



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)
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Summary of the current Situation

As of the end of October, 75 political prisoners remain incarcerated in prison, with another 121 awaiting trial. The suppression of media in the country and the use of Section 18 to stifle political dissent remain of paramount concern. The extrajudicial killing of a freelance journalist Aung Kyaw Naing (aka Par Gyi), is particularly troubling as we near the end of 2014. The following is an analysis of media coverage and AAPP information received from Burma, focusing on issues regarding political prisoners and other developments pertaining to civil rights and freedoms in Burma.

Table of Contents

- Month in Review
- Detentions
- Incarcerations
- Releases
- Conditions of Detentions
- Demonstrations and Related Restrictions on Political and Civil Liberties
- Restrictions on Former Political Prisoners
- Land Issues
- AAPP in the Media
- Key International Developments
- Conclusions and Analysis
- Links

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

MONTH IN REVIEW

In the month of October, eight activists were charged, 26 were sentenced, and 21 released.

Extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, and torture have been sharply brought to the forefront of human rights violations that take place in Burma following the deeply unfounded killing of freelance reporter Aung Kyaw Naing (aka Par Gyi) this month while in a military custody in Mon State. After being shot and killed by a government soldier, his body was buried without first being examined or returned to his family. Serious questions have been raised surrounding his death.

In a reminder that such events are not isolated cases in Burma, 120 organizations signed a petition demanding that the government “establish an independent and impartial parliamentary commission with a mandate to investigate the disappearance of Sumlut Roi Ja.” Sumlut Roi Ja, a Kachin woman, was allegedly picked up by the military on October 28, 2011, and has been missing since then. She is presumed dead, yet no explanation has been provided for her disappearance.

This month, the government also demonstrated its continued disregard for media freedom within Burma. The five defendants in the Bi Mon Te Nay Journal case were all sentenced to two years imprisonment under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code, and have had their first appeal rejected without any explanation. In addition, a total of four media groups were forced to shut down in Chin State for failure to register with the state government. These developments came as a bill to create a regulatory council that would oversee the broadcasting of both TV and radio passed quickly through parliament despite the protest of journalists within the country. Than Win Htut, from DVB, stated his surprise at how fast the bill passed, arguing that, “Some points from the broadcast bill put Burma’s future media pluralism at risk.”

A number of forums on human rights issues were also held this month, with broad criticisms being levied against the government. On October 4 and 5, another forum on media freedom was held, this time in Nay Pyi Taw. Participants questioned the independence of the courts in Burma, and also raised concerns about their lack of access to information pertaining to government activities, citing the 1923 State Secrets Act as a key hindrance. Another forum, held from October 14 to 16 in Yangon and titled “Myanmar’s Transition Process: Prospects for 2015 and Beyond”, brought together civil society representatives to discuss a wide range of issues, including legal reform and human rights. Criticism was brought against the judiciary, the 2008 Constitution, laws regarding peaceful protest and assembly, media laws, and the entire ‘democratization’ process in general. Legal expert Kyee Myint summarized the groups frustration: “We need new policies and new leaders - not just people who have changed out of their uniforms.”

[\(10 October 2014 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(24 October 2014 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(28 October 2014 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(21 October 2014 - Burmanet\)](#) [\(16 October 2014 - Voice Of America\)](#) [\(20 October 2014 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(28 October 2014 - DVB\)](#)

DETENTIONS

Other than stories mentioned below in the *Conditions of Detentions* section, AAPP did not receive any information pertaining to political activists being detained.

INCARCERATIONS

Four Activists, Six Farmers Sentenced under Section 18

On October 29, four members of the 88 Generation Karen Student Association were sentenced to four months imprisonment under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act by Hpa-an Township Court. The charges stem from a protest on August 25, 2014, when around 200 residents demonstrated for the return of their land. Six farmers were also sentenced under Section 18, and will have to pay a 20,000 kyat fine.

[\(30 October 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Bi Mon Te Nay Journalists Sentenced

The owner, publisher, and three journalists of Bi Mon Te Nay were sentenced by Pabaedan Township Court to two years imprisonment on October 16 under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code. The five were originally charged under the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act, but those charges were dropped and the 505(b) charges were introduced. The charges relate to events on July 7, 2014, when the journal had published an article that quoted an activist group as saying that Aung San Suu Kyi and her political allies had been elected as the country's interim leaders. Reporters without Borders condemned the sentence, stating that it "constitutes a serious violation of media freedom." The journalists submitted an appeal against the two year prison sentence, which was rejected on October 27.

