


Political Prisoner Profile

AAPP CASE NO.:	0114			
NAME OF POLITICAL PRISONER:	Thiha Thet Zin			
GENDER:	Male			
DATE OF BIRTH:	6 January 1978	AGE:	31 in 2009	
RELIGION:				
PARENTS NAME:	U Tin Hla			
EDUCATION:				
OCCUPATION:	Battery Service			
LAST ADDRESS:	Bogale Township, Irrawaddy Division			
ARREST DATE:	11 September 2007			
SECTION OF LAW:	Penal Code Section 505(b); Unlawful Association Act of 1908, Section 17(1); Printers and Publishers Registration Law, Sections 17 and 20; and Law Amending the Myanmar Immigration (Emergency Provisions) Act of 1947, Law No. 2/90, Section 13(1)			
SENTENCING HISTORY:	18 years total (8 years on 11 November 2008 and 10 years 18 November 2008)			
COURT HEARING:				
NAME OF PRISON:	Myitkyina Prison, Kachin State			
RELEASE DATE:				
IMMEDIATE HEALTH CONCERNS:				
CURRENT STATUS SUMMARY:				
<p>Thiha Thet Zin is a 31-year-old man who is now serving an 18-year sentence at Myitkyina Prison for his involvement in the 2007 Saffron Revolution protests against the military regime. <i>(See details below.)</i></p> <p>Prison Transfer History:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thiha Thet Zin was originally held at Insein Prison in Rangoon Division for over one year. • On 20 November 2008, days after receiving an 18-year prison sentence, Thiha Thet Zin was transferred to Kengtung Prison in Shan State. (AAPP Chronology 20Nov2008) • On 1 December 2008, just over a week later, Thiha Thet Zin was transferred again to Myitkyina Prison in Kachin State in northern Burma. (Irrawaddy 01Dec2008) <p>Myitkyina Prison in far north Burma's Kachin State is approximately 1,640 kilometers (1,019 miles) away from his family and friends in Bogale Township of Irrawaddy Division. Transferring political prisoners to distant prisons is one of the tactics used by the regime to further punish prisoners and increase the burden on their families and friends who provide necessary medicines, food, and other support.</p> <p>When Cyclone Nargis hit Burma's Irrawaddy Delta on 2-3 May 2008, it killed an estimated 140,000 people. During the cyclone, Thiha Thet Zin was detained at Insein Prison while awaiting his prison sentence. He was informed of the tragic news that eight out of nine of his family members—including his son, his parents, his grandmother, and all his siblings—were swept away by Cyclone Nargis. His wife is the only surviving member of his family. (Irrawaddy 30May2008)</p>				
CAREER BACKGROUND:				
<p>According to a report from Burma's military government, Thiha Thet Zin was involved in a group called the Forum for Democracy in Burma (FDB). The regime stated that FDB was formed on 26 February 2004 in Maesot, Thailand, when exiled activists got together to form an anti-government coalition for the purpose of creating unrest in Burma by infiltrating government institutions (e.g., military, police force, USDA, fire brigade, etc), planting informers to extract information, and organizing protests. The FDB was said to have coordinated workers, farmers, monks, ethnic groups, students, and other pro-democracy activists to conduct</p>				

3- to 5-day trainings on political defiance, community organization, human rights, leadership, and underground movements at an office in Maesot, Thailand. The military report stated that Thiha Thet Zin, a worker in the battery industry, was among a number of private enterprise workers who attended the FDB trainings across the border in Mae Sot, Thailand. (Permanent Mission of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, Switzerland, 03Dec2007)

ARREST DETAILS:

Thiha Thet Zin was arrested on 11 September 2007 during his participation in what became known as the Saffron Revolution.* He was arrested along with 18 other activists; ten of the 19 activists were eventually released, while Thiha Thet Zin was charged in conjunction with the remaining eight activists. (Democratic Voice of Burma 08Oct2008)

** The Saffron Revolution was named after the color of the monks' robes who led many of the peaceful marches in August and September of 2007. It was a multi-day series of demonstrations that spread throughout Burma to protest the military regime's economic mismanagement and the falling standard of living. In August 2007 the regime abruptly removed fuel subsidies, causing fuel prices to skyrocket between 100% and 500% overnight. This consequently led to a dramatic increase in the prices of transportation and general commodities. Throughout the protests activists were arrested, and beginning on 26 September 2007 the military used force with a violent crackdown on the protestors and the monks to end the demonstrations.*

DETAILS OF IMPRISONMENT:

- Court Location: Sanchaung Township Court within the Insein Prison compound
- Judge: Win Myint, Township Judge (Special power)
- Prosecutor: Police Lieutenant Major Myo Thant
- Defense Lawyers: U Aung Thein and U Khin Maung Shein

ORIGINAL TRIAL: Beginning on 19 March 2008 Thiha Thet Zin was tried at Sanchaung Township Court concurrently with eight other activists who were all being detained at Insein Prison. They were being charged with "illegal border crossing, attending training given by subversive organisations, defaming the state, and violations of the printing act." (DVB 08Oct2008) According to AAPP's *The Future in the Dark* (Sept 2008), the nine co-defendants were as follows:

