



## Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

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# NEWSLETTER MARCH 2017

## HUMAN RIGHTS LECTURES

**Lectures in Tenasserim Division, three in Sagaing Division, one in Mon State, and one in Chin State**

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) continued to deliver human rights lectures throughout Burma in March. A total of 13 lectures were delivered in March: eight in Tenasserim Division, three in Sagaing District, one in Mon State and one in Chin State. To be precise, in eight villages of Pulaw Township in Myeik District, two markets in Tamu Township, Tamu District and one church in Kalay Township, Kalay District, one village in Thahton District, Mon State, and one church in Paletwa Township, Chin State. The lectures covered protection and prevention of human rights abuses as prescribed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The lectures furthermore aimed to promoting general compliance with the law. Not only did AAPP members Ko Aung Myo Kyaw, Ko Wanna Nwe, Ko Myo Tun and Ko Kyaw Oo deliver the lectures, but they received assistance from the 88 Peace and Open Society Member Tint Lwin and Pulaw Youth Network member Sabae Phyu, who discussed the peace process in relation to human rights. Attendants included both Government officials and civilians, and a number of children were present as well. AAPP would like to give special thanks to all the people who helped AAPP organise this month's lectures: Secretary General of the Karen National Union (KNU) Tun Oo, KNU's Chit Thu, Karen representative Saw Kyaw Moe, member of 88 Peace and Open Society Tint Lwin and member of Pulaw Youth Network Sabae Phyu. Furthermore, we would like to thank village administrators, church officials and market officials who made the lectures possible.

## Trainings successful in Tenasserim Division

AAPP is glad to announce results from past capacity building measures: Two more lectures were delivered in two villages in Pulaw Township in Tenasserim Division by the Prevention and Promotion of Human Rights Group (Human Rights Defenders Group). This group completed Human Rights and Transitional Justice Training provided by AAPP, received materials to help them train their communities, and are now capable to independently assist AAPP in training communities in human rights.



AAPP member Wanna Nwe delivers a human rights lecture in Chin State.

## TRANSITIONAL TRAININGS

## JUSTICE

**Training in Tenasserim Division, Sagaing Division, KNU Region, and Lecture in Chin State**

As a part of the series of regular trainings on transitional justice, AAPP held two 12-day lectures, one 11-day training and a lecture on transitional justice. The training from March 16 to March 26 was organized in Tamu Township,

Sagaing Division. There were 29 participants in the training including members from the NLD, KWC, Kayuna Youth Group, Sandaku Youth Group, Tamu Youth Network, Kukee Youth Network, Youth Social Occasion of Joy or Grief Group, Funeral Service Society, Social Affairs Association, students and locals. Participants were Burmese, Kukee, Chin, and Shan. The training was administered by AAPP's Documentation and Transitional Justice Trainer Kyaw Oo, and AAPP's Human Rights Trainer Nay Wunn.

AAPP provided training in Pulaw Township in Tenasserim Division from March 7-18. In Pulaw Township. The Training was administered by AAPP's Human Rights Trainer Zun Pan and AAPP's Documentation and Transitional Justice Trainer Sai Myint Thu. The training was attended by 22 participants, including NLD members, 88 Peace and Open Society members, students, teachers, staff, and members of community based organizations from Pulaw Township.

AAPP provided training in Battalion 2, Brigade 1 of the KNU in Thaton District in Mon State from March 20 to 31. The training in Thaton District was given by AAPP's Human Rights Trainer Saw Than Hlaing and AAPP's Documentation and Transitional Justice Trainer Sai Myint Thu. The training was attended by 23 people, including Karen National Union (KNU), students and a local woman.

Considering the different situations in the three regions however, the three trainings focused on different issues. There have been cases of human rights violations in these townships, including land confiscation, arbitrarily detention, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and corrupt judiciaries.

On March 29, AAPP also delivered a one-and-a-half-hour lecture in Saint Peter Church in Paletwa Township, Chin State. Over 550 youth attended the lecture. AAPP Human Rights Trainers Ko Wanna Nwe delivered the lecture on peace and transitional justice. Such activities serve as a capacity-building measures, carried out with the aim of encouraging and informing their participation in the democratic setup.



Head of AAPP's Rangoon office Ko Aung Myo Kyaw (pictured left) delivers the training to the KNU members, students and locals. AAPP member Khaing Zaw Win (pictured right) translated into Karen.

## ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

### AAPP meets Bago Regional Members of Parliament

On March 22, AAPP met with Members of Parliament and the east part Ex-Political Prisoners Group in the Bago Parliament, to discuss building a commemoration monument for those who sacrificed their lives in the 1988 uprisings. The Parliament Representatives included Chairman U Khin Maung Yin, Vice Chairman U Kyi Zin, Chairman of Education, Health and Social Committees Dr. Kyaw Kyaw, Head of AAPP's Rangon Office Ko Aung Myo Kyaw, and AAPP Counselor Ko Lwin Moe Myint.

