

OCTOBER CHRONOLOGY 2017

Summary of the Current Situation:

There are **221** individuals oppressed in Burma due to political activities,

45 political prisoners are serving prison sentences,

49 are awaiting trial inside prison,

127 are awaiting trial outside prison.



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Accessed October 2017



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

နိုင်ငံရေးအကျဉ်းသားများ ကူညီစောင့်ရှောက်ရေးအသင်း (မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ)

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POLITICAL PRISONERS

▪ ARRESTS

Two Individuals Working with Foreign Journalists Arrested Over Drone

On October 27, language interpreter, Aung Naing Soe, and driver, Hla Tin, were arrested along with a pair of foreign journalists, whom they were working for, by police in Naypyitaw under Section 8 of the Export and Import Act for flying a drone near parliament. Foreign journalists, Lau Hon Meng from Singapore, and Mok Choy Lin from Malaysia, were on assignment in Burma working for Turkey's state broadcaster 'Turkish Radio and Television Corporation' (TRT). Police Lieutenant, Tun Tun Win, stated to reporters that the four individuals will be remanded in custody for up to 15 days but are expected to be charged within 10 days. Aung Naing Soe and Hla Tin have been transferred to Pyinmana Prison in Naypyitaw. On the night of October 27, 25 police officers raided the home of Aung Naing Soe, who is a well-known journalist, searching through documents and seizing several flash drives. The raid was reportedly conducted without a warrant. As of October 31, police have refused to let Aung Naing Soe's family members visit him while he is remanded in custody. On October 31, Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN) issued a statement calling for the immediate release of Aung Naing Soe and Hla Tin and for the Government to ensure that they have access to their lawyers, visitation opportunities from their families and for their belongings returned to them.

[\(28 October 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 October 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 October 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 October 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 October 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 October 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 October 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 October 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 October 2017 - DVB\)](#) [\(28 October 2017 - DVB\)](#) [\(28 October 2017 - Eleven\)](#)

[\(29 October 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(29 October 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 October 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(30 October 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(30 October 2017 - Frontier Myanmar\)](#) [\(31 October 2017 - BHRN\)](#)

▪ CHARGES

Lawsuit Filed Against Five Facebook Users by USDP Member

Member of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) Magwe Regional Office, Han Maung, filed a lawsuit under Section 66(d) of the Telecommunications Law at the Magwe Police Station against the unknown owners of five alias Facebook accounts. Han Maung has accused the owners of the accounts named 'Ye Myint', 'Zarni Tike', 'Chief General Sai Mahar Tun', 'Min Din', and 'Soe Lwin,' of publishing posts on Facebook that indicated he was behind the recruitment of mobs to instigate unrest in Ann Township, Rakhine State in September, and that he hired Aung Kyaw Myint, who was charged by the Magwe Divisional Government at the Magwe District Court on September 29 for offering money to people participate in the mob. Police Lieutenant from Magwe Region Police Station, Kyaw Htoo, said that the Criminal Investigation Department will investigate the owners of the Facebook accounts as well as Han Maung's phone, which he handed over to authorities for investigation.

[\(12 October 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#)

Lawsuit Filed Against Facebook Account Owner Under 66(d)

Secretary of the Sanchaung Township National League for Democracy (NLD) Party, Chit Ko Ko Aung, filed a defamation lawsuit under Section 66(d) of the Telecommunications Law against the owner of the alias Facebook account "NLD Special News". On October 21, the "NLD Special News" account posted online that members of NLD from Sanchaung, Kyimyindine, Ahlon, Lanmadaw, and Latha Townships intended to collaborate and stage a protest demanding the resignation of Yangon Chief Minister, Phyo Min Thein. A police officer from the Yangon Division

Police Force said that the identity of the Facebook account owner is still not known.
[\(23 October 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)

▪ Detention

Michael Kyaw Myint Detained Before Peaceful Protest

On October 23, Michael Kyaw Myint was arrested and detained by police on sedition charges under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code in relation to a complaint filed by Secretary of the Yangon Regional Government, U Moe Hein. On October 24, while in custody, he was taken to the Tamwe Township court for a remand court hearing. He was subsequently taken to Insein Prison where he remains, as of writing, awaiting trial. Michael Kyaw Myint was arrested while he was preparing to drive to a protest he intended to hold against the Yangon Regional Government at an area commonly used for demonstrations known as the “Hittaing” in Tamwe Township, Rangoon. He obtained permission from authorities on October 21 to hold a peaceful protest at this area. It is believed the complaint filed against Michael Kyaw Myint was initiated after his announcement on Facebook on October 23 about his intention to hold the protest. On November 1, the first court hearing in his trial at the Tamwe Township Court was adjourned and deferred until November 10 because the plaintiff, Moe Hein, asked for a leave of absence.

