the end of 2005.

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