

URGENT ACTION

IMPRISONED ACTIVIST NEEDS URGENT MEDICAL CARE

Ko Mya Aye, a pro-democracy activist imprisoned in Myanmar, is in urgent need of medical treatment for a heart condition. The authorities have so far failed to provide the treatment he requires. He is being held in Taungyi prison, Shan state, in northern Myanmar, far from emergency medical treatment facilities, and hundreds of kilometres from his family.

According to a reliable source, **Ko Mya Aye**, a 44-year old prisoner of conscience, appears to be suffering from angina, a serious heart condition. This has worsened in recent months. In addition, he suffers from hypertension (high blood pressure) and gastric problems. He has not received adequate medical treatment for these conditions.

Prior to 9 April 2010, Ko Mya Aye was held in Loikaw prison in Karenni State, eastern Myanmar, far away from any emergency medical care facilities. Instead of transferring him to a less remote prison closer to cities where he could seek treatment in public hospitals, and where he could be closer to his family, the authorities transferred him to Taungyi prison. Poor conditions in the prison are also exacerbating Ko Mya Aye's ill health. He is being held in a cell with prisoners sentenced to death, and is only allowed to leave his cell to use the toilet. There is no toilet or running water in his cell. Ko Mya Aye is known to have been tortured in the past.

Ko Mya Aye was arrested on 22 August 2007 along with other members of the group of pro-democracy activists known as the 88 Generation Students, after they had peacefully protested against recent increases in fuel prices. In the six weeks that followed, large-scale anti-government demonstrations erupted across Myanmar, the largest protests against the military government since 1988. He was sentenced to 65 years and six months in prison in a closed trial. He had previously been in prison between 1989 and 1996, after he took part in the 1988 pro-democracy demonstrations as a student leader.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to ensure that Ko Mya Aye is immediately given the necessary medical treatment and care for his health problems;
- Calling on the authorities to guarantee Ko Mya Aye access to close medical monitoring for his heart condition and for Ko Mya Aye to be seen by a heart specialist;
- Urging the authorities to improve the conditions in which he is held, including access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities;
- Calling on the authorities to release Ko Mya Aye unconditionally as soon as he has received the urgent medical treatment that he requires.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 JUNE 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 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 arbitrary use of repressive laws and practices to criminalise peaceful political dissent in Myanmar. Fundamental rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly are severely curtailed. There are nearly 2,200 political prisoners in Myanmar, almost double the number before the peaceful anti-government demonstrations of August- September 2007. Many who took part in the demonstrations were arrested and sentenced to lengthy jail terms.

Political prisoners in Myanmar are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment and many are held in poor conditions which do not meet the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. Access to medical treatment is severely limited, and in many cases prison conditions contribute to or exacerbate ill health. The poor conditions and inadequate medical care in Myanmar's prisons mean that political prisoners often rely on family members to provide them with basic medicines, food and clothing. Yet many political prisoners have been transferred to remote prisons, making it much more difficult for their families to visit them. Many family members must undertake long journeys – in some cases up to nine days – to visit their relatives in prison. 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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