[\(22 October 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)[\(23 October 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 October 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 October 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 October 2017 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 October 2017 - Frontier Myanmar\)](#)[\(24 October 2017 - Eleven\)](#)[\(24 October 2017 - Eleven\)](#)[\(26 October 2017 - Eleven\)](#)[\(25 October 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)[\(27 October 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#)[\(1 November 2017 - Eleven\)](#)

▪ TRIALS

Swe Win Retains Bail While Trial Continues

On October 13, *Myanmar Now* Chief Editor, Swe Win, who is on trial for charges of defamation under Section 66(d) of the Telecommunications Law, attended a hearing at the Maha Aung Myay Township Court, Mandalay Division. At the court hearing, the judge announced that on October 27 the court would rule on an appeal submitted by the plaintiff to revoke Swe Win's bail issuance. The case began on March 7 when Kyaw Myo Swe filed charges under Section 66(d) against Swe Win in relation to a Facebook post he published condemning the leader of the ultra-nationalist group Association for the Protection of Race and Religion (Ma Ba Tha), U Wirathu. Though Swe Win was not taken into custody following the initiation of the lawsuit, he was arrested by police at the Yangon Airport on July 30, over alleged fears that he was fleeing the charges against him. The following day on July 31, Swe Win was released on bail set at 5 million kyat (about USD\$3680), however plaintiff, Kyaw Myo Swe, appealed the court's decision in August. In recent months, Swe Win, who is a prominent investigative journalist, has received death threats and on March 14 faced a violent physical assault, on top of the criminal charges against him in connection with his reporting on U Wirathu. On October 27, the Mandalay District Court rejected an appeal by Kyaw Myo Swe to revoke bail for Swe Win.

[\(13 October 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)\(14 October 2017 - Mizzima\)\(27 October 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)\(27 October 2017 - Fortify Rights\) \(28 October 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

Absent Judge Stalls Aung Ko Htway Bail Decision

On October 2, at a court hearing at the Dagon Seikan Township Court, Rangoon, a decision could not be made on whether to

grant Aung Ko Htway bail because the assistant judge, who had taken over the case from the main judge who was unable to attend, could not rule on the matter. Once more, at a court hearing on October 16, which adjourned prematurely because of a power outage, Aung Ko Htway was not permitted bail as a ruling could not be made in the absence of the main judge. At the rescheduled court hearing on October 26, the Judge was still absent, and the court was still unable to rule on bail. Aung Ko Htwe's next court hearing is scheduled to take place on November 9, when the first of four prosecution witnesses are expected to testify.

[\(17 October 2017 - Myanmar Times\)\(16 October 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)\(16 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)\(17 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)\(26 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Arakanese Activist Arrested Under Unlawful Associations Act Awaits Trial

On October 15, Arakanese activist and Chairman of the Thingaha Kann Latt Rakhita group from Mrauk-U Township, Arakan State, Ann Thar Gyi (A.K.A. Than Shwe), was arrested under Sections 17/1 and 17/2 of the Unlawful Associations Act at the Mya Tansaung Monastery by Mrauk-U Myoma Police. On October 16, he was formally charged during a remand court hearing at the Mrauk-U Township Court and was taken to Sittwe Prison the same day where he remains remanded in custody awaiting trial. An arrest warrant was issued against him in May for delivering a speech commemorating the founding of the Arakan Army on April 10. Although authorities banned the event, Ann Thar Gyi held lectures nonetheless. A case was filed against him by Light Infantry Battalion #540 under the Unlawful Associations Act in May. This case follows the sentencing in August of Abbot Nanda Thara and Khine Ni Min, who were arrested under Section 17/1 of the Unlawful Associations Act in April for organizing a football match marking the 8th

anniversary of the founding of the Arakan Army.

