

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 16/005/2006

18 May 2006

Further Information on UA 15/06 (ASA 16/001/2006, 20 January 2006) and follow-up (ASA 16/003/2006, 1 March 2006) – Possible "disappearance"/Fear of torture/Arbitrary detention

MYANMAR/	Chit Thein Tun (m), aged 42, liaison officer of Burmese Solidarity Organization (BSO)
INDIA	Ma Hnin Hnin (f), aged 24, wife of Chit Thein Tun Maung Maung Oo (m), aged 40, BSO representative
	Ko Po Zaw (m), aged about 23, rice trader Ma Aye Myint Ma (f), aged about 19, rice trader, wife of Ko Po Zaw

Chit Thein Tun and Maung Maung Oo are now known to have been sentenced to death for "high treason". They are in solitary confinement, in Mandalay Prison. They are not known to have received any visits.

Myanmar is not known to have carried out any executions in recent years and is considered abolitionist in practice on the death penalty. In December 2003, the Myanmar authorities told Amnesty International that they would not carry out any executions (of the approximately 200 people then on death row).

Ko Po Zaw, his wife Ma Aye Myint Ma and Chit Thein Tun's wife Ma Hnin Hnin have been sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

No details of their trial proceedings, or when they were sentenced, are available.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Chit Thein Tun and Maung Maung Oo were members of the outlawed All Burma Students Democratic Front. They were arrested in connection with two explosions at Nanthphalon market in Tamu on 8 January (a town near the Indian border in Sagaing Division) which reportedly killed one person. Before they were arrested, they had been living as refugees in Moreh, northwestern India, and working for the Burmese Solidarity Organization (BSO), which provides support to Burmese refugees in India.

The Myanmar Minister for Information said at a 22 February press conference Chit Thein Tun and Maung Maung Oo had confessed that Maung Maung Oo had been involved in planting explosives concealed inside a cassette player and a radio. He also said the explosions had been intended to harm cross-border trade between Myanmar and India.

Prison conditions in Myanmar are poor, and prisoners often have health problems exacerbated by inadequate prison diet and medical treatment. The Myanmar authorities have not allowed the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit any prisons since late 2005.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:

To the Myanmar authorities, in Burmese or your own language:

- urging the authorities to give Chit Thein Tun, Maung Maung Oo, Ko Po Zaw, Ma Aye Myint Ma and Ma Hnin Hnin immediate access to lawyers of their own choosing, their families and any medical attention they may require;
- expressing concern that Chit Thein Tun and Maung Maung Oo are reportedly in prolonged solitary confinement, which is contrary to international standards on the treatment of prisoners;
- urging the authorities not to execute Chit Thein Tun and Maung Maung Oo;
- expressing concern that Chit Thein Tun and Maung Maung Oo were reportedly abducted from India, and urging the authorities to allow them to return to India.

To the Indian authorities, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern at the reported abduction of Burmese refugees Maung Maung Oo and Chit Thein Tun from Indian territory;
- calling on the authorities to investigate this incident and bring those responsible to justice;
- urging them to ask the Myanmar authorities to immediately return Maung Maung Oo and Chit Thein Tun, who have been sentenced to death in Myanmar, to India.

APPEALS TO:

General Than Shwe

Minister of Defence/Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council
c/o Ministry of Defence, Ahlanpya Phaya Street, Yangon, Union of Myanmar

Salutation: Dear General

Shivraj Patil

Minister of Home Affairs

Government of India, 104-107 North Block, New Delhi 110 001, India

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Major General Maung Oo

Minister of Home Affairs and chairman of the Myanmar Human Rights Committee
Ministry of Home Affairs, Corner of Saya San Street and No 1 Industrial Street,
Yankin Township, Yangon, Union of Myanmar

B. Ahamed

Minister of State for External Affairs, 172 South Block, New Delhi 11001, India

Fax: + 91 112 309 4221

COPIES TO:

Major General Maung Oo

Minister of Home Affairs and chairman of the Myanmar Human Rights Committee
Ministry of Home Affairs, Corner of Saya San Street and No 1 Industrial Street,
Yankin Township, Yangon, Union of Myanmar

and 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 29 June 2006.