



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)
နိုင်ငံရေးအကျဉ်းသားများ ကူညီစောင့်ရှောက်ရေးအသင်း (မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ)

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Summary of the current Situation

As of June's end, there are sixty-five political prisoners incarcerated in Burma, with 102 activists currently awaiting trial for political actions.

Notwithstanding the president's commitment to the release of all political prisoners by the end of 2013, the number of political incarcerations has been steadily increasing since the beginning of 2014, with a net average of six new political prisoners sentenced each month. In light of the 102 prisoners currently awaiting trial, if the current trend continues then Burma is set to see over 100 political prisoners by years end.

June, 2014

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"There can be no national reconciliation in Burma, as long as there are political prisoners"

MONTH IN REVIEW

Over the course of June, AAPP recorded the arrest of twenty-two activists, the sentencing of thirteen activists, and the release of two political prisoners. The numbers indicate that the government's trend of incarcerating political activists continues.

In addition to arrests for political activity, this month also saw a number of controversial arrests and indictments. Following the highly publicized raid of Mahasantisukha Monastery, five monks were arrested and indicted for allegedly committing religious offenses under the Penal Code. However, the prosecution has yet to allege facts that would place the monks in violation of the Penal Code. Instead, it is more plausible that the arrests are a consequence of the ownership disputes between the abbot of the monastery and the State Sangha Committee. Regardless, there have been no specific allegations of the monks engaging in illegal behavior, which lead many to believe the arrests were politically motivated.

In response to continued pressure over politically-influenced incarcerations, the legislature passed an amendment to the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act. Permission is still required to conduct a peaceful procession or assembly; however, the word "consent" shall be used in place of permission. The amendments to the law have removed sections and headers regarding the "denial" of a request to peacefully assemble. By removing sections regarding denial, the authorities are removing the sections pertaining to the right of the individual to receive notification of the denial and the sections regarding how to appeal a denial. The maximum sentences for individuals found guilty of conducting a peaceful assembly or procession without consent (Section 18), of

disturbing or harming the attendees of a peaceful assembly or procession conducted in accordance with official consent (Section 17), or of violating the rules listed in Sections 8e, 10, 11, and 12, have been reduced by half their original periods.

[\(25 June 2014 - Burmese Parliament/Burmese\)](#)
[\(25 June - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(26 June 2014 - Andolu\)](#)
[\(13 June 2014 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(16 June 2014-RFA\)](#)

DETENTIONS

88 Generation Coordinator Arrested

On May 30, the Bassein Township coordinator for the Information and Communication Committee of the 88 Generation Peace and Open Society, U Myint Ko, was arrested for filming and operating video filming business without a license. It is allegedly common practice to operate without a filming license, and his arrest raises questions about the prejudicial nature of the government's enforcement of the licensing requirement.

[\(2 June 2014 - 88 Gen\)](#)

INCARCERATIONS

Gold Miners and Activist Sentenced

On June 30, four gold miners and an activist, Ko Yarzar, were each sentenced to six months under Section 505(b) and three months under Section 143 for protests held on January 17, 2013. The four gold miners, Ko Win Aung, Ko Min Zaw Oo, Ko Myint Aung, and Ko Aung San Lin, and the activist were sentenced in Yamethin Township Court. In January, 2013, the men began protesting after the Moehtimoemi National Prosperity Company suspended them from working in its mines. In last May, ten other miners who lead the January protest were sentenced to one and a half years of hard labor for their participation in the protests.

[\(30 June 2014 - RFA\)](#)

Zaw Pe Appeals His Sentence

The DVB Reporter Zaw Pe, who was sentenced to one year imprisonment in May for trespassing and disturbing a civil servant, has appealed his sentence with the Magwe Divisional Court. Zaw Pe's attorney is optimistic about the appeal; he believes that the sentence will be reduced or dropped.

[\(25 June 2014 - DVB\)](#)

Ceremony Organizer Sentenced

Political organizer, Kyaw Hein, was sentenced to choose either one month imprisonment or a 10,000 kyat fine for arranging a preaching ceremony in Shwe Pyi Thar without receiving prior permission. The organizer chose to spend a month in prison.

[\(24 June 2014 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

MDCF Members Sentenced

Tin Maung Kyi and Zaw Win, two members of the Movement for Democracy Current Force, were sentenced to six months in prison under Section 505(b) of Burma's penal Code for distributing leaflets questioning the government's reliability.