[\(16 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)[\(16 October 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)[\(16 October 2017 - BNI/Burmese\)](#)[\(17 October 2017 - BNI\)](#)

■ SENTENCES

ALP Member Sentenced to 18 Months Imprisonment

On October 12, Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) Member and human rights defender, Khaing Myo Tun, was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment under Sections 505(b) and 505(c) of the Penal Code at Sittwe Township Court, Arakan State. Having been detained for over 14 months since his arrest on July 25, 2016, he will serve four more months in prison. During his trial, which included more than 40 court hearings, he was refused bail in August 2016 and February 2017. The charges were pressed against Khaing Myo Tun, by Lieutenant Colonel Tin Naing Tun in relation to a statement published by the ALP on April 24, 2016, claiming that the Military had used forced labor and had committed other human rights violations against civilians in Arakan State in early 2016. At the time the statement was published, Khaing Myo Tun was the Deputy Information Officer of the ALP. Consistent with the ALP statement, human rights organization, Fortify Rights, documented seven cases of forced labor by the Military in December 2015 and January 2016 during fighting between the Military and the Arakan Army, where soldiers forced ethnic Rakhine civilians to act as porters under threat of death.

[\(11 October 2017 - Fortify Rights\)\(12 October 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)\(12 October 2017 - Frontier Myanmar\)\(12 October 2017 - The Irrawaddy/Burmese\)\(12 October 2017 - The RFA/Burmese\)\(13 October 2017 - DVB\)](#)

Kachin Baptist Convention Officials Sentenced

On October 19, Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC) Pastor, Naung Latt, and KBC youth leader, Gam Seng, from Mong Ko Township, Kachin State, appeared before the Muse Township Court. During the hearing, both prosecution and defense counsels gave

their final statements. On October 27, the Lashio District Court in northern Shan State sentenced Naung Latt to four years and three months imprisonment with hard labor under Sections 17/1 of the Unlawful Associations Act (2 years), Section 500 of the Penal Code (2 Years), and Section 8 of the Export and Import Act (3 months). Gam Seng was sentenced to two years and three months imprisonment with hard labor under Sections 17/1 of the Unlawful Associations Act (2 years) and Section 8 of the Export and Import Act (3 months). The two KBC Officials were charged with providing information, recruiting troops, and transporting fuel to the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) under Section 17/1 of the Unlawful Associations Act. Naung Latt was additionally charged for defamation under Section 500 of the Penal Code by the Military in connection with an interview he gave to *Voice of America* on December 1, 2016, about alleged Military airstrikes in civilian areas in Shan State. Both were charged under Section 8 the Export and Import Act for use of an unlicensed motorcycle.

Naung Latt and Gam Seng were arbitrarily taken into custody on December 24, 2016, by Military Battalion #99, Major Kyaw Myo Min Latt, and were detained incommunicado at Kalaya 123 Military Base in Nampaka Township, northern Shan State, for almost a month until January 19, when the Military confirmed their arrest and detention, handing the pair over to police along with signed confessions of their support for the KIA. The pair were arrested and detained shortly after meeting and speaking with reporters from several news sources about the alleged Military occupation, bombing, and subsequent rebuilding of the Mong Ko church, in Muse Township in late 2016, which resulted in photos of the destruction being published in the media. While in detention, Naung Latt and Gam Seng were repeatedly interrogated and their defence lawyers maintain that

their confessions were signed under duress. According to accounts from journalists, members of the media were restricted access to the trial proceedings at the Lashio District Court and were barred from taking pictures of the defendants outside the courthouse. On October 27, the US Embassy issued a statement expressing concern about the sentencing of Naung Latt and Gam Seng, the motive behind their prosecution and their treatment while in secret detention. In the statement, they called for an end to the use of the Unlawful Associations Act and other repressive legislation that may be used to arbitrarily arrest and detain citizens.