[\(21 October 2014 - Burmanet\)](#)[\(16 October 2014 - Associated Press\)](#)[\(16 October 2014 - DVB\)](#)[\(16 October 2014 - Irrawaddy\)](#)[\(16 October 2014 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(16 October 2014 - RFA\)](#)[\(28 October 2014 - Myanmar Times\)](#)[\(21 October 2014 - Eleven\)](#)

Land Rights Activists Convicted

On October 9, Ye Yint Aung, Ko Aung, and Zaw Win, who are from Tan-Ngar Village, were sentenced to three months imprisonment under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act. The conviction is in relation to a plough protest held back in March, 2014, which resulted in nineteen farmers having charges brought against them. Nay Win, another farmer involved in the protest, still faces charges under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code, while all four face outstanding charges at Madaya Township Court. They are incarcerated in Obo Prison, Special Ward.

[\(10 October 2014 - AAPP\)](#)

Five Sentenced under Section 19

AAPP has received information that five people were sentenced to one month imprisonment under Section 19 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act on September 30, 2014. Kyaw Win, San Min, Kyaw Hlaing, Nay Zaw Lin, and Thaw Dar Oo are all now incarcerated in Obo Prison. The charges related to a protest held on April 28, where the five demonstrated in opposition to Article 436, 59(f) and 59(d) of the 2008 Constitution and called for its amendment. The five were released in late October after serving their sentence.

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

Protestor Imprisoned for Demanding Abolishment of Section 18

Thar Cho (aka Kyaw Min Zaw), an NLD member, has been jailed for four months for a protest held on January 4, 2014 against Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession. He was sentenced by Pyinmana Court under that same piece of legislation.

[\(2 October 2014 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

RELEASES

Phyu Hnin Htwe Released

Wanbao Mining Company has dropped all charges against Phyu Hnin Htwe, the 20 year old student activist who was arrested at her home on September 13, 2014 and charged under Section 364 and 368 of Burma's Penal Code. She was released from police custody in Monywa Prison on October 15, 2014. The company said that the charges were dropped in an effort to maintain good relations between Burma and China. She had been arbitrarily detained for more than a month before she was finally released.

[\(16 October 2014 - Eleven\)](#)[\(15 October 2014 - DVB\)](#)[\(15 October 2014 - Irrawaddy\)](#)[\(13 October 2014 - DVB\)](#) (AAPP)

Presidential Amnesty Granted

On October 7, the Ministry of Information of Myanmar announced a presidential amnesty under Article 204(a) of the Constitution, releasing 3,073 prisoners across Burma. AAPP has thus far only identified one of the released as a political prisoner: Mar La, who was sentenced to five years imprisonment in 2013 under the Unlawful Association Act for his alleged connections with Kachin ethnic armed groups. The release also included seven former Military Intelligence members and 58 foreigners, with the remainder largely consisting of petty criminals. The release coincided with the full moon day and the end of Buddhist lent. Some have accused the government of political opportunism and see the release as a way to garner international support in the lead up to the Asia Pacific Summit, set to be held in Burma next month.

[\(9 October 2014 - DVB\)](#)[\(8 October 2014 - New Light of Myanmar\)](#)[\(7 October 2014 - BBC\)](#)[\(7 October 2014 - ABC\)](#)[\(7 October 2014 - Irrawaddy\)](#)[\(7 October 2014 - DVB\)](#)[\(7 October 2014 - RFA\)](#)[\(8 October 2014 - Eleven\)](#)

19 Political Prisoners Released

Aye Thein, Kyaw Thiha, Win Ko, Ohn Kyaw, Nwe Yin Than, Win Cho, Myo Myo Than, Ma Shwe Lant, and Win Aung, who had all been sentenced to six months hard labor on May 23, 2014, under Section 353 of the Penal Code in relation to an ongoing land dispute, were released on October 1. In addition, Yar Zar (sentenced to nine months imprisonment on January 14, 2014 under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code and Section 143 of the Penal Code) was also released the same day. All ten had been detained in Obo Prison.