[\(24 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Members of the Press Testify on Behalf of Unity Journalists

On June 18, members of the press highlighted the importance of press freedom while testifying in court on behalf of the five *Unity Weekly* journalists facing charges under Article 3 of the Official Secrets Act for reporting on the military's construction of an alleged chemical weapons factory. Pho Thaukkyar of Myanmar Journalist Association testified "that the public needs to be informed about the facility, and [he] suggested that the government—even if they should see otherwise—should take into consideration the motives of the publication, which is whether their intention was to just report the news or if they meant to jeopardize the country."

[\(18 June 2014 - DVB\)](#)

Htin Kyaw Sentenced

On June 4, Kyaut Tadar District Court sentenced Htin Kyaw, the leader of Movement for Democracy Current Force, to three months in prison under Section 18 of the Peaceful Process Act. Htin Kyaw led a protest against the government after authorities destroyed Tha Mee lay village. Htin Kyaw faced Section 18 charges for not having the permission of the township's general director, even though he had received permission to protest from township police. On June 23, South Okkalapa Township Court sentenced Htin Kyaw to six months imprisonment under Section 505(b) of the Burmese Penal Code for defaming the country and public mischief. On May 5, 2014, Htin Kyaw distributed leaflets criticizing the government. In addition to South

INCARCERATIONS

Okkalapa, Kyaw was charged under Section 505(b) by ten other townships.

[\(4 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

“there is absolutely no rule of law” due to the court’s alignment with the government.

[\(6 June 2014 - DVB\)](#)

U Mali Tan Sentenced

On June 10, a Kachin village leader, U Mali Tan, was sentenced to twenty-two years of imprisonment for possessing a weapon and detonating explosives. Back in May 2012, U Mali Tan was arrested and beaten by the Light Battalion No-121, who transported him to the Kyauk-Kyi police station where he was charged under Section 17(1) of the unlawful Association Act. At trial, he was sentenced to two years in Shwegu Township Court. However, Mali Tan was indicted for additional crimes. Although he was initially charged under Section 17(1), he was also indicted under Section 19(a) of the 1951 Possession of a Weapon Act, and Section 3 and 4 of the 1982 Explosives Act. On June 10, U Mali Tan was sentenced to five years under Section 19(a), ten years under Section 3, and seven years under Section 4, notwithstanding overwhelming evidence of his innocence. U Mali Tan’s lawyer plans to appeal the court’s decision.

[\(11 June 2014 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(12 June 2014 - Irrawaddy\)](#)

Three Kachin IDP’s Sentence Extended

On June 5, a Myitkyina court found three Kachin refugees, La Ring, Lahpai Gun and Brang Yone, guilty of breaching the Explosives Act. The charges under the Explosives Act arose from the arresting officer’s suspicion that the refugees were linked to a bomb plot. The three refugees had previously been convicted of violating the Unlawful Association Act, and now their lawyer believes that the additional charges under the Explosives Act show that

RELEASES

Nay Myo Zin and Win Cho, two activists that organized a farmers protest in January, were released after spending eighty-four days in Insein Prison.

[\(25 June 2014 - DVB\)](#) [\(25 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

CONDITIONS OF DETENTIONS

AAPP has not received any updated information on the conditions of detentions.

DEMONSTRATIONS AND RELATED RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Women Activists Charged for Protesting in Chin State

On June 25, four activists, two females and two males, were charged for holding a rally earlier in the week in the town of Matupi. They were charged with staging a protest without official permission, Chapter 3 of Burma's Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act. The protest called for an end to sexual abuse in the region, particularly domestic abuse. Two women were released on bail later that evening. The women attempted to request permission for the protest from the local authorities but were rejected.

[\(27 June 2014 - DVB\)](#)

Fundraising Music Festival Leads to Indictment

National League for Democracy Chairperson of the Rangoon North Division was indicted for holding an unauthorized music festival to fundraise for constitutional reform.