[\(24 October 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#)[\(19 October 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)[\(27 October 2017 - Fortify Rights\)](#)[\(26 October 2017 - Human Rights Watch\)](#) [\(26 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 October 2017 - Mizzima\)](#)[\(27 October 2017 - Irrawaddy\)](#)[\(26 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)[\(27 October 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 October 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 October 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#)[\(27 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)[\(27 October 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#)[\(27 October 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)[\(27 October 2017 - DVB\)](#)[\(30 October 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#)[\(27 October 2017 - Christian Solidarity Worldwide\)](#)[\(30 October 2017 - Mizzima\)](#)[\(28 October 2017 - Mizzima\)](#)[\(28 October 2017 - BNI/Burmese\)](#)[\(28 October 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)[\(28 October 2017 - Mizzima\)](#)

Fourteen-year-old Student Sentenced to Two Years Detention under Unlawful Associations Act

On October 30, 14-year-old student from Htan Ma Sai Village in Nant Hsam Township, Northern Shan State, Maing Cho Min Htwe (A.K.A Aik Yann), was sentenced by judge, Zaw Zaw Oo, to two years detention at the Mandalay Youth Training Center and a 1,000 kyat fine (about USD\$0.73) under

Section 17/1 of the Unlawful Associations Act at the Nant Hsam Township Court. The judge delivered Maing Cho Min Htwe's sentence without examining prosecution and defense witnesses on the same day that he was formally charged by LIB #77 Major Myint Maung Maung Soe from. The judge ruled that Maing Cho Min Htwe had been recruited by the TNLA and trained to become a soldier, which Maing Cho Min Htwe allegedly confessed to at the court hearing. The only civilian allowed to attend the court hearing was Maing Cho Min Htwe's mother. On October 25, Major Myint Maung Maung Soe filed a lawsuit against Maing Cho Min Htwe under Section 17/1 of the Unlawful Associations Act at the Nant Hsam Township Court/Police Station. Maing Cho Min Htwe was originally arrested on October 5 at around 5pm at a Military checkpoint while returning to Nant Hsam City from his village by a group of soldiers, led by LIB #105 Captain Thura Tun on suspicion of affiliation with the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) based on a picture found on his mobile phone showing him wearing a TNLA uniform. He was detained at the Nant Hsam Military Base for 20 days without access to communication with family.

[\(31 October 2017 -Network Media Group/Burmese\)](#)

RESTRICTIONS ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Protesters Demand Redistribution of Land From WML

On October 4, about 150 residents from Ton Taw Kyaung, Moe Kyo Pyin Ale, Sel Te, and Lel Ti villages marched to the office of Wanbao Mining Limited (WML), the Chinese company co-operating the Letpadaung Copper Mine in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division, with the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited (UMEHL). Protesters denounced the company for confiscating their lands and demanded the redistribution of 1,900 acres of substitute farmland, as per the Letpadaung Taung Investigation Commission Report published in March 2013. On October 5, Letpadaung Copper Mine Manager, Hla Sein, stated that there was no plan to provide substitute lands for villagers whose lands have been confiscated. He also added that crop compensation, which villagers had been demanding, was not included in the Letpadaung Taung Investigation Commission Report.

On October 9, local villagers blocked four trucks transporting copper ore and acid from entering the mine, near Moe Kyo Pyin Ale Village. Subsequently, a protest camp was opened at the location. On October 10, approximately 300 soldiers and police officers arrived at the site threatening the protesters at gunpoint, enabling the trucks to be taken back to the mine. On October 12 at 1:30AM, 70 people destroyed the protest camp. Protest Leader, Win Kyaw, said that even though the protest camp was destroyed other protests camps had already been set up in its place the that they would continue to protest until their demands are met. On October 14, approximately 150 protesters marched from Moe Kyo Pyin Ale

village to the front of WML's office. In front of a police barricade, the protesters again denounced the company for failing to abide by the Letpadaung Taung Investigation Commission Report and redistribute 1,900 acres of substitute land to those affected by the land confiscation. On October 24, representatives from WML and UMEHL, municipal government members including, Municipal Minister, Myint Kyi, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, Kam Zar Mone, Minister of Border and Security, Major Kyaw Than Naing, met with seven local villagers. Letpadaung Copper Mine Manager, Hla Sein, stated 1900 acres of substitute land would be found for those who had their lands confiscated. WML stated that they asked the Forestry Department and Land Records Department to identify available vacant land because there is no vacant land in Salingyi Township or Yinmabin Township. WML proposed redistributing vacant land in Kani Township, Sagaing Division, to villagers as an alternative compensation option. Locals objected to the proposed offer, deeming the land too far away. Therefore, WML/UMEHL proposed to find land closer to Salingyi and Yinmabin Townships. Local villagers at the meeting also demanded crop compensation, to which there was no response from the other parties.

