

DECEMBER CHRONOLOGY 2017

Summary of the Current Situation:

There are **236** individuals oppressed in Burma due to political activities,

46 political prisoners are serving prison sentences,

52 are awaiting trial inside prison,

138 are awaiting trial outside prison.



Picture from RFA © 2017
Accessed December 2017



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

နိုင်ငံရေးအကျဉ်းသားများ ကူညီစောင့်ရှောက်ရေးအသင်း (မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ)

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POLITICAL PRISONERS

▪ ARRESTS

Two Reuters Journalists Arrested in Rangoon for Violating State Secrets Act

On December 12, Thet Oo Maung, A.K.A Wa Lone, and Kyaw Soe Oo, were arrested regarding charges under Section 3(1) of the 1923 Official Secrets Act, which carries a maximum of 14-year imprisonment for the unlawful possession of military documents. On the evening of the December 12, police forces took them to Htauk Kyant Police Station in Rangoon where they were denied bail. According the Ministry of Information, the four were arrested regarding charges under Section 3(1) of the 1923 Official Secrets Act for the unlawful possession of military documents. The pair were detained incommunicado at an unknown location until December 27 where they appeared in court and remanded to another two weeks in custody in Insein Prison, Rangoon. Their next court hearing is scheduled for January 10 in Rangoon's Northern District Court. Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo were reunited with the family members for the first time since their arrests, at which time, Wa Lone stated that he had not faced any mistreatment at the hands of the authorities. They family members of the pair gave similar accounts of the arrests as told by Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, during a meeting with two policemen they had never met before, at a restaurant they had never been to before, they were handed two documents which they were told to read straight away. Upon leaving the restaurant they, along with two policemen, were arrested. They could not be sure if the police man arrested were the men who gave them the documents, and intelligence on the current whereabouts of the arrested policeman is unknown.

Calls for their release have come from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, 12

Burmese media organizations in a joint letter, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, Reuters, the US Embassy in Rangoon, and the EU. The Protection Committee for Myanmar Journalists began wearing black t-shirts in protest of the arrests on December 16, urging other reporters to do the same. On December 18, the Office of the President of Myanmar U Htin Kyaw authorized the police to proceed with the case against the two reporters. NLD Spokesman, Win Htein, believes the arrests were entrapment.

[\(13 December 2017 - BBC\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - CPJ\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - DVB\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - Frontier\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - PEN America\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - Reuters\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - RFA\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - Seattle Times\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - CNN\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - DVB\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - Fortify Rights\)](#) [\(14](#)

[December 2017 - Mizzima](#) [\(14 December 2017 - Mizzima\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - Reuters\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(15 December 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(15 December 2017 - RFA\)](#) [\(15 December 2017 - Reuters\)](#) [\(15 December 2017 - Reuters\)](#) [\(15 December 2017 - The Sydney Morning Herald\)](#) [\(15 December 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 December 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 December 2017 - Reuters\)](#) [\(17 December 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(17 December 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(17 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(17 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(17 December 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(17 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(17 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(17 December 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(17 December 2017 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 December 2017 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 December 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 December 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 December 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(19 December 2017 - Al Jazeera\)](#) [\(19 December 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(19 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(19 December 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(20 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(20 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(20 December 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(20 December 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(20 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(20 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(20 December 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(20 December 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(21 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(21 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(21 December 2017 - 7 Day](#)

[Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(21 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(21 December 2017 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#) [\(21 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(21 December 2017 - MNHRC\)](#) [\(22 December 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 December 2017 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 December 2017 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(25 December 2017 - Mizzima\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 Wednesday 2017- Mizzima\)](#) [\(27 December 2017 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(27 December 2017 - DVB\)](#) [\(28 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 December 2017 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 December 2017 - Irrawaddy\)](#)

Three Teachers, One Education Assistant and One Villager Arrested in Inn Din Village

According to Member of Parliament (MP) Ohn Maung, the Military Affairs security forces arrested Maung Daw education assistant Myint Soe, three teachers, and one villager from Inn Din Village, northern Arakan State on December 15 and 16. The police brought two of the teachers and the villager to Maung Daw police station. Only two people, the Teaching Assistant, Myint Soe, and Primary Headmaster, Aung Thein Phyu, have been released thus far. Earlier in December 2017, two Reuters journalists were arrested on charges related to the State Secrets Law for alleged possession of security documents, after visiting Inn Din

Village. Villagers believe the arrests may be in connection to this.

[\(16 December 2017 – BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 December 2017 – RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(17 December 2017 – 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(19 December 2017 – Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(19 December 2017 – 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

▪ Detention

Teen Appeals Jail Term for Association with Armed Group

On December 12, Kyaukse District Court began to examine the appeal of 14-year old Mai Cho Min Htwe made November 29. Arrested on October 5, he was found guilty under Section 17/1 of the Unlawful Association Act, and sent to Mandalay Youth Rehabilitation Camp three days later for alleged association with the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) after a photo of him wearing a TNLA uniform was found on his phone.

