


Political Prisoner Profile

AAPP CASE NO.:	159			
NAME OF POLITICAL PRISONER:	Myo Min Zaw			
GENDER:	Male	ETHNICITY:	Burmese	
DATE OF BIRTH:	1976	AGE:	22 at time of detention	
RELIGION:				
PARENTS NAME:	U Soe Myint			
EDUCATION:	Student (2nd year student, studying English at Hlaing College in Rangoon University, located in Hlaing Township, Rangoon Division), at the time of his detention.			
OCCUPATION:	Student			
LAST ADDRESS:	Arzarny Street, Bahan Township, Rangoon Division.			
ARREST DATE:	14-Sep-98	PHOTO DATE:		
SECTION OF LAW:	5(j), 17/20			
SENTENCING HISTORY:	52 years			
COURT HEARING:				
NAME OF PRISON:	Putao Prison, Kachin State			
RELEASE DATE:				
IMMEDIATE HEALTH CONCERNS:				
CURRENT STATUS SUMMARY:	Myo Min Zaw was studying English in his second year at Rangoon University at the time of his arrest in September 1998, and has now been in detention for over 3 years.			
CAREER BACKGROUND:	<p>In 1996, Myo Min Zaw was a second year student majoring in English in Hlaing College, Rangoon University. He became actively involved in the 1996 December students' demonstration. When all the universities were closed down, he and other students continuously met and discussed issues concerning politics, economics, education and student rights.</p> <p>In 1998, he set up a study group, the Student and Youth United Front, of which he became the chairperson. It was at this time that he took the name Moe Hein Aung, as he was participating in preparing for the upcoming student movement and distributing statements by the SYUF.</p> <p>Myo Min Zaw was the leader of the student demonstration that broke out at Hledan junction in Rangoon on 24 August 1998. The main slogans during the August and September demonstrations were as follows: (1) We call for the immediate convening of parliament; (2) The people's government is our government (3) We don't want the military regime.</p> <p>Before the three slogans were chosen, decisions were made to spread the movement all over Rangoon and to initiate demonstrations in other towns. Myo Min Zaw, therefore, was an important target for military intelligence (MI). He was arrested when MI finally tracked him down in September 1998.</p> <p>He is a Burmese student leader, and was an active organiser in pro-democracy demonstrations during 1998 in Burma through two student union groups (the "All Burma Federation of Student Unions" (ABFSU) and the</p>			

Student and Youth Union Front “SYUF”). The ABFSU and some other student union organizations have been classed as "illegal organizations" because they have refused to register with the Burmese authorities.

The second Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Burma, Judge Rajsoomer Lallah, recorded in respect of this prisoner, at paragraph 18 of his 1999 Report A/54/440 to the United Nations, as follows:-

“18. Myo Min Zaw was a second year English student. He was arrested with 300 other students, during the demonstrations of June-September 1998. Myo Min Zaw was arrested in the street on 14 September 1998 and accused of agitating unrest. He was reportedly sentenced to 38 years imprisonment, subsequently increased to 52 years. Myo Min Zan is now being held in Pathein/Bassein prison, having been transported there in April/May 1999 along with other prisoners.”

Amnesty International regards this prisoner as a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for his non-violent political beliefs.

ARREST DETAILS:

Myo Min Zaw was arrested on 14 September 1998, while he was meeting with other student activists somewhere within Kyanktada Township, Rangoon Division. Military Intelligence personnel is believed to have carried out the arrest.

He was arrested outside a tea shop in Yangon with Ko Aye Aung. They both are reported to have been beaten at the time of their arrest and during interrogation. Myo Min Zaw was reportedly tried in a group of 50 students, in a closed trial for ten days in Insein prison, the main prison where political prisoners are held in Yangon. The group was believed to not have had access to lawyers, and when they asked prison officials and the presiding judge for a lawyer the request was ignored. The prisoners were denied the right to speak in their own defence. The fairness of the trial was further compromised by the authorities having given a press conference shortly after their arrest, in which the authorities claimed that the demonstrations were intended to create unrest.

They were all given the maximum sentences possible under security legislation and the Burmese laws on publication which in part require that leaflets must be approved by the official censor. In common with other cases of political prisoners their sentences have been applied cumulatively resulting in very long terms of imprisonment. (<http://www.worcester-amnesty.org.uk/page3.htm>, 2010)

DETAILS OF IMPRISONMENT:

Myo Min Zaw was originally sentenced to a term of 38 years in prison. While in prison, he was given an additional 14 years imprisonment, increasing the term of imprisonment to **52 years** in total.

He is presently at Bassein (Pathein) Prison, located in East Bassein Township, Irrawaddy (Ayeyarwady) Division, Burma. It is believed that the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), or the Military Intelligence on its behalf, ordered the detention. The reasons for the detentions is believed to be for organising and participating in non-violent student demonstrations (i.e. protests) in December 1996 and in June-September 1998; for distributing some written statements among the people, especially to students. The source understands that one of his statements mentioned that the students supported the demand of the National League for Democracy (a political party, which won the 1990 election in Burma) and other parties that the Parliament which was elected by the people in democratic elections which were held in Burma in May 1990 be allowed by the Burmese military (SPDC) to convene; and for asking the authorities for the freedom of the student union and student movement, and for civil and political rights for the people of Burma not to be fettered.

During his imprisonment, he was taken to an interrogation center where he was reportedly tortured in many severe ways. At the news conference of the military government held in October 1998, Myo Min Zaw was

accused of being the chief organizer of riots in cooperation with the All Burma Federation of Students' Union (ABFSU). He was sentenced to 38 years imprisonment without any representation. According to the Burmese Jail Manual, which was in force during the rule of British Colonial days, all prisoners have the right to parole for one third of the given prison term. However, no parole has been allowed and recently his sentence has been extended in 52 years.

This profile was prepared by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) on 3 June 2010.