


Political Prisoner Profile

AAPP CASE NO.:	157			
NAME OF POLITICAL PRISONER:	Sithu Zeya			
GENDER:	Male	Ethnicity:	Burmese	
DATE OF BIRTH:	Jan 16 1990	Age:	21	
RELIGION:	Buddhist			
PARENTS NAME:	Father; U Zeya			
EDUCATION:	BSC Biology student			
OCCUPATION:	Democratic Voice of Burma Photo Journalist			
LAST ADDRESS:	Mingalar Taung Nyunt			
ARREST DATE:	20 April 2010		PHOTO DATE:	
SECTION OF LAW:	Unlawful Association Act 17/1, Immigration Act 13/1			
SENTENCING HISTORY:	Sentenced on 23 December 2010 under the above charges			
COURT HEARING:	Mingalar Taung Nyunt Township Court			
NAME OF PRISON:	Insein			
RELEASE DATE:				
IMMEDIATE HEALTH CONCERNS:				
CURRENT STATUS SUMMARY:				
<p>On 17 January 2011 reports revealed that DVB reporter, Sithu Zeya, had been place in solitary confinement after failing to understand prison regulations. He was taken out of his isolation cell every 15 minutes and forced to squat and crawling because he did not know the prison regulations. This lasted for at least 9 days.</p> <p>17 political prisoners who shared the same cell-block with Sithu Zeya whilst he was detained in cell block 4 in Insein Prison have begun demonstrations on his behalf.</p> <p>“The political prisoners...are now refusing to stand to attention, a daily routine in the prison every dusk and dawn,” said a source. “If their demands are not met in the next three days, they will shave their heads in protest, which is against prison regulations. They have informed the prison authorities that if shaving their heads doesn’t work, then they will go on hunger strike.”</p> <p>Sithu Zeya’s father, Maung Maung Zeya, who was also arrested alongside his son in April 2010 for taking photos at the scene of the water festival bombing in Rangoon, is still awaiting trial and was informed in January 2011 that he could be released if he agrees to reveal information about DVB reporters working inside Burma.</p>				
CAREER BACKGROUND:				
Prior to his arrest Sithu Zeya was working for Democratic Voice of Burma as a Photo Journalist and was studying biology at university.				
ARREST DETAILS:				
During the Burmese water festival, on the 15 April 2010, bombs went off at a stadium in Rangoon killing 10 and injuring 168. Sithu Zeya was arrested on 20 April 2010 for taking photos at the scene of the incident.				

DETAILS OF IMPRISONMENT:

During interrogation Sithu Zeya's mother reported that he had been beaten and denied food.

On 23 December 2010, Sithu Zeya was sentenced to 8 years imprisonment for illegally crossing the border and association with an unlawful organization. However, he may face further charges under the Elections Act, which can result in up to 20 years in prison. Aung Thein, Sithu Zeya's legal advisor, has since highlighted that none of the charges were supported by strong evidence.

“The prosecutors couldn't provide any independent evidence for the accusations on [Sithu Zeya's] illegal border crossing and contact with the individuals of the so-called 'unlawful association.' The verdict was based on informal confession results from torturing the accused while he was under interrogation.”

After the sentencing Sithu Zeya's mother stated “I am sad that he's now ended up in prison for taking some photos. He just finished school and had not even started working yet. He is interested in journalism, that the only thing I know.”

This profile was prepared by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) on 24 January 2011.