

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 65/95 Ill-treatment / Fear of Torture

15 March 1995

**MYANMAR50 students, including Moe Myat Thu, Mo Maung Maung, Maung Maung Win, Maung Maung Oo, Cho Nwe Oo (f), Yi Yi Tun (f), Aye Aye Moe (f), Moe Kalayar Oo (f), Ni Ni (f)**

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Amnesty International is gravely concerned for the safety of some 50 young pro-democracy activists who were arrested on 20 February 1995 in the capital, Yangon (formerly Rangoon). According to reports, Maung Maung Oo and Moe Myat Thu were badly beaten by members of Military Intelligence at the time of their arrest. Amnesty International has no further information about where the 50 are being detained or the conditions of their detention.

The young people were arrested during the funeral of U Nu, who was Myanmar's first prime minister. A former prisoner of conscience, he was held under house arrest from 1989 until 1992. The young people gathered peacefully at the site of his funeral procession and shouted slogans, and then were apparently arrested. Amnesty International urgently calls on the military authorities to ensure that none of these activists are tortured or ill-treated while in detention.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Moe Myat Thu and Maung Maung Oo, both students, were arrested previously in 1989 during the pro-democracy movement. Moe Myat Thu was a close associate of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, prisoner of conscience and 1991 Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Ni Ni had also been previously arrested and is the sister of Ko Phone Maw, the first student to be killed in the 1988 mass demonstrations protesting 26 years of one party-military rule in Myanmar. Moe Kalayar Oo, Aye Aye Moe, Yi Yi Tun, Cho Nwe Oo, Maung Maung Win, and Moe Maung Maung are all students in Yangon.

The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC, Myanmar's military authorities) took power following the violent suppression of widespread pro-democracy demonstrations in 1988. Hundreds of people were arrested and imprisoned for taking part in the demonstrations. General elections held in 1990 resulted in an overwhelming victory for the National League for Democracy, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's political party. However the SLORC refused to hand over power and has continued to rule by decree since 1988. The rights to freedom of expression and assembly are severely curtailed in Myanmar, and anyone expressing opposition to the SLORC is at risk of arrest. Although many political prisoners have been released since 1992, hundreds remain in prison, including some five political activists who were arrested in July and August 1994 and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Since 1988, Amnesty International has received many extensive reports of torture and ill-treatment in Myanmar's prisons.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:**

- expressing concern at the ill-treatment of Moe Myat Thu and Maung Maung Oo;
- seeking assurances that the treatment of the 50 activists conforms to international standards, and that they be given access to their families, lawyers and medical personnel;
- urging that they be promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence, or released.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) Chairman of the State Law and Order Restoration Council,  
General Than Shwe

c/o Ministry of Defence  
Signal Pagoda Road  
Yangon, Union of Myanmar

**Telegrams: General Than Shwe, Yangon, Myanmar**

**Telexes: 21316**

**Salutation: Dear General**

2) Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Secretary 1  
State Law and Order Restoration Council

c/o Ministry of Defence  
Signal Pagoda Road  
Yangon, Union of Myanmar

**Telegrams: Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Yangon, Myanmar**

**Salutation: Dear General**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:** to diplomatic representatives of Myanmar accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 April 1995.