[\(24 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Newspapers Investigated

Recent police inquiries of national news journals have sparked discussions over whether the Special Branch police have breached media laws, suppressing press freedom in the democratizing state. Over the past week, a number of journals have been instructed to visit the Special Branch police, Burma's police intelligence unit. Those summoned report being questioned about the internal operations of the newspapers, including inquiries about financial sources and expenditure and staffing numbers. Both Police Lieutenant, Nyi Nyi Than, and the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Kyaw Kyaw Htun, state that the meetings with key editors are discussions, not investigations. They say that

the purpose of the discussions is to inquire information regarding the success of the journals in recent times, wanting to know which journals have been successful, which have not, and why. Issues have arisen over whether the discussions carried out by the Special Branch have violated media laws. U Thiha Saw, a member of the Interim Press Council, argues that the Special Branch failed to inform the council before questioning administrators of the journals, violating Article 21, Chapter 8 of the Media Law. Concern has also arisen over whether or not the Special Branch had the authority to carry out the discussions at hand. The Special Branch belongs to the Ministry of Home Affairs, whereas media affairs are administered by the Ministry of Information. Administrators upset by the questioning have argued that the Special Branch did not have an official document from the Ministry of Information authorizing the investigations. Thus far, the Special Branch has not utilized the information gathered from discussions in a way that hinders the operations of the investigated newspapers.

[\(23 June 2014 - RFA\)](#) [\(30 June 2014 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

NLD Speech Request Denied

A request to use the district sport ground in Minbu Town, Magwe Division, for a speech on the amendment of the 2008 Constitution was rejected by the Director of Naypyidaw Sport Ministry. The request was made by National League for Democracy and 88 Generation Peace and Open Society, who have been the main proponents of the amendment.

[\(23 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

DEMONSTRATIONS AND RELATED RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Htin Kyaw Protests His Detention

The leader of Movement for Democracy Current Force, Htin Kyaw staged an impromptu demonstration in protest of unlawful police practices. While in transport from the police station to the North Okkalapa court for a hearing on his alleged breach of Section 505(b) of the Penal Code, he refused to cooperate with the transporting officers by lying on the ground in front of the court to draw attention to the judicial system's violation of human rights. Htin Kyaw claims that he was incarcerated for a total of twenty-eight days after his detaining officers filed for two consecutive remands. Htin Kyaw was originally indicted in multiple jurisdictions for leading protests calling for the abdication of the government.

[\(19 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Myitkyina NLD Chairperson Charged

S. Ku Mar, chairperson of the Myitkyina National League for Democracy, was charged under Section 18 for organizing an unauthorized public speech in support of amending Article 436 of the Constitution. However, the NLD had given notice of the protest, which was held at City Park Royal Restaurant, to the state, township, and district election commissions, as well as the Township General Administration.

[\(18 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Pyay NLD Request to Hold Public Speech Denied

The Secretary of the Pyay National League for Democracy, Myint Than Htun, claimed that his second request to organize a public speech on amending Article 18 of the Constitution has been denied.

[\(18 June 2014 - Mizzima\)](#)

NLD Secretary Indicted

Nay Myo Kyaw, a National League for Democracy Secretary from Ma Gwe Division, was indicted under Section 27 in Ma Gwe Township Court for using a loudspeaker without permission. Nay Myo Kyaw was using a loudspeaker to give a public speech supporting the amendment of constitutional Article 436. The speech was organized by the NLD and 88 Generation Peace and Open Society. However, the organizers did not receive permission from the local authorities. If convicted, Nay Myo Kyaw could face up to seven days in prison or a 5,000 Kyat fine under Section 27.

[\(17 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Protest Leader Indicted

One June 16, Su Su Nway was indicted under Section 18 for leading a protest in Pyin Oo Lwin with 150 farmers. Hsu Hsu Nway was the coordinator of a farmers' union, and she led a protest calling for the return of land confiscated by the military.

[\(18 June 2014 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(19 June 2014 - DVB\)](#)

NLD Members Pressured to Remove Party Signs

Local government authorities of Narga Township pressured Narga NLD members to remove NLD signboards posted on the border of Narga Township, in Done Mee. There are also reports that those NLD members who volunteer their houses as local NLD party offices were encouraged by the local authorities to no longer allow the NLD to utilize their residences.

[\(16 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Local Shan State Authorities Threaten NLD Member

Local government authorities threatened an

DEMONSTRATIONS AND RELATED RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

NLD member in Shan State that his property would be burned to the ground and he would be killed if he did not remove an NLD sign posted at the party office.

[\(14 June 2014 - DVB\)](#)

No Right to Protest in Pe Gu Township

The administrators of Pe Gu Township claimed that they have no intention to lift the restriction on the right to protest in the town center.

[\(13 June 2014 - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

Reverend Questioned

On June 9, police in Myitkyina, Kachin State, brought Reverend Samson of the Kachin Baptist Convention (“KBC”) in to their administrative office for questioning following a demonstration that the KBC organized to remember the anniversary of the Kachin war. During the protest the KBC issued a statement calling for an end to the Kachin conflict, as well as a federal system of government in Burma.