Win Cho (different than above), Kyaw Win, San Min, Kyaw Hlaing, Nay Zaw Lin, Thaw Dar Oo, Kyaw Sein, Thet Nwe Oo, and Maung Lwin were also released this month, as their sentences had expired. Win Cho was released on October 20 after spending two months in prison, while Kyaw Win, San Min, Kyaw Hlaing, Nay Zaw Lin, and Thaw Dar Oo were all released on October 30 after serving their one month sentences. Maung Lwin was released on October 7 after being imprisoned on January 1, 2014, for fifteen years. No explanation was given for his early release. The remainder had served either one or two month sentence and were therefore released this month.

(1 October 2014 - AAPP)

CONDITIONS OF DETENTIONS

Missing Reporter Killed In Custody

Freelance journalist Aung Kyaw Naing (aka Par Gyi) has been killed while in custody. It is believed that Par Gyi had been in Mon State to cover a story on fighting between DKBA and the government forces, and was detained in Mon State's Kyaikmayaw Township on September 30, 2014 by police, later being transferred to military custody. He was accused of being a member of the Klohtoobaw Karen Organization (KKO), the political wing of the DKBA, which has denied these claims. According to Amnesty International, there were eyewitnesses who had seen a man being tortured by soldiers around the same time and place Par Gyi had been detained. Later, a report allegedly written by the military stated, "Aung Naing, under pretext of going to [the] latrine, wrestled a soldier on guard and tried to make off with his firearm. He was shot and captured dead by the guard and his body was buried in a respectful manner [near] Shwewachaung Village."

A number of groups, including the 88 Generation for Peace and Open Society and the Committee to Protect Journalists, have raised serious concerns surrounding his death, and his wife was told that he was beaten while in custody. Par Gyi was 49 years old; prior to working as a freelance journalist he was a political activist and a member of Aung San Suu Kyi's personal security during the 1988 protests and ensuing election campaign. Both Amnesty International and Asian Human Rights Commission have released statements strongly condemning the killing and calling for an immediate and independent inquiry. Protests have also been held throughout the country, with a number of activists facing charges for such activity (full story below in *Restrictions on Demonstrations*). He was killed on October 4, 2014. State owned *New Light of Myanmar* announced that the president has ordered the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

to submit a "special investigation report" to his office regarding the case.

[\(25 October 2014 - Eleven\)](#)[\(24 October 2014 - Irrawaddy\)](#)[\(24 October 2014 - DVB\)](#)[\(24 October 2014 - Irrawaddy \(2\)\)](#) [\(21 October 2014 - The Irrawaddy\)](#)[\(30 October 2014 - Amnesty International\)](#) [\(30 October 2014 - AHRC\)](#)[\(31 October 2014 - New Light of Myanmar\)](#)

Five Tortured in Shan State

A report published by Shan State Human Rights Foundation on October 22 claims that five villagers have been tortured, and seven individuals kept under house arrest, in Kee See Township, Shan State, during a Burmese military offensive from October 12 till October 18. Three male villagers from Wan Ngu Lerm Village were arrested, accused of being Shan soldiers, interrogated, and beaten. On October 14, two farmers from Pan Ze Village were then arrested, beaten, and tied up overnight. On October 12, seven women were taken from Wan Ngu Lerm and Wan Pasaung and detained in a local teachers home for six days. The authorities initially refused to allow one of the women, who was pregnant, to leave, but she was eventually released.

[\(24 October 2014 - BNI\)](#)[\(23 October 2014 - Mizzima\)](#)

ABFSU Members Call for Prisoner to Receive Health Care

Daw Nyo, detained in Paungde Prison, Prome District, Pegu Region under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code, is in poor health. She is suspected of having uterine cancer,

CONDITIONS OF DETENTIONS

and a tumor has been discovered, leading her lawyer to issue a letter to the court demanding that she receive proper health care. Given the fact that she has not been sentenced yet, Myint Aye (lawyer) states that this is well within her rights. The request was ignored, sparking a sit-in protest on October 21 in front of the prison. Following the protest, she was sent to Paungde Public Hospital.