[\(2 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(5 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(6 October 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(10 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(10 October 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(10 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(11 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(11 October 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(11 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(12 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(12 October 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(12 October 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)

[\(15 October 2017 - Eleven\)](#) [\(24 October 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(25 October 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 October 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

Protester Demands Land Ownership Application Issues be Resolved

On October 4, resident from Myittha Township, Mandalay Division, Shwe Mi, staged a solo protest with permission from authorities calling on the Government to resolve the issues that farmers face when applying for ownership titles in accordance with the 2012 Farmland Law. She called for serious action to be taken against civil servants who take bribes during the land ownership application process and urged township authorities to assist farmers with the process. The official cost of the land ownership application process is 500 kyat (about USD\$0.37) but farmers are frequently asked to pay more in the form of a bribe. If farmers do not pay the extra amount, they do not obtain the land title. Hence, she wants authorities to resolve these issues by investigating the problem. Shwe Mi said that she has not received her land ownership title, and as a result cannot borrow money from banks for farming, making her life difficult.

[\(4 October 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

Farmers Receive “Unofficial” Ownership Titles

Over 300 out of over 1,000 farmers from Kya Khat Kwin Village Tract in Inga Township, Irrawaddy Division, have received “unofficial” land ownership titles. As a result of the questionable authenticity of the titles, farmers have been refused loans from the Agriculture Bank. Land ownership titles have been issued since 2013 after the 2012 Farmland Law was enacted. The “unofficial” land ownership titles farmers received were printed on white paper, contrary to the official

document that is normally printed on green paper. The cost of the land ownership application process is 500 kyat (about USD\$0.37). Farmers from Kya Khat Kwin Village Tract who received the “unofficial” land ownership titles paid 5,000 kyat (about USD\$3.65) per acre of land to have their lands measured by the Land Records Department and another 5,000 kyat or 10,000 kyat to receive the title. When farmers apply for an ownership title, they firstly fill in the form with village tract administrators. The form is then verified by the Village Committee for Scrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands and then submitted to the Township Committee for Scrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands, which measures the land. Farmers are commonly asked for to pay a fee to obtain land ownership titles from the Township Committee for Scrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands. Even though farmers have submitted a complaint letter to the Inga Township Administrator, an investigation into the matter has not begun yet. Inga Township Member of Parliament (MP), Bo Bo Zin, said that he was aware of the issue and that a meeting would be organized about the issue with the Inga Township Administrator and the Land Records Department. On October 17, during an Upper House Parliamentary Session, Deputy Minister of Irrigation, Livestock and Agriculture, Hla Kyaw, answered a question asked by #8 Constituency Magwe Division MP, Win Myint, on how the Ministry could reduce the amount of time it takes for farmers to obtain land ownership titles and how the Ministry could correct the questionable land ownership titles that have been issued.

[\(8 October 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(8 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

Farmers Pen Letter to CRCCF to Receive Compensation for Confiscated Land

On October 8, 26 farmers from Kalay Township, Sagaing Division, submitted a letter to the Central Review Committee on

the Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands (CRCCF) asking to receive compensation for their confiscated lands. In 1990, 73.45 acres of land in Kalay Township were confiscated from the farmers to build Kalay University, for which they did not receive any compensation. Despite farmers having submitted a letter in 2012 to the former Government for compensation, they have not received a response and no action has been taken, prompting them to submit a new letter. One of the farmers whose land was confiscated, Kyin Za Htan, stated that farmers whose lands were confiscated now earn a living as casual laborers because they can no longer farm. [\(9 October 2017 – The Voice/Burmese\)](#)

Government Orders Assessment of Damage Caused by Tagaung Nickel Plant

In October, Industry Minister, Khin Maung Cho, stated that President, U Htin Kyaw, had ordered an assessment to be carried out of the damage caused to the environment and to the agriculture sector as a result of improper waste disposal from the Tagaung Nickel Mine, which spans across Htigyaing and Katha Townships in Sagaing Division and Thabeikkyin Township, Mandalay Division. Numerous protests in recent years have occurred against the mining operation where farmers and villagers have denounced the seizure of their farmlands and have demanded compensation for the environmental damage and crop damage the mine has caused.