[\(14 June 2014 - KNG\)](#)

Students Banned from Political Activity

On June 9, the Government Technical Institute, which is run by the Department of Technical and Vocational Education, announced that any student found participating in political riots will face punishment up to expulsion.

[\(14 June 2014 -RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 June 2014 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(17 June 2014 - DVB\)](#)

Former Activists Blacklisted

Moe Thee Zun, a former leader of the 88 Generation Students Group, and Moe Hein, chief executive of The Sun Rays journal, were blacklisted by the Department of Immigration and National Registration. They

are no longer allowed to return to Burma, and their names have been flagged by the airlines.

[\(11 June 2014 - Irrawaddy\)](#)

Five Farmers Arrested and Charged for Protesting

Starting on June 8, farmers in Myay Mon Village in Kant Balu Township led a three day protest to draw attention to a governmental land-grab that occurred in 1991. Originally, the government seized 500 acres. However, since 1991, the government has returned 200 acres to the farmers. This protest arose after the government failed to respond to the farmers’ requests to have the remaining 300 acres returned. On June 9, five protesters were arrested and charged under Section 447. Later that day, they were released on bail.

[\(10 June 2014 - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

Shop Owner Held Press Conference About Confiscated Shop

In June of 2007, U Ba Soe had his shop confiscated, he believes, because he flew an NLD flag in front of his shop. U Ba Soe recounts that General Mg Oo called Ba Soe into his office to inform U Ba Soe that his shop has been confiscated because U Ba Soe flew a NLD flag. After unsuccessfully reporting the 2007 incident to authorities, including President Thein Sein, he held a press conference on June 6, 2014.

[\(6 June 2014 - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

NLD Refused Permission to Organize Speech

According to National League for Democracy (“NLD”), the Chin State Government would not permit the NLD and 88 Generation Peace and Open Society

DEMONSTRATIONS AND RELATED RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

to organize a public speech promoting the amendment of Article 436. The government further warned that it would destroy and remove any construction done in preparation for the speech.

[\(1 June 2014 - RFA\)](#) [\(7 June 2014 - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

Sint-Kaing Protesters Detained and Charged

On June 6, police broke-up a 700 employee protest in Sint-Kaing, Mandalay, and temporarily detained twelve protesters. The protesters were admonished while remaining detained in police cars where the police reportedly cautioned the detainees to end their protest. The twelve detainees were charged under Section 143, 147, and 505(b) of the Penal Code. After most employees accepted the employer's terms, the employer dropped charges against the twelve detainees.

[\(7 June 2014 -RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(7 June 2014 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(8 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(9 June 2014 - DVB\)](#)

RESTRICTIONS ON FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS

AAPP received no updated information regarding restrictions of former political prisoners this month.

LAND ISSUES

Union Member and Local Farmer Indicted

A member of the Farmers' Union and a local farmer in Phruhso Township, Kayah State, were indicted under Section 447 of the Penal Code on trespassing for cultivating land in Phruhso that was seized in the 1990's by the Infantry Battalion No. 531. Local farmers were protesting this grab, claiming that the military put out an order requiring that if one wanted to cultivate the land, he or she must sign a letter of recognition that the land is owned by the military.

[\(25 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Farmers Charged in Ploughing Protest

On June 21, twelve farmers and one activist were charged with criminal trespass and mischief for alleged damage to confiscated land in a ploughing protest that occurred on June 20, 2014. Farmers from the Hlae Maut, Bwat, and Nwarchan villages of Ingapu Township, Irrawaddy Division, claim ownership of the land. Approximately 100 farmers participated in the protest over more than 200 acres of land reportedly seized from the local farmers by the number six military training camp in 1994. Previously in June of 2013, twenty-five farmers were charged with trespassing for ploughing the same disputed land. Ko Than Htay, farmers' rights activist, stated that the thirteen individuals, himself included, have signed the parole to the case charging them under Sections 447 and 427 of Burma's Penal Code.

[\(22 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Farmers Charged for Protesting

Sixteen farmers were charged under Section 18 for protesting in front of Yuzana Company in Rangoon. The farmers' protest called for compensation for land in Huu Kaung Valley, Kachin State, grabbed by Yuzana to grow Tapioca. The protesters reportedly had asked authorities for permission to hold the

protest; however their request was denied. The farmers had brought legal action against Yuzana in 2010, and the court ruled that each landowner should receive eighty thousand kyats per acre of farmland, forty thousand kyats per acre of cropland, and sixty thousand kyat per acre of orchard. Most farmers refused to accept the court's ruling and sought to protest.

