



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

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Political Prisoners' Rights Group: “Torture is state policy in Burma”

[Mae Sot, Thailand] The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) (AAPP) today strongly condemned the widespread ongoing use of torture against political detainees in Burma.

New testimony from political prisoners released under a general amnesty in Burma last week underlines the systematic patterns of abuse and torture of political detainees. In an interview with exile media group *Democratic Voice of Burma*, former student leader Myo Yan Naung Thein, who was arrested in December 2007, described being kidnapped by unknown assailants, hooded, and taken to an unknown location where he was brutally beaten. He was also denied proper medical treatment and is now unable to walk as a result.

In an interview with *Radio Free Asia*, another released political prisoner and former student leader arrested in June 1998, Bo Bo – also known as Moe Kyaw Thu – described being hooded and repeatedly assaulted during interrogation.

According to AAPP, 128 political prisoners were released under the latest amnesty. But high-profile political prisoners like labour activist Su Su Nway and comedian Zarganar were not amongst those released.

Both suffer from serious heart conditions and have not received adequate medical treatment in prison.

AAPP Secretary Tate Naing said, “Denial of medical treatment is also a very cruel form of torture. For those political prisoners who are in poor health, it is a kind of death sentence.”

So far this month, AAPP has documented the arrests of 36 activists in Burma, including three monks. Those arrested include well-known individual activist and US citizen Kyaw Zaw Lwin also known as Nyi Nyi Aung, detained on 3 September on his arrival at Rangoon International Airport. He was taken to various different interrogation centres where he was kicked and beaten, deprived of food for seven days, and questioned throughout the night. His request for medical treatment for his injuries has so far been denied.

AAPP Joint-Secretary Bo Kyi said, “Even though Burmese domestic law and international law forbids torture, no officials are ever held to account for their actions. There is no doubt about it: torture is state policy in Burma. We are deeply concerned for the safety of those activists recently arrested.”

“The military regime must allow the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burma immediate and unrestricted access to the country to investigate these reports of torture,” added Bo Kyi.

Since its founding in March 2000, AAPP has documented hundreds of instances of torture experienced by political detainees. In 2005, the organization published the report *The Darkness We See: Torture in Burma’s Interrogation Centers and Prisons*.

-ENDS-

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Notes to editors:

- Sections 330 and 331 of the Myanmar Penal Code prohibit “voluntarily causing hurt to extort confession” and “voluntarily causing grievous hurt to extort confession” respectively, punishable with a prison term of up to seven years under Section 330 and up to ten years under Section 331. Section 166 of the Penal Code prohibits public servants from unlawfully injuring anyone while discharging their duties, and provides a penalty of up to one year for this offence.
- Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”
- Click here to download a political prisoner profile for Kyaw Zaw Lwin aka Nyi Nyi Aung <http://www.fbppn.net/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/Kyaw-Zaw-Lwin-aka-Nyi-Nyi-Aung-25-Sep-09.pdf>
- RFA interview with Bo Bo aka Moe Kyaw Thu (in Burmese) - http://www.rfa.org/burmese/news/political_prisoner_suffers_from_torture-09212009155159.html