[\(10 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(10 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

KIA Releases Detained Civilians, Dozens Still Missing

On October 10, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) released seven villagers who had been detained since October 4 when approximately 40 civilians from Sainglaw, Hongtaung and Kaungkha villages in Sadone Sub-township of Waingmaw Township, Kachin State, were taken into

custody. On October 6, eight civilians, including Shan ethnics and Chinese nationals, were released after successful talks between the KIA and the Peace-talk Creation Group (PCG). The location of the remaining detained civilians remains unknown and the motive behind the seizure of the civilians remains unclear. KIA Spokesperson and Head of the Technical Advisory Group, Daung Khar, told reporters that the KIA had stopped the forced recruitments of civilians in local villages. However, Executive KIA Member, Colonel Zaw Daung, said that the incident was related to recruitment.

[\(5 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(6 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(7 October 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(7 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(7 October 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(7 October 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(8 October 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(8 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(9 October 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(10 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(12 October 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(9 October 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

Farmers Speak Out About Land Confiscation in Kyaukse Township

On October 11, farmers from Kyaukpyar Village, Kyaukse Township, Mandalay Division, held a press conference at the Mandalay Media Center demanding fair compensation for more than 400 acres of land, belonging to 93 farmers, that had been confiscated in 2004 by the Government. The confiscated lands were allocated for the development of three cement plants. Farmers alleged that in 2007, the AAA, Kyar Khaung (Tiger Head), and Myanmar Sin (Myanmar Elephant) cement plants offered 70,000 kyat (about USD\$51) per acre for land belonging to farmers that was considered rocky and 100,000 kyat (about USD\$73) per acre for land that did not contain rocks. Farmers who were not satisfied with the compensation offer were threatened at the

Kyaukse General Administration Office to accept the compensation offers or face legal prosecution. 12 out of 93 farmers turned down the companies' offers for compensation as they were well below the market price for land, which was approximately 5 million kyat (about USD\$3656) per acre at the time, receiving no compensation at all. Kyaukpyar Village farmer, Ko Zaw Htike, demanded at the press conference that farmers be given substitute lands and stated that he and other farmers have not been able to work since their lands had been confiscated. According to Kyaukse residents, ash from the cement plants has damaged crops and soils in nearby fields as well as polluted the air and water, causing health issues. Farmers at the conference also stated that they were dissatisfied with recommendations that were submitted by the Kyaukse Township Review Committee on Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands to the Mandalay Divisional Government. Farmers have submitted a complaint letter about the land confiscation issue to Vice President and Chairman of the Central Review Committee on Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands (CRCCF), Henry Van Thio, and will try to arrange a meeting Prime Minister of the Mandalay Division Government.

[\(11 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)\(12 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\) \(12 October 2017 - Eleven\)\(13 October 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

Land Confiscated in Karenni State

On October 12, Ethnic Armed Group (EAG), the Karenni National Democratic Party (KNDP) A.K.A. Nagar Group (Dragon Group) removed a house situated on farmland in Htu Du Ngan Tha Village, in Loikaw Township, Karenni State, with the help of police. According to reports, the KNDP destroyed buildings and confiscated farmland in the area on three occasions in October. Locals whose farmlands were confiscated claimed that the lands had been

in their possession for so long that they were cultivated by their ancestors, though they did not have land ownership titles. Farmers said that the former government made an oral order that some of these farmlands were to be given to KNDP. Naw Mu Aye, whose farmland was confiscated, said that even though she reported the issue and claimed ownership of the land to authorities she was threatened and forced to give up the land. Opposition parties in Karenni State have criticized land confiscation carried out by the KNDP, with help from police, who have used their power to take land away from locals who are not familiar with land laws, amounting to violations of human rights in their view. Khun B Htoo, Chairman of the Karenni National Party (KNP) has criticized the Karenni State Government and Parliament Representatives who have stayed quiet as no take action has been taken against land confiscation. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) based in Karenni State have said that it is difficult to negotiate issues, including land confiscation with the KNDP, an who have a peace agreement with the Government.