[\(18 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Monastery Raided after Ownership Dispute

On June 10, Mahasantisukha Monastery in Rangoon's Tamwe Township was raided after a long dispute over the monastery's ownership. The monastery was donated in the 90's to the renowned abbot Penang Sayadaw who has been on a mission in Japan. In 2004 the military confiscated the property and granted control to the State Sangha Committee. In October of 2013, the president issued an order returning ownership to the abbot, and since then, the Committee has attempted to assert their ownership claim. Most recently, the Committee sent a letter calling for the current residents of the monastery to vacate. After the current residents refused to vacate, the Committee persuaded local law enforcement to raid the monastery. During the raid, thirty-two monastery staff were briefly detained, and security forces remained deployed around the compound. Later in the week, authorities in Tamwe Township charged five of the monks under 295A of the Penal Code for offenses relating to religion. The monks were allegedly disrobed and sent to Insein Prison to await their trial. There are reports that the monks were not permitted to see visitors or receive packages for a period of time. However, under threat of mass protests, all five monks were released from prison on bail after ten days. The monks still face charges.

[\(11 June 2014 - DVB\)](#) [\(11 June 2014 - RFA\)](#) [\(13](#)

LAND ISSUES

[June 2014 - Irrawaddy](#) ([16 June 2014-RFA](#))

Dawei Farmers Detained

On June 3, Dawei police detained twenty farmers for refusing to accept compensation for a government land-grab. The farmers refused the compensation because they believed that it was inadequate. Later that day, they were released.

[\(4 June 2014 - Mizzima\)](#)

Twenty Farmers Indicted

Tavoy Police Office indicted over twenty farmers. The charges followed building tensions between farmers and local authorities. The conflict arose from land-grabs in Tavoy, Tenassarim, which were intended to provide the space for a new suburb project. The farmers had been offered replacement farm-land as compensation. However, the farmers refused, claiming that the land held sentimental value, and in response the farmers began building tents on their land. The authorities responded by indicting the farmers. Additionally, there are reports that the land is to be used to build an office for the Union Solidarity of Development Party, a mansion for the state prime minister, government-staff housing, and a hospital.

[\(1 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

AAPP IN THE MEDIA

On June 23, General Kyaw Kyaw Tun, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, informed the Pyithu Hluttaw that the government had no plans to return to the prison classification system used during the colonial era, stating that the new bill proposals will continue to treat prisoners equally. The 1894 Prison Act classified prisoners into three levels, A, B, and C, with each receiving different standards of treatment. This Act was revoked in 1964 by Ne Win. Current leaders justify the decision not to reinstate the classification system because they declare it a discriminatory colonial policy and in violation of constitutional law. Under the classification system, monks and political prisoners were classified into group B, allowing them access to healthcare among other things. Recently, authorities were able to force the five monks arrested from Mahasantisukha to de-robe prior to inspection. Under the classification system, monks were protected against having to de-robe. U Bo Kyi from AAPP also condemns the decision of the government not to return to the classification system. He states that in accordance with democracy, prisoners need to be classified according to status and offense. Without classification, political prisoners will continue to receive the same treatment as criminal prisoners.

[\(25 June 2014 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(24 June 2014 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

Eleven Media reports on Burma's use of "catch-all" sections of the penal code to indict political prisoners. The use of the penal code creates difficulties for the Committee for Scrutinizing the Remaining Political Prisoners to formulate a legislation differentiated criminal prisoners from political ones. The report cites AAPP's records that at least forty-six political prisoners

remain behind bars, with approximately another 150 awaiting trial.

[\(24 June 2014 - Eleven\)](#)

RFA reports on ongoing political arrests in Burma citing AAPP's political prisoner records, which indicate that Thein Sein did not keep his promise to ensure the release of all political prisoners by the end of 2013.

[\(10 June 2014 - RFA\)](#)

KEY INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

U Win Tin Honored

The Truth Foundation, a South Korean human rights organization, has awarded the late U Win Tin their 2014 Human Rights Award.

[\(28 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Unity Journalists Awarded Honorary Citizenship

On June 12, a small town in northern Italy, Sala Baganza, awarded the Unity Journalists honorary citizenship as a symbolic gesture to recognize the Burmese journalists for their humanitarian endeavors to ensure the freedom of opinion and expression. The award signifies the international recognition obtained by the journalists and their fight for press freedom.