### AAPP Discusses a Political Party at UMFCCI

On March 30 and 31, the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) held a dialogue on the emergence of a political party. Among the invitees was AAPP's joint secretary Ko Bo Kyi, to discuss democracy and civilians.

### AAPP Met with Czech Republic Ambassador

On March 28, AAPP's Joint Secretary of the Ko Bo Kyi met with the Czech Ambassador to discuss democratic transition from the Czech experience.

### **Human Rights Defenders Forum (HRDF)**

On March 29, the Human Rights Defenders Forum (HRDF) was held at the Central Hotel in Rangoon, Burma. The thematic topic for panel discussion was 'New Privacy and Security Protection Law and Its Impacts on Human Rights Defenders.' AAPP member and HRDF steering committee member Zaw Moe performed as the moderator in this forum.

### **AAPP Attended the Commemoration of Phone Maw and Soe Naing**

On March 13, a ceremony was held to commemorate the 29th anniversary of the deaths of Phone Maw and Soe Naing at the Rangoon Institute of Technology (RIT) in Yangon. AAPP secretary Tate Naing and some fellow AAPP staff members attended the ceremony.

### **Discussion with OHCHR**

On March 28, AAPP's Zaw Moe attended a meeting with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). AAPP together with other visiting organisations discussed human rights conditions and listed recommendations. AAPP presented its recommendations in writing, including combatting arbitrary detention, political prisoners, restrictions on freedom of expression and weakness of mental health infrastructure in Burma, as well as laws that need to be reformed.

### **Reparation Working Group Meeting**

On March 28, a reparation working group meeting was held at the ND-Burma Office in Rangoon, discussing reparations for former political prisoners, in particular reparation at the Karen, Mon and Bago Parliaments and involvement of Civil Society Organisations in Mandalay. The meeting hosted AAPP members Zaw Moe, Ye Aung, Thwin Lin Aung, Wunna Nwe, Thet Thet Aung and Han Gyi. In an earlier meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand, AAPP discussed reparations, but an NLD lawmaker stated that it is too early to discuss reparations. In the current meeting, AAPP presented that it is preparing to publish the

Myanmar National Human Rights Committee (MNHRC) Law Reform Report in April or May. The next workshop is scheduled in June.

### **TAF Violence Monitoring Roundtable**

On March 15, Asia Foundation held a TAF Violence Monitoring Roundtable, with representatives from AAPP, SHALOM, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), Kayah State Peace Monitoring Network (KSPMN), Tayoyan Women's Union (TWU) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Myanmar Peace Monitor (MPM), Centre for Diversity and National Harmony, Joint Monitoring Committee - Technical Secretariat Centre (JMC-TSC), ND-Burma, Ta'ang Students and Youth Organisation, the Tagaung Institute. and The Asia Foundation (TAF). The major topic of discussion was collecting, storing and disseminating information at the organisations. Asia Foundation then took the opportunity to explain their policy of violence monitoring in Burma.



AAPP's members meet with Bago Regional Parliamentary members.

## **MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

In March, AAPP-Mental Health Assistance Program (MHAP) Chief Clinical Supervisor Kyaw Soe win and counselor Moe Myint attended epi-info data analysis upgrade training, organised by Johns Hopkins University (JHU) research field team to improve data analysis of counseling service outcomes. On March 13, AAPP-MHAP

Common Elements Treatment Approach (CETA) counselors visited the Youth Training Center, 'Hnget Awe San' (a Juvenile prison) and started recruitment for counseling services. The center currently houses 26 residents. U Kyaw Oo, in charge of the center, warmly welcomed the AAPP counselors, and arranged the necessities for recruitment and a private space for counseling. Six AAPP counselors are active in the center, providing counseling services for 12 clients every Monday - and more will be included in the upcoming weeks.

## GENERAL ACTIVITIES

### AAPP Honored Female Political Prisoners on International Women’s Day

On March 8 - International Women’s Day, AAPP gave special attention to female political prisoners who sacrificed their freedom to fight for democracy and human rights in Burma. AAPP identified eight high profile cases as illustrative examples of courage and determination of female political prisoners: Leader of the Democracy and Peace Women’s Network Naw Ohn Hla; Lower House MP Dr. May Win Myint Dr. Shwe Pon; Upper House MP Zin Mar Aung; Farmer and Democracy Activist Su Su Nway; Human Rights Defender Ma Phyu; Rangoon Regional Parliament MP Sander Min; and Member of All Burma Federation of Student Unions Phyu Hnin Htwe.

### AAPP Marked its 17 Year Anniversary by Visiting Students at Hnget Aw San School

On the 17th anniversary of AAPP’s establishment, AAPP visited the Hnget Aw San Social Welfare Training School. AAPP donated sports materials and provided lunch.



Pictured right, AAPP Joint-Secretary Ko Bo Kyi and Chief Clinical Supervisor Ko Kyaw Soe Win, donate supplies to the Hnget Aung San School.