

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

**AI Index: ASA 16/08/94
Distr: UA/SC**

UA 272/94

Fear of torture

18 July 1994

MYANMAR

Khin Zaw Win, student

Khin Zaw Win has not been seen since 4 July 1994, when he was reportedly arrested by members of Military Branch Three at Yangon (Rangoon) airport as he tried to board a plane bound for Singapore. It is not known where he is being held, or whether he has been charged with any offence. Amnesty International fears that he may be tortured in incommunicado detention.

Khin Zaw Win, a student known to have close links with political opposition groups in Myanmar, had been studying in Singapore on a Singapore government scholarship. His thesis topic was the political situation in Myanmar, and he had returned to his home country in order to carry out further academic research. At the time of his arrest, it is likely that he was carrying many documents relating to the political opposition movement in Myanmar.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Myanmar government, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) 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, but the SLORC refused to hand over power. Since then, the SLORC has ruled by decree, and issued martial law orders to impose restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression and assembly. These decrees have been used to detain people considered to be a political threat to the SLORC. Although there were many releases in 1992 and 1993, hundreds of political prisoners remain in detention, and in the last 12 months, there have been several arrests of prominent opposition politicians and activists. In October 1993, a group of young people with whom Khin Zaw Win was known to have close links were sentenced to prison terms of up to 20 years. Since 1988, Amnesty International has received many reports of ill-treatment and torture in Myanmar prisons.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest of Khin Zaw Win, and requesting details of his whereabouts;
- seeking assurances that his treatment in detention conforms to international standards, and that he be given access to his family, lawyer, and to medical personnel;
- urging that he be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence, or released.

APPEALS TO

1. General Than Shwe
Chairman
State Law and Order Restoration Council
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 Lieutenant General

3. General Maung Aye
Vice Chairman
State Law and Order Restoration Council
c/o Ministry of Defence
Signal Pagoda Road
Yangon, Union of Myanmar

Telegrams: General Maung Aye, Yangon, Myanmar

Salutation: Dear General

U Ohn Gyaw
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Prome Court
Prome Road
Yangon, Union of Myanmar

Faxes: +95 1 229 50

Telexes: 21313 MOFARN BM

Telegrams: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES 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 August 1994.