[\(22 October 2014 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)[\(22 October 2014 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

Htin Kyaw: Hunger Strike, Denied Visitations, Sentence Extended

Htin Kyaw has gone on hunger strike to protest his detention in solitary confinement. At his court hearing on October 2 at Kyauktada Township Court, he made the announcement and also claimed that prison officers had been inciting quarrels between him and other prisoners. He has since ceased his hunger strike.

On October 9, Htin Kyaw's family was denied visitation rights. He was also placed in solitary confinement in the police dog kennels. Both of these punishments were in retaliation against his attempted hunger strike. On October 18, his wife, Than Than Maw, was finally able to access him. However, she has now also been indicted under Section 18 for her participation in protests against Htin Kyaw's incarceration. She was indicted on October 10, 2014 by Kyauktada Township.

On October 30, Htin Kyaw was sentenced to an additional two years by Kyauktada Township Court under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code. He was sentenced along with his co-defendant, Naung Naung, in connection to a protest held by Naung Naung outside of Yangon City Hall on July 7. The protest called for an interim government to be formed, headed under Aung

San Suu Kyi; Htin Kyaw later implicated himself in the protest at one of his court hearings. Htin Kyaw is incarcerated in Insein Prison, and still awaits trial at Hlaing Township Court. His total sentence is now 13 years and four months. Naung Naung received an additional four months imprisonment under Section 18 of Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act, but will only need to serve two years in prison.

[\(17 October 2014 - Eleven\)](#)[\(10 October 2014 - RFA\)](#)[\(3 October 2014 - Eleven\)](#)[\(AAPP\)](#)[\(30 October 2014 - BBC/Burmese\)](#)[\(30 October 2014 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)[\(30 October 2014 - DVB/Burmese-YouTube\)](#) [\(31 October 2014 - DVB\)](#)

Unity Five Have Sentences Reduced, Set to Appear in Supreme Court

Magway Region High Court made a statement on October 2 that the five Unity Journal employees, who were sentenced in July to ten years in prison with hard labor, have had their sentences reduced to seven years.

The Supreme Court has also agreed to hear their appeal. According to their lawyer, Robert San Aung, they will now have to wait another 45 days to have their cases heard in front of the Supreme Court.

[\(15 October 2014 - Myanmar Times\)](#)[\(15 October 2014 - Mizzima\)](#)[\(2 October 2014 - Mizzima\)](#)

DEMONSTRATIONS AND RELATED RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Activist Charged under Section 18

On October 30, activist Nay Lin Soe (aka Phoe Sanay) staged a solo protest in front of Western District Court calling for the elimination of Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act. He already faces charges under Section 18 at both South Dagon and Kyauktada Township Courts for protesting a rape case in South Dagon Township without permission. He also held solo protests in September in a number of Yangon townships.

[\(30 October 2014 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

Activists to be Charged for Protesting against Par Gyi's Death

Residents of Mandalay held a candlelight vigil to denounce the murder of freelance reporter Par Gyi. It took place on the corner of 80th St. and 26th St. near Mandalay Palace. Their Aung Myint was charged under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act for the protest.

On October 26, a similar protest was held by two resident of Prome Township in front of General Aung San Statue. The two activists, Myint Aye and Thant Zin Htet, are facing charges under Section 18 as well, as they protested without receiving permission according to Myoma Police Station Commander Myo Myint.

A case has also been opened against Generation Wave member Moe Thway, who held a protest in front of Yangon City Hall on October 26. It is unknown whether a case has been opened against Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Kyi, and Mya Aye, who also protested with Moe Thway. The case number is 343/2014, and the

charges fall under Section 18 due to the fact that the protest was unauthorized.

[\(28 October 2014 - Eleven\)](#)[\(28 October 2014 - The Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(27 October 2014 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(30 October 2014 - Amnesty International\)](#)[\(28 October 2014 - Irrawaddy\)](#)

Activist Opposes Change in Court

Zaw Win, a land rights activist who faces three charges relating to a May 29 solo protest, has voiced his opposition to the decision to move his trial from Pyin Oo Lwin to Mandalay. Although the Code of Criminal Procedure states that a case should be tried where the alleged offence was committed, the Pyin Oo Lwin Township Court has proposed the change for safety reasons, fearing public unrest in the area. The proposed change has not yet been decided on, and Zaw Win is set to appear in court again on November 3.