[\(13 December 2017 - Myanmar\)](#)

Minority Rights Lawyer Detained and Allegedly Abused in Connection to Shooting

Ethnic minority rights lawyer Mai Myo Aung was arrested and detained in Muse Township in northern Shan State on December 22. According to Ta'ang Legal Aid (TLA), Mai Myo Aung is being held in Muse's Kaung Mu Tong quarter, and during a December 26 meeting, he had shown signs of physical abuse. He was detained in association with charges related to an incident that left one person dead and another injured at a gambling den. However, the TLA claims the lawyer was not at the location when the confrontation took place, and had no knowledge of the shooting. Police have refused to release CCTV video surveillance of the lawyer on the scene, the main source of evidence for the arrest. According to police, he will be charged under Penal Code sections 302 and 307, punishment for murder, and attempt for murder. According to TLA officials, this is not the first time Mai Myo Aung has been beaten by the police in efforts to gain information on fighting near Muse Township.

[\(28 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

[\(29 December 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)](#)

▪ TRIALS

Michael Kyaw Myint Appeared Before the Court

On December 28, Michael Kyaw Myint, charged under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code in relation to a complaint filed by Secretary of the Rangoon Regional Government Moe Hein, appeared before the Tamwe Township Court. A prosecution witness was examined during the hearing. Although he had obtained permission from authorities on October 21 to hold a peaceful protest on October 23 in an area commonly used for demonstrations known as the “Hittaing” in Tamwe Township, Rangoon, he was arrested while preparing to drive to the site. He is currently being detained at Insein Prison.

[\(28 December 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

▪ SENTENCES

Moe Thu Receives One Month Imprisonment For Holding Solo Protest Calling for Abolishment of 2008 Constitution

On December 28, Moe Thu was sentenced to one-month imprisonment under charges related to Article 19 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act. Moe Thu held a solo protest in 2017 calling on the Government to dissolve the 2008 constitution as soon as possible. The Pabedan Township police charged Moe Thu at Pabedan Court on November 14, 2017. He was arrested on October 30, 2017 while staging a protest march at the Thein Gyi Market on Mah Bandula Road to Rangoon's City Hall. According to Moe Thu, he had not informed the relevant officials of his plans to protest the 2008 Constitution.

[\(28 December 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

Four Men Receive Additional Sentencing Under Counter Terrorism Law

On December 29, four men were sentenced to additional time imprisonment under the Counter-Terrorism Law for alleged connections with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA). Zaw Min Htwe, Myint Thein, and A. Ra Mahn received an additional seven years, while Khin Maung Shwe received an additional 15. The four maintain they have no ties to the KIA, and plan to appeal the sentence. They were originally charged in November 2016 under Section 17(1) of the Unlawful Association Act, Section 505(b) of the Penal Code (behavior amounting to public mischief), Section 5 of the Emergency Provision Act and Section 122 of the Penal Code for alleged connections with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in order to establish an 'Islamist Army.'

[\(29 December 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)](#)

▪ RELEASES

Charges Dropped, Prisoners Released in Drone Case

Aung Naing Soe, and Hla Tun, along with Singaporean journalist Lau Hon Meng and Malaysian journalist Mok Choy Lin, appeared before the Zabuthiri Township court, Naypyidaw for the fifth time on December 4. Already carrying out a two-month imprisonment sentence for pleading guilty to Section 10 of the 1934 Aircraft Act, they were set to face additional charges under the Export and Import Law for bringing the drone into the country without a permit. The journalists also faced charges for violating the country's immigration law by committing a crime while in the country. Khin Maung Zaw, the lawyer for Interpreter Aung Naing Soe, Driver Hla Tun, and the two journalists, filed an appeal for the case's dismissal to the Mandalay High Court after the prosecution finished its presentation of witnesses for the charges. At the court hearing on December 20, two of the prosecution's witnesses could not attend, and only minor witnesses testified. On December 28, the charges under the Export and Import Law, and the Immigration Act were withdrawn by the plaintiffs, Police Officer, Tun Tun Win, and Immigration Official, Htay Win, who states that they wanted to maintain good relations with Singapore and Malaysia and because they could not find intent to harm the country's security. On December 29, the Lau Hon Meng, Mok Choy Lin, Aung Naing Soe, and Hla Tun were all released from prison. Lau Hon Meng and Mok Choy Lim were immediately taken to immigration and deported to their respective countries. [\(4 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(5 December 2017 - Mizzima\)](#) [\(5 December 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(11 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(11 December 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(11 December 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(20 December 2017 -](#)

[Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(21 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(21 December 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 - RFA\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 - DVB\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 December 2017 - Mizzima\)](#) [\(28 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 December 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 December 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 December 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 December 2017 - DVB\)](#) [\(29 December 2017 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(29 December 2017 - Mizzima\)](#)

Seven Civilians Arrested by KIA and TNLA Have Been Released

According to a Shan State police officer, on December 13 seven civilians were arrested by a joint Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) group. Those arrested included six staff and one engineer from the Oriental Highway Company. They were arrested on Lashio-Muse highway in Nam Cook Village, Kutkhai Township, Northern Shan State. On December 14, the Office of the Commander-in-Chief released a statement saying that the joint group had arrested the seven. However, concerned with Commander-in-Chief's Office press release, TNLA General Secretary Brigadier General Ta HPhone Kyaw said it had not been confirmed whether TNLA was involved in the arrests. All seven were released December 17.

[\(15 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

RESTRICTIONS ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Kachin State Residents Protest Land Damages Caused by Mining Company

On November 30, residents in the Hpakant Township, Kachin State protested the local Government and mining companies. They accused the local administration and courts for failing to justly remedy land damages. Residents say more than 30 homes have been flooded, and due to land damage, farmers can only use 300 out of 1,000 acres of arable land to grow crops. Although some damages have been paid to help residents move their homes, protesters feel this is not enough. Township residents have brought this issue to the administrator in previous years; however, no investigation of the mining company has followed.

[\(1 December 2017 - Eleven\)](#)

Police Investigate Tanintharyi Journal After Complaint Filed for Satirical Article Publication

Police began investigations into *Tanintharyi Journal* after Tanintharyi Region Chief Minister, Lei Lei Maw, instructed Deputy Director of the Tanintharyi Regional Government, Aye Lu, filed a complaint on November 23 in the Court of Dawei Township due to a satirical piece published in the November 20 issue. Published under the byline “Mu Say Ooh,” the piece mocks the efforts of an incumbent female administrator by the name of ‘Shin Gwan Gwep’ in pursuit of re-election in an article headlined “Electioneering Smile.” In the article, Shin Gwan Gwep was ridiculed for admitting that she did not know how to run her ward. Lei Lei Maw allegedes this refers to an admission she made to local media that she does not know how to run a regional administration. Lei Lei Maw claims

this defamed her and her family. According to Human Rights Watch spokesperson, Than Win, no one knew the identity of the Shin Gwan Gwep until Lei Lei Maw filed the complaint. On December 1, police summoned Executive Director, Myo Aung, who said he would not provide police with information on the identity of the writer. The publication’s editor-in-chief, Han Htet, does not believe the magazine defamed anyone with the content. However, on December 21 the Dawei Court allowed the case to proceed. Han Htet will be summoned by the Court and charged under Section 25(b) of the News Media Law. If guilty, the penalty could be up to 1,000,000 kyat (US\$740). This is the second lawsuit filed this year in response to a satirical media article, the first was filed by the military against The Voice Daily in May 2017. Charges were later dropped.

[\(1 December 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(4 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(6 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(6 December 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(7 December 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(11 December 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(21 December 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 December 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(22 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(30 December 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

Farmers Able to Bring Land Confiscation Charges in Shan State During Review Period

On December 8, during the Parliament Session of the Shan State Government, Member of Parliament (MP) Sai Tun Nyan from Kyauk Me Township, Shan State, asked if there were any plans to avoid charges brought by farmers while confiscated lands were being reviewed. Sai Lone Kyaw,

Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation of Shan State, replied that charges will be carried out according to the law. It is reported that there is a total of 32 cases against farmers over land disputes in Shan State.

[\(8 December 2017 – Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

Farmers Call for Compensation from Power Company After Land Seizure

Five farmers and one homeowner in Mon State's Ye Township, call for compensation after Southeast General Energy & Power Co. Ltd. (SEGEP) seized their land to install 13 utility poles across Wal Kyaw Kwin paddy fields, and damaged more than 60 bushels of paddy. Ye Township is the only township in Mon State not connected to the national power grid and residents currently pay K450 (US\$0.33) per unit. The utility poles are part of a plan to distribute electricity to Chaung Taung, Ka Lawt, Han Gan, Sin Ku, and Kawt Hlaing Villages beginning next month, which may bring costs down to K200-300 (US\$0.15-US\$0.22) per unit. According to the Aung Mingalar Ward Administrator, Zaw Myo Min, community members told SEGEP to stop production after learning of the damage, but the company was unresponsive. SEGEP managing director Maung Maung Myint said company officials met with local administrators on December 1 to discuss paying compensation for damaged crops. Township residents are willing to call on higher authorities if no compensation is given.

