



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

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AAPP has grave concerns for NLD member denied urgent medical treatment

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The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) has grave concerns for political prisoner, Ko Min Aung, after learning he has been denied urgent medical care for the past 11 months despite suffering from heart disease.

Ko Min Aung, Taungup NLD treasurer aged 37, is just three years into a 17 year sentence for his involvement in the 2007 Saffron Revolution. He is currently incarcerated in the remote Kale prison, approximately 756 kilometers away from his family who live in Taungup Township in Arakan State. Since his arrest in 2007, Ko Min Aung has been arbitrarily transferred on four separate occasions to different detention facilities across Burma.

“The military regime of Burma routinely sends political prisoners to prisons far away from their families, despite the existence of prisons significantly closer to their homes. This is a strategy employed by the regime to breakdown the resolve of political prisoners by removing the support provided to them by their families. In the case Ko Min Aung it is having a devastating impact on his health”, says AAPP Joint Secretary Ko Bo Kyi.

Under international human rights law prisoners, like all people, enjoy the right to the highest attainable standard of health. Prison authorities must take practical measures to protect the health of persons deprived of their liberty.

“In Burma political prisoners are deliberately denied treatment for serious medical problems, many of which are caused and then exacerbated by the conditions of detention. In this context families provide a vital lifeline to prisoners; a lifeline severed by prison transfers. Failure to provide adequate health care or medical treatment to detainees in prison, can contribute to conditions amounting to torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, as is the case with Ko Min Aung”, Ko Bo Kyi says.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners can confirm that there are over 150 political prisoners currently in poor health due to torture, harsh prison conditions, transfers to remote prisons where there are no doctors, and the denial of proper medical care. Among them are two of Burma’s longest serving political prisoners, NLD members Thant Zaw and Nyi

Nyi Oo, who have been unlawfully detained for the past 22 years after being falsely accused of involvement in a bomb explosion in Rangoon, in 1989. Nyi Nyi Oo is in a critical condition after suffering a stroke and has acute high blood pressure.

Ko Min Ko Naing, Burma's most famous student leader, serving a 65 year and 6 month sentence in solitary confinement, is also in poor health and in need of urgent medical assistance. In an addition to suffering from osteoporosis his heart is becoming weaker.

"Ko Min Aung and Burma's other critically ill political prisoners are in prison for their peaceful political activities and human rights advocacy. They should never have been imprisoned in the first place. If they are not granted urgent medical care they will likely die in prison. Does the 'new' military government of Burma want their deaths on its hands? ", Ko Bo Kyi says.

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