[\(24 October 2014 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

Solo Protester Arrested

Phyo Wai Kyaw staged a solo protest in front of the General Aung San statue in Mingalar Shan Kan, Pyinmana Township, Nay Pyi Taw on October 20, 2014, calling for the elimination of bribes in the courts. He had requested permission to protest on three separate occasions (April 27, July 4, October 15) but was denied his request each time. He eventually decided to go ahead with the protest, and was arrested by Myoma Police that same day. According to the police, his submitted request did not follow paragraph

DEMONSTRATIONS AND RELATED RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

(e), Section 12 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act, which states that a protestor must not “say things or behave in a way that could affect the country or the Union”. He has been charged under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act and released on bail; his case number is PA-478/2014.

[\(20 October 2014 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

Tin Mar Yi Charged in Relation to Phyu Hnin Htwe Case

On September 29, 2014, a prayer was held at Mandalay’s Maharmuni Pagoda calling for the release of Phyu Hnin Htwe. As a result, Tin Mar Yi (aka Ma Ni) from the Tamar Yate organization was charged by the police under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Protest Act. The case was opened on October 3 by a local police officer in Chan Mya Tha Si, Mandalay. She was set to be interrogated on October 20.

[\(20 October 2014 - Myanmar Times\)](#)[\(17 October 2014 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

Activists Hearing Postponed

Eleven activists in Magwe Division, who are being sued for a rally they held demanding a change to Burma’s constitution, have had their hearing postponed. Originally the hearing was set for September 29, but Magwe Division’s Religious Affairs Director, Thuang Shwe, failed to attend, pushing the hearing further to October 13, when he again failed to attend despite being the one who issuing the group. Htay Oo, who is defending

the activists, stated “as they are not residents of Magwe, they have to travel all the way here to attend the hearing which is a huge burden for them. This also applies to us lawyers.” The trial has been rescheduled for October 27.

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

Michaungkan Protest Camp Defies Deadline

Despite an October 3, 2014 deadline to vacate the Michaungkan Protest Camp in Rangoon, protesters still remained on the 4th, claiming that they will stay until their demands are met. Police have yet to disturb this particular camp, but have already dispersed prior protest camps in 2013 and earlier this year. Sein Than, who was the leader of the protest camp, is now serving a two year sentence for his involvement with the protest. On October 10, the Michaungkan Protesters started a one day hunger strike to further protest the imprisonment of activist Sein Than.

[\(10 October 2014 - DVB\)](#)[\(4 October 2014 - DVB\)](#)

Local Chin Newspapers Forced to Shut Down

The Hakha Post, one of more than 20 local newspapers in Chin State, has been ordered to shut down due to the fact that it is unregistered. However, according to the editor-in-chief Lalawmpui, only a few of those 20 are officially registered. Lalawmpui surmises that the order was given due to his

DEMONSTRATIONS AND RELATED RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

publication of critical news regarding the poor administration of the state government.

On October 16, the Falam Post, Tiddin (Tedim) Post, and Zo Lengthe, three other Chin news outlets, were also banned from publishing because they are not properly registered. Concerns have been raised over the way in which freedom of media is still largely governed by the whims of the state government.

[\(27 October 2014 - Irrawaddy\)](#)[\(24 October 2014 - BNI\)](#)[\(17 October 2014 - BNI\)](#)[\(2 October 2014 - Irrawaddy\)](#)

RESTRICTIONS ON FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS

AAPP has not received any information pertaining to restrictions on former political prisoners in October 2014.

LAND ISSUES

Kanbalu Farmers Update

Eight farmers from Kanbalu Township in Sagaing Division are facing further charges after being initially sentenced for staging a plough protest in March 2014, where they ploughed land that had been seized by the government. They were initially sentenced to varying terms ranging from 3 months to 2 years imprisonment. The new charges are for illegal trespassing. The farmers are currently awaiting trial.

On October 16, 2014, seven of the Kanbalu farmers were released from prison as they finished their three month prison sentences. The seven who were released were part of a larger group of farmers who were arrested and charged in July for staging a ploughing protest against the seizing of their land by the military in the 1990's. The rest of the farmers sentenced in July are still serving sentences related to other charges.

