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First UA: 38/24 Index: ASA 16/8003/2024 Myanmar of April 30, 2024

MYANMAR HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS FOR THET HNIN AUNG

Thet Hnin Aung, a prominent trade union leader, was sentenced to seven years in prison with hard labour following a secret trial and after five months of being forcibly disappeared. His arrest occurred on the same day that he was released from prison, after serving a two-year sentence (2021-2023) for his activism in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Thet Hnin Aung has ongoing health concerns that require daily medication. There are grave fears for his well-being as he has already endured torture and other ill-treatment during his prior imprisonment. The Myanmar military must immediately and unconditionally release Thet Hnin Aung.

Write to the Head of the Myanmar Military urging him to:

- Guarantee immediate access to necessary medical care for Thet Hnin Aung.
- Immediately and unconditionally release Thet Hnin Aung from arbitrary detention and allow him to freely exercise his human rights.
- End the practice of enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention and disclose the fate and/or whereabouts of forcibly disappeared people.
- Ensure respect for the human rights of everyone in the country including the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association.

Write to:

Head of the Myanmar Military, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing
Defense Services Commander-in-Chief's Office
Ministry of Defense Tatmadaw,
Information Technology Department, Office No.3
15015, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
cincdsmyanmar@gmail.com

Salutation: Dear Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

And copy:

Mrs. May Thazin Tun
Counsellor & Chargé d'affaires, a.i.
Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
336 Island Park Drive
Ottawa, ON K1Y 0A7
Tel: (613) 232-9990 Fax: (613) 232-6999
Email: meottawa@rogers.com

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Thet Hnin Aung, a union leader for MICS TUsF (Myanmar Industries, Crafts and Services Trade Unions Federation), actively worked to improve worker conditions in Myanmar. In 2021, he was charged under Article 17/1 of the local "Unlawful Association Law" due to his participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement and was sentenced to two years in prison. He served time in Insein Prison in Yangon and Zaymathwe Prison in Mon State, being released on June 26, 2023.

Upon release, while completing paperwork with two other prisoners, he was abducted by soldiers, hooded, and taken away in a military vehicle. His family, informed by a witness, learned of his abduction the day he was supposed to meet them at the township's police station. When his family attempted to inquire at a military base in Paung, Mon State, soldiers threatened them and blocked access.

After five months of silence, in November 2023, Thet Hnin Aung resurfaced in Insein Prison, showing signs of torture. During his disappearance, he was tried and sentenced in absentia to seven years with hard labour under Article 52a, a counter-terrorism charge, marking a severe sentence for a labour activist linked to his activism and role in the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Since the military coup on February 1, 2021, led by the State Administration Council (SAC), Myanmar has seen significant human rights violations. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) reports over 26,242 arrests, with at least four executions and 123 death sentences. Sixteen labour organizations were declared illegal on March 2, 2021. Systematic abuses by the junta include airstrikes, village burnings, torture, and arbitrary killings, worsening in 2024 with the imposition of an enforced conscription law, escalating instability and increasing the number of refugees.

Despite severe repression, the people of Myanmar continue to demonstrate courage and solidarity, demanding respect for their rights and documenting military crimes. It is crucial for the international community to support these civil society actors in their efforts.

Please take action as soon as possible until June 24, 2024! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.