[\(29 June 2014 - DVB\)](#)

Ambassadors Meet with Abbot

Two British ambassadors received permission to meet with Sayadaw U Ottara, an abbot—and British National—detained after the Mahasantisukha Monastery was raided on June 10, 2014. After meeting with U Uttara, the ambassadors testified on his behalf in court on June 20.

[\(17 June 2014 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 June 2014 - Eleven\)](#) [\(18 June 2014 - RFA\)](#)

HRW Urges Government to Stop Threatening NLD

On June 4, Human Rights Watch (“HRW”) urged the Election Commission to end its threatening behavior towards Aung San Suu Kyi’s speeches on behalf of the NLD. HRW exhorted President Thein Sein to ensure that there are no restrictions placed on political parties like the NLD.

[\(4 June 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Conclusion / Analysis

While there have been authoritative attempts to improve the state of political prisoners in Burma, most changes have been peripheral. On June 1, the Committee for Scrutinizing the Remaining Political Prisoners stated that sixty, confirmed political prisoners remain in Burma. The committee submitted a list of the sixty prisoners to the correction department and the office of the president, seeking a pardon for the prisoners. However, among the names on the list were prisoners recently convicted under current laws such as Section 18 of the Peaceful Procession Act and Section 505(b) of the Penal Code. The rights of activists will remain at risk until legitimate actions are taken by the government to amend its laws and enforcements practices. Consequently, even if the president grants a pardon to all sixty prisoners in the committee's submission, there is no expectation that political incarcerations will end.

Unfortunately, even the government's most recent endeavor to enact positive legislative change fell short of rendering any influential advancements. This month, after many protests and much advocacy on behalf of political activists, the government targeted a controversial piece of legislation used to incarcerate political activists. Although the Burmese Parliament was successful in passing an amendment to the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act, the changes

mandated by the amendment do not appear to promise any substantial change in the number of political incarcerations—if anything, the changes carry the potential to increase incarcerations. By replacing the word 'permission' with 'consent' throughout the Act, the amendment still requires activists to receive a form of authorization from local authorities before engaging in political speech—it is difficult to see how requiring consent is different than requiring "permission." Ultimately, this replacement does not appear as if it allow for any significant change in the Act's enforcement.

The synonym swap was not the only legislated change. The amendment also removed all sections regarding the "denial" of an application. The appalling effect of this change is that those who apply to protest no longer maintain the right to receive notice that their request to protest has been denied by the authorities. Now, protesters could be forced to proceed with their protests without knowing whether the protest was lawfully denied by authorities. This change could have stifling effects on political freedom in Burma—including an increase in the number of political incarcerations, for those who engage in protests may not know when their political action is illegal.

Perhaps the single redeeming quality of the amendment is a favorable change in the Act's sentencing section. The maximum sentences prescribed under the Act have been reduced by half of their original

Conclusion / Analysis

periods. While this will likely have a positive impact on those convicted under the law, it will have no effect on the continued use of the Peaceful Assembly Act to incarcerate political activists.

The civilian and international pressure to improve the state of political freedoms in Burma has exhorted the government to act. However, the government's response to this pressure appears as though it will fall short of evoking the long-term change that many wish for.

Links / Resources

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June 9

[Woodworker Protesters Detained \(DVB\)](#)

Links / Resources

June 8

[Authorities Promise to Drop Charges Against Sint-Kaing Protestors \(RFA/Burmese\)](#)

June 7

[Government Threatens to Destroy Speech Preparations \(DVB/Burmese\)](#)
[Sint-Kaing Protests \(RFA/Burmese\)](#)
[Employees in Sint Kaing Protest \(DVB/Burmese\)](#)

June 6

[Three Kachin IDP's Sentence Extended \(DVB\)](#)

June 4

[Htin Kyaw Sentenced \(RFA/Burmese\)](#)
[HRW Urges Government to Stop Threatening NLD \(RFA/Burmese\)](#)
[Dawei Farmers Detained \(Mizzima\)](#)

June 2

[Shopkeeper Held Press Conference \(DVB/Burmese\)](#)
[88 Generation Coordinator Arrested \(88 Gen/Burmese\)](#)

June 1

[CSRPP Submits Sixty Prisoner List \(RFA/Burmese\)](#)
[NLD Refused Permission to Organize Speech \(RFA\)](#)
[Twenty Farmers Indicted \(RFA/Burmese\)](#)

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