28 additional farmers were released later in October. Ten of those released, however, still face charges. 173 farmers appeared in court on October 28, including a number of farmers who are already imprisoned, as well as some of those already released. The large number of defendants has caused confusion amongst the group of farmers, as well as the prosecution. One lawyer stated that the prosecution does not exactly know who the accused farmers are.

[\(16 October 2014 - DVB\)](#)[\(30 October 2014 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)[\(20 October 2014 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)[\(29 October 2014 - DVB\)](#)

Nine Farmers Sentenced to Seven Years Imprisonment

On October 14, nine farmers from Thaton Township were sentenced to seven years in prison for working on land that they believe was unlawfully seized by the military in Mon

State. In March 2014, the nine farmers entered the land and started working on it. Soon after, they were summoned to the local court on charges of trespassing and destruction of property. Than Myint, who is the liaison for the farmers, was quoted in the Irrawaddy as saying "It is very unfair for them to be jailed for seven years, and we will appeal." There are five other farmers from Mon State who are facing similar charges and waiting for their verdict.

[\(16 October 2014 - Irrawaddy\)](#)

Farmers Hearing Postponed

Ten farmers from Daw So Shae Village in Loikaw Township have had their hearing postponed because the plaintiff in the case, the commander of Field Artillery Regiment 360, did not show up to the hearing. The farmers are accused of trespassing and planting crops on land owned by the army. They argue that the land they planted on is not army land. This is the second time that the plaintiff hasn't shown up.

[\(15 October 2014 - Eleven\)](#)

AAPP IN THE MEDIA

AAPP Excluded from New Prisoner Task Force

The Irrawaddy published a detailed article on the current state of political prisoners in Burma, listing a number of prisoners by name who remain incarcerated from the junta-era. The article then notes that the current Scrutinizing Committee for Remaining Political Prisoners is set to be disbanded, being replaced by a task force under the jurisdiction of the Home Ministry, the same department that heads the prison system. Furthermore, the article highlights the fact that AAPP Joint Secretary, Bo Kyi, will not be included in the new process. In response to the government's claim that all political prisoners have, in fact, been released, Bo Kyi stated, "I can't agree with the opinion of other committee members. We cannot forget these men."

[\(30 October 2014 - Irrawaddy\)](#)

KEY INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

British & US Embassies Call For Investigation into Death of Journalist

The Embassies of the United States and the United Kingdom have called on the Burmese government to launch a full investigation into the death of Par Gyi. The US embassy stated, "We call on the government to conduct a credible and transparent investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death, and to hold the perpetrators accountable."

[\(29 October 2014 - Irrawaddy\)\(29 October 2014 - DVB\)](#)

Amnesty International Calls for Tough UN Resolution

Amnesty International issued a strong statement urging the UN General Assembly to "adopt a resolution on the country that addresses the government's backtracking on human rights." It notes that Burma has failed to make progress on most of the recommendations in the 2013 resolution, and draws attention to President Thein Sein's failed promise to release all political prisoners by the end of last year.

[\(28 October 2014 - Amnesty International\)](#)

UN Special Rapporteur Reports on Burma to UN

Ms. Yanghee Lee, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar, has raised concerns at the UN General Assembly regarding Burma's democratization process and the ongoing failure to protect individual's fundamental human rights in Burma. She cited issues such as arbitrary arrests and detention, as well as torture and ill-treatment in prison, as key areas in need of improvement. The report calls on the government to adopt international standards and strengthen the rule of law.

[\(20 October 2014 - Mizzima\)\(23 September 2014 - UNGA\)](#)

President Thein Sein Urges EU to Stop Submitting Reports

President Thein Sein spoke at the 10th Asia-Europe meeting on October 17, where he urged the European Union to stop submitting reports on Burma to the United Nations General Assembly. He cited the recent political, economic, and social reforms in Myanmar as proof of the change in the country's leadership. He also stated that the government plans to sign a number of UN conventions pertaining to human rights.

Human rights organizations, such as Equality Myanmar and the Women's League of Burma, criticized the request, referencing ongoing abuses throughout the country. The EU Embassy in Yangon has confirmed that it will still be submitting a resolution this year.