- Aung Myo Paing (a.k.a. Ahyoe): Male, son of U Thein Aung, second year physics student. Lives in Tamwe Township, Rangoon, was arrested on 15 September 2007.
- Myat Lin Htut (a.k.a. Pyaung Gyi): Male, 28-year old, son of U Than Way, student from Bassein (Patheingyi) University. Lives in Bogale Township, Irrawaddy, was arrested on 17 September 2007.
- Nay Lin Aung (a.k.a. Lin Lin): Male, 28-year old, son of U Aung Than, second year psychology student. Lives in Pantanaw Township, Irrawaddy Division, was arrested on 15 September 2007.
- Phyto Maung Maung Soe (a.k.a. Phyto Gyi): Male, 28-year old, son of U Khin Soe, final year law student. Lives in Sanchaung Township, Rangoon, was arrested at Aung Mingala Bus Station on 11 September 2007.
- Pyae Phyto Aung (a.k.a. Hnan Muu): Male, 21-year old, son of U Thauung Han, graduated from Government Technological College. Lives in Bessein Township, Irrawaddy, was arrested on 15 September 2007.
- Pyae Phyto Hlaing (a.k.a. Ah Thay Lay): Male, 27-year old, son of U Chit Hlaing, second year psychology student. Lives in Sanchaung Township, Rangoon, was arrested on 11 September 2007.
- Thein Zaw: Male, son of U Zaw Win, student and NLD member. Lives in Bogale Township, Irrawaddy, was arrested on 11 September 2007.
- Thiha Aung (a.k.a. Aung Aung): Male, 25-year old, son of U Cho Oo, second year business management student. Lives in Bogale Township, Irrawaddy, was arrested on 13 September 2007.
- **Thiha Thet Zin:** Male, 30-year old, son of U Tin Hla. Lives in Bogale Township, Irrawaddy Division, was arrested on 11 September 2007.

On 8 October 2008 Democratic Voice of Burma reported that the group of nine co-defendants decided not to enter a defense during their trial and also dismissed their two defense lawyers in protest at the unfairness of their legal proceedings. Defense lawyer Khin Maung Shein said, "Their demands are to be allowed to see

their family members and for their family to be permitted to attend their court hearings, to receive a fair trial, and for the authorities not to interfere with the judicial process."

On 11 November 2008 the nine activists received prison sentences ranging from eight years to 24 years under the following laws:

1. Law Amending the Myanmar Immigration (Emergency Provisions) Act of 1947, Law No. 2/90, Section 13(1) – Crossing an international border without permission (*5 years + labor*)
 - 9 Men Convicted: Aung Myo Paing, Myat Lin Htut, Nay Lin Aung, Phyo Maung Maung Soe, Pyae Phyo Aung, Pyae Phyo Hlaing, Thein Zaw, Thiha Aung, and **Thiha Thet Zin**
2. Unlawful Association Act of 1908, Section 17(1) – For participating in an unlawful association (*3 Years + labor*)
 - 9 Men Convicted: Aung Myo Paing, Myat Lin Htut, Nay Lin Aung, Phyo Maung Maung Soe, Pyae Phyo Aung, Pyae Phyo Hlaing, Thein Zaw, Thiha Aung, and **Thiha Thet Zin**
3. Penal Code, Section 505(b) – Statements conducing to public mischief (*2 years + labor*)
 - 6 Men Convicted: Aung Myo Paing, Myat Lin Htut, Phyo Maung Maung Soe, Pyae Phyo Aung, Pyae Phyo Hlaing, and Thiha Aung
4. 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration Law, as amended in 1989 by Law No. 16/89, Section 17 – For engaging in a printing enterprise or a publishing business before obtaining a registration certificate from the Central Registration Board (*7 Years + labor*)
 - 2 Men Convicted: Nay Lin Aung and Pyae Phyo Hlaing
5. 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration Law, as amended in 1989 by Law No. 16/89, Section 20 – For not complying with any portion of instructions of the Printers and Publishers Registration Law (*7 Years + labor*)
 - 2 Men Convicted: Nay Lin Aung and Pyae Phyo Hlaing

SUBSEQUENT TRIAL: One week after the initial sentencing, Thiha Thet Zin and his cousin Thein Zaw were both taken back to court on additional charges of crossing an international border without permission; Thiha Thet Zin was charged with two counts, and Thein Zaw was charged with one count of violating the law. **On 18 November 2008 Thiha Thet Zin was sentenced to 10 additional years in prison (5 years for each charge) and Thein Zaw received 5 additional years under the following law:**

1. Law Amending the Myanmar Immigration (Emergency Provisions) Act of 1947, Law No. 2/90, Section 13(1) – Crossing an international border without permission (*5 years + labor*)

In total, the lengthy prison sentences received by the nine co-defendants were as follows:

- 24 Years: Pyae Phyo Hlaing
- 22 Years: Nay Lin Aung
- **18 Years: Thiha Thet Zin**
- 13 Years: Thein Zaw
- 10 Years: Myat Lin Htut, Pyae Phyo Aung, Aung Myo Paing, Phyo Maung Maung Soe, and Thiha Aung

This profile was prepared by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) on 26 January 2009 and updated on 2 December 2009.