[\(12 October 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#)

Confiscated Lands Planned to be Returned to Original Owners

2,600 acres of land from Mine Dine Village Tract, Phon Kone Village Tract, Ma Kyee Kone Village Tract and Ohn Mine Village Tract in Thabeikkyin Township, Mandalay Division, which were confiscated by the Military, are planned to be returned to original owners. Historically, the Military confiscated over 8,000 acres of land in Thabeikkyin Township, but 2,600 acres were never utilized for state projects. As a result, farmers have continued to cultivate on the 2,600 lands. Thabeikkyin Township Minister of Parliament (MP) Tin Myint Swe said that these lands will be fairly provided by Committee for Scrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands to original landowners and those who are currently

using the land.
[\(16 October 2017 – RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Soldiers Violently Assault Four Kachin Men in Kachin State

On October 18, at around 10pm, four soldiers entered the Kaday Kachin Baptist Church's Compound in Hpakant Township, Kachin State, and violently assaulted four men identified as La Gway La Rain, Tu Lun, Ma Yit Gone Ming, and Gan Maw. The men were beaten, stepped on and kicked by soldiers who eventually left the compound 11pm. Another man, who was not detained by the soldiers, was closing the gate of the church, he shined a torch at the soldiers near the church's compound. The soldiers then entered the compound and assaulted the four men. Church youth leader, Ma Yan Tu Lun, said that soldiers pointed their guns at women and men who were cooking in the church and threatened them. Locals and church authorities told *The Irrawaddy* that they will file a lawsuit against the soldiers.
[\(19 October 2017 – Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)[\(19 October 2017 – BNI/Burmese\)](#)

Land Protest in Tenasserim Cancelled Over Fears of Prosecution

On October 18, approximately 200 demonstrators in Tenasserim Division, who were planning to protest the Chief Minister of the Tenasserim Regional Government, the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, and the Municipal Minister of Tenasserim Region, were dispersed by police who deemed the demonstrators' placards and slogans contrary to the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law (PAPPL). Demonstrators sought to denounce the inaction of the Ministers to ensure that the Regional Government, in accordance with a statement it made on September 17, would compensate seven farmers who had not yet been compensated for lands that had been confiscated as part of the Dawei Urban Development Project. In 1990, over 350 acres of land were

confiscated by the Government for the Dawei Urban Development Project, however the project was not initiated, and farmers continued farming the land and paid to use the land until 2011. Under the U Thein Sein Government, the confiscated lands were leased out to private companies, mainly to the Dawei Public Development Company, to build government buildings, residential apartments, and shopping centers as part of an urban development project. According to the Tenasserim Regional Government, 63 out of the 70 farmers whose lands were confiscated for the urban development project have received compensation, but seven farmers who demanded consultation with the Regional Government and the private companies remain uncompensated. According to protest leader, Ma Yi Yi Htwe, nearly 20 farmers have been sued during the land confiscation disputes that remain ongoing.

[\(18 October 2017 – RFA/Burmese\)](#)[\(18 October 2017 – The Voice/Burmese\)](#)[\(18 October 2017 – Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)[\(19 October 2017 – 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)[\(19 October 2017 – The Irrawaddy\)](#)[\(24 October 2017 – Myanmar Times\)](#)

Pyin Oo Lwin Farmers Protest Over Land Confiscation Issues

On October 23, over 300 farmers from over 20 villages in Pyin Oo Lwin Township, Mandalay Division, held a protest demanding the immediate release of incarcerated farmers and the return of confiscated land. Protesters marched around the township chanting and holding placards expressing their 13 demands for the Government. A farmer from Saytalone Village in Pyin Oo Lwin Township, Myint Naing, stated to reporters that approximately 100 farmers from his village were facing legal charges. Protest leader, Lin Htin Soe, explained that while some villagers' farmland had been seized and used for Government projects, some seized lands were never used, and many that

farmers who have tried to use these unutilized lands have been charged.