[\(24 October 2014 - Myanmar Times\)\(20 October 2014 - Eleven\)\(20 October 2014 - Mizzima\)](#)

US Calls for Release of Remaining Political Prisoners

The United States government called on the government to continue "to work expeditiously through the political prisoner review committee to release all political prisoners unconditionally and to remove conditions placed on those already released." This came after the government released more than 3,000 prisoners on October 7.

[\(8 October 2014 - Mizzima\)](#)

Conclusion / Analysis

Par Gyi's death, is tragic enough, with the circumstances around it being cause for great concern. The fact is he was detained, and later killed, by a military apparatus that continues to operate within a culture of impunity. These issues need to be resolved if this government is genuine when claiming that it is, "undertaking wide-ranging measures in the protection of human rights," as claimed by the government at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Par Gyi's death must be considered as part of a broader trend of blatant basic human rights and civil liberties abuses. Just this month, five innocent villagers were tortured in Shan State, eight individuals were charged under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act, and 20 people were sentenced under that same act. The five defendants in the Bi Mon Te Nay Journal case were sentenced to two years in prison under Section 505 (b) of the Penal Code, and Naung Naung and Htin Kyaw also received two year sentences under the same legislation. Similar numbers can be seen looking back over the last few months, as pieces of legislation such as Section 505 (b) and Section 18 have repeatedly been used as a means of silencing political opposition. It is important that we understand Par Gyi's death as not simply an isolated incident, but as the result of the government's disregard for basic human rights.

Fortunately, international actors have recognized these trends. Ms. Yanghee Lee, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar, raised concerns over arbitrary detention and torture in her address to the UN General Assembly, while Amnesty International has released a strong statement urging the UN General Assembly resolution to "address backtracking on human rights". Likewise, we urge the UN General Assembly to ignore the rhetoric of President Thein Sein's government, and instead assess the actual conditions faced by political activists and human rights defenders within Burma.

Torture, extrajudicial killing and disappearing of people are all part of systematic abuse carried out by government forces against civilians. Ending these practices requires the support of the international community and their pressuring of President Thein Sein's government to act. Transparency and accountability are key to answering for these crimes both past and present and we ask the international community to continue to support civil society in Burma in advocating for the rights and liberties of its people.

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Links / Resources

April 28

[Five Sentenced \(RFA/Burmese\)](#)

September 23

[Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar \(UNGA\)](#)

October 2

[Five Unity Journalists Sentence Reduced \(Mizzima\)](#)
[Local Chin Newspaper Forced to Shut Down \(Irrawaddy\)](#)
[Protester Imprisoned for Protesting Abolishment of Article 18 \(Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

October 3

[Htin Kyaw to go on Hunger Strike \(Eleven\)](#)

October 4

[Michaungkan Protest Camp Defies Deadline \(DVB\)](#)

October 7

[Presidential Amnesty Granted \(BBC\)](#)
[Presidential Amnesty Granted \(ABC\)](#)
[Presidential Amnesty Granted \(Irrawaddy\)](#)
[Presidential Amnesty Granted \(DVB\)](#)
[Presidential Amnesty Granted \(RFA\)](#)

October 8

[Presidential Amnesty Granted \(New Light of Myanmar\)](#)
[Presidential Amnesty Granted \(Eleven\)](#)
[Us Urges the Release of Political Prisoners \(Mizzima\)](#)

October 9

[Presidential Amnesty Granted \(DVB\)](#)

October 10

[Michaungkan Protesters go on Hunger Strike \(DVB\)](#)
[Family of Imprisoned activists Refused Visit \(RFA\)](#)

[Media Forum Criticizes Government \(Myanmar Times\)](#)

October 11

[Lawsuit Against Eleven Media Continues \(Eleven\)](#)

October 13

[Phyu Hnin Htwe Suffers in Prison \(DVB\)](#)

October 14

[Activist Hearing Postponed \(DVB\)](#)

October 15

[Student Activist Released \(DVB\)](#)
[Student Activist Released \(Irrawaddy\)](#)
[Court Agrees to Hear Unity Journalist Appeal \(Myanmar Times\)](#)
[Court Agrees to Hear Unity Journalist Appeal \(Mizzima\)](#)
[Farmers Hearing Postponed \(Eleven\)](#)