[\(23 October 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 October 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 October 2017 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 October 2017 - Eleven\)](#)

Farmers Demand Return of Confiscated Land

On October 29, dozens of farmers protested in Ottarathiri Township, Naypyidaw, demanding the return of their confiscated lands in Patheingyi Township, Irrawaddy Region. Protesters also urged the Government to take actions against village administrators and civil servants who allegedly sold the confiscated lands that were planned to be returned to farmers. In the year 2000, 120 acres of farmland in Zee Phyu Taung Village in Ye Township, Mon State, were confiscated by Military Operations Command #19 for the development of a prawn farming project. The project was ultimately unsuccessful, and the lands were supposed to be returned to farmers but were secretly sold off by village administrators. In January, six farmers from Ye Township sent letters of complaint to relevant authorities but have not received a response. On October 25, they sent a letter to the State Counselor demanding resolution of the issue. [\(29 October 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(30 October 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(30 October 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

Maing Pan Land Records Department Sets Deadline for Land Redistribution

On October 19, a meeting was held at the Maing Pan Township General Administration Office in Maing Pan City, Southern Shan State about land confiscation issues. The Forestry Department, Land Records Department and General Administration Department as well as over 20 local resident representatives attended

the meeting. The Maing Pan Land Records Department stated that local villagers must apply to receive back their confiscated lands before October 26. In 2000, the Military built #385 Artillery Base and claimed the area surrounding the base. The Military also planned to build a new city on the confiscated lands, however they could not implement the new city because they did not have at least 1,000 acres of land. Locals demanded to be allowed to cultivate the confiscated lands seeing as how they were not in use by the Military.

[\(22 October 2017 - BNI/Burmese\)](#)

Farmers Receive Land and Crop Compensation in Naypyidaw

On October 27, a land and crop compensation ceremony was held at the Naypyidaw Municipality City Hall. 14 farmers received over 39 million kyat (about USD\$28,850) in land compensation for their 38.44 acres of land that were confiscated in Zabuthiri Township, Naypyidaw. Farmers received one million kyat per acre of land (about USD\$740) and received monetary compensation crops as well depending on the variety. The farmers' land was part of approximately 60,000 acres of land that were confiscated when the Naypyidaw Territory was built. Over nearly 95 percent of compensation has been given for 23,000 acres of confiscated lands and for around 1,000 acres of forest land.

[\(27 October 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 October 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

LEGISLATION AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

New Legislation Addressing Violence Against Women to be Submitted to Parliament

On October 17, it was announced that the draft Prevention and Protection of Violence against Women Bill, aimed at addressing women's disproportionate experiences with violence, will be submitted to Parliament during this parliamentary session. In development since 2013, stemming from the collaboration between the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement and women's rights group, including Gender Equality Network the Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process, the new legislation is designed to bring Burma's laws into more effective compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which Burma ratified in 1997. According to women's right activists, the Bill will better protect women from all forms of violence, including domestic violence, marital rape, sexual violence, harassment, and assault in the workplace and in public. Definitions of such offences will be more clearly defined and

harsher penalties for violence against women will be applied. [\(17 October 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(20 October 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(20 October 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

MNHRC Declares Overcrowding in Prisons a Serious Human Rights Problem

In October, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) Commissioner, Yu Lwin Aung, stated that overcrowding was one of the main human rights problems besetting Burma's prisons, along with the lack of basic services provided to prisoners. According to the Commission's assessment, most prisons in Burma are overcrowded. It was revealed that Myingyan Prison, Mandalay Division, which has an actual capacity of 1000 inmates, was holding over 2800 inmates, nearly three times its capacity. Yu Lwin Aung acknowledged prison overcrowding as the source of inmates' health problems and the lack of basic services provided to inmates. The MNHRC will present a comprehensive report in December regarding the situation of Burma's prisons when it concludes its year-long mandate to inspect prisons.

[\(19 October 2017 - Myanmar Times\)\(19 October 2017 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#)

Almost 7,000 Cases Completed Under Pilot Court Program in One Year

Almost 7,000 cases were completed within one year under the Pilot Court Program at the Patheingyi Township Court in Irrawaddy Division. The Supreme Court of the Union implemented the Pilot Court Program, which the Patheingyi Township Court participated in, from 2015 to 2017 to improve the functions of courts. The Program aimed specifically at ensuring quicker completion of court cases and eliminating prolonged trials. Patheingyi Township Court judge, Win Aung, said that almost 5,000 of the 7,000 cases completed from October 2016 to October 2017 were vehicle related cases. He added that the United States Agency for International

Development (USAID) will evaluate whether the program has been successful or not.

[\(24 October 2017 – DVB/Burmese\)](#)

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