October 16

[Seven Kanbalu Farmers Released \(DVB\)](#)
[Nine Farmers Sentenced to Seven Years \(Irrawaddy\)](#)
[Student Activist Released \(Eleven\)](#)
[Bi Mon Te Nay Journalists Sentenced \(Associated Press\)](#)
[Bi Mon Te Nay Journalists Sentenced \(DVB\)](#)
[Bi Mon Te Nay Journalists Sentenced \(Irrawaddy\)](#)
[Bi Mon Te Nay Journalists To Appeal Sentence \(Myanmar Times\)](#)
[Journalists Criticize Media Bill \(Voice Of America\)](#)

October 17

[Ko Htin Kyaw Too Weak For Trial \(Eleven\)](#)
[Tin Mar Yi Charged \(Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)
[Chin Newspapers Shut Down \(BNI\)](#)

October 20

[Stop Submitting Human Rights Report on Myanmar to UN General Assembly, Thein Sein Tells EU \(Eleven\)](#)
[Activist Charged Under Section 18 \(Bottom of Article\) \(Myanmar Times\)](#)
[Thein Sein Urges EU to Stop Submitting Reports \(Eleven\)](#)
[Solo Protest Calling for End of Corruption in Courts \(Eleven/Burmese\)](#)
[UN Special Rapporteur Reports on Burma to UN \(Mizzima\)](#)
[Thein Sein Urges EU to Stop Submitting Reports \(Mizzima\)](#)
[Thein Sein Urges EU to Stop Submitting](#)

[Reports \(Myanmar Times\)](#)
[Civil Society Forum Criticizes Government \(Myanmar Times\)](#)
[Kanbalu Farmers Released \(Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

October 21

[Journalist Detained by Army \(The Irrawaddy\)](#)
[Reporters Without Borders Condemn Bi Mon Te Nay Sentencing \(Burmanet\)](#)
[Bi Mon Te Nay Journalists Sentenced \(Eleven\)](#)

October 22

[ABFSU Members Call for Prisoner to Receive Healthcare \(Eleven/Burmese\)](#)
[Daw Nyo Receives Treatment \(Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

October 23

[Five Tortured in Shan State \(Mizzima\)](#)

October 24

[Missing Journalist Killed In Custody Of Burmese Army \(Irrawaddy\)](#)
[Activist Opposes Change In Court \(Myanmar Times\)](#)
[Missing Journalist Killed \(DVB\)](#)
[Missing Journalist Killed \(Irrawaddy \(2\)\)](#)
[Five Tortured in Shan State \(BNI\)](#)
[Chin Newspapers Shut Down \(BNI\)](#)

October 25

[Missing Journalist Killed \(Eleven\)](#)

October 27

[Chin Newspapers Forced to Shut Down \(Irrawaddy\)](#)
[Activists to be Charged for Par Gyi Protests \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

October 28

[Bi Mon Te Nay Appeal Rejected \(Myanmar Times\)](#)
[Reporters Death Sparks Candlelit Vigil \(Eleven\)](#)
[Activists Charged for Protesting Par Gyi's Death \(The Irrawaddy\)](#)
[Amnesty Calls for Tough UN](#)

Links / Resources

[Resolution \(Amnesty International\)](#)
[NGO's Call For Probe into Roi Ja's Disappearance \(DVB\)](#)
[Activists Charged for Protesting Par Gyi's Death \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

October 29

[British & US Embassies Call For Investigation Into Death Of Journalist \(Irrawaddy\)](#)
[British & US Embassies Call For Investigation Into Death Of Journalist \(DVB\)](#)
[Jailed Farmers Face Additional Charges \(DVB\)](#)

October 30

[Human Rights Group Condemns Killing \(Amnesty International\)](#)
[Human Rights Group Condemns Killing \(AHRC\)](#)
[Htin Kyaw Sentence Extended \(BBC/Burmese\)](#)
[Htin Kyaw Sentence Extended \(RFA/Burmese\)](#)
[Htin Kyaw Sentence Extended \(DVB/Burmese-YouTube\)](#)
[AAPP Excluded from new Prisoner Task Force \(Irrawaddy\)](#)
[Activist Charged under Section 18 \(Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

October 31

[Htin Kyaw To Serve Thirteen Years \(DVB\)](#)
[Call for Inquiry into Par Gyi's Death \(New Light of Myanmar\)](#)