[\(4 December 2017 – BNI/Burmese\) \(5 December 2017 – BNI\)](#)

Sixth Annual Media Development Conference Held

The sixth annual Conference on Media Development was held December 7-8. The conference brought together Burmese news outlets, as well as international media experts from the region and abroad. Topics of the conference focused on the need for access to information, and issues related to

media legislation regulating the online and print space. Attendees also explored how to counter misinformation, and the role of ethnic-minority news outlets in peace-building.

[\(5 December 2017 – Myanmar Times\) \(8 December 2017 – Myanmar Times\)](#)

More than 2000 Land Confiscation Cases Solved Over the Past 18 Months

The Central Committee for Re-scrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands released lists stating more than 2,000 out of 12,000 cases had been solved over the past year and a half. Since the committee's formation in May 2016, there were 5735 complaint letters, with 543 out of 5735 being resolved. The most complaints were from Rangoon Division, Mandalay Division, and Bago Division, respectively. In Rangoon Division the Committee received 1823 complaints and 67 cases were solved. The fewest complaints were from Karenni State where three cases of the nine filed complaints were solved. In Chin State, three cases of the 190 complaints were solved and, in Taninthary Division there were three out of 69 cases solved. The Central Committee published that it had 6707 cases left to solve from under the previous government and it has already solved 1907. Many of the cases have yet to be resolved because many people who were involved in confiscating the land are now members of committees to restore the land.

[\(6 December 2017 – DVB/Burmese\)](#)

Trust Between Judiciary and Justice in Decline, According To UNDP's Report

An annual report released by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) found that people's trust in the judiciary is at its lowest level. The two-year long survey started at the end of 2015 and was based on Arakan State, Kachin State, Shan State and four townships in Rangoon Division. According to the 'People's Trust Indicator,' 56 percent of those surveyed believe judges, legal officers, and police officers are not fair,

while 32 percent believe they are. Further, 30 percent of those surveyed felt the services they received were fair; however, more than 60 percent did not. Even though judges, legal officers and police officers are operating at full capacity, they are not adhering to standards of fairness and respect. In addition, corruption has continued to be a large issue. For instance, more than 70 percent of judges, legal officers and police officers hope to receive bribes. According to the majority of those surveyed, there are no equal right before the law.

Based on the government's responsibility and accountability, those surveyed said the government's actions have actually prevented justice. However, even though there is a decline in people's trust over judiciary services, trust in community leaders is increasing, with more than 60 percent of those surveyed believing their community leaders solve disputes without bias. Despite these issues, Thein Zaw, legal officer of the Rangoon Division, said that the Union Attorney General's Office is making progress in its "Toward Rule of Law Strategic Plan 2015-2019."

[\(7 December 2017 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#)

Police Destroy Salingyi Township Protest Camp, Then Villagers Reopened It

On December 7, around 50 police destroyed the Letpadaung protest camp at the Moe Kyoe Pyin Ale Village, Yin Mar Bin District, Salingyi Township, Sagaing Region. Moreover, police pointed guns to the protestors and destroyed flags and posters. After the police left, villagers reopened the camp the same day. Sagaing Division Security and Border Affairs Minister, Kyaw Thant Naing, said that they will take action against farmers who opened the protest camp. On December 22, an unknown group burned the protest camp. However, locals reopened the camp on December 30.

Since October 2017, approximately 20 villagers set up the protest camp and demanded that they be given 1,900 acres of land to replace the confiscated farmlands used for the Copper Mine Project. They also demanded crop compensation, in accordance with the recommendations made in 2013 by an investigative commission.

[\(07 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(07 December 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(09 December 2017 - 7dayDaily/Burmese\)](#) [\(09 December 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(30 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(30 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

Local Farmers Face Land Confiscation by Military

Local farmers from Khay Kham Village in Hue Mon Village Tract, Lashio Township, Northern Shan State, said that they face difficulties because #7005 armoured battalion, controlled by Eastern North Division Headquarter, is preparing to expand the Sin Taung Golf Course. In 2008, Eastern North Division Headquarter confiscated 200 out of 400 acres of lands from Khay Kham Village to build Sin Taung Golf Course (Sin Taung Golf Club). Local farmers are growing corn and paddy on the remaining 200 acres of lands. On December 6, #7005 armoured battalion started preparing to fence the 200 acres of lands to expand the golf course. Local farmers did not receive any compensation or substitute lands and the farmers do not have any ownership titles to the land. Even though Sai Wann Hlaing Kham, from the Lashio District Re-Scrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands Committee, and the Upper House representative from Lashio Township recommended that the golf course should not be expanded and

military should release these lands to farmers in October 2017, there was no response until December 8.

[\(9 December 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

Report Finds People in Powerful Positions File Majority of Section 66(d) Complaints

On December 11, Free Expression Myanmar (FEM) published a report analyzing complaints filed under Section 66(d) of the 2013 Telecommunications Law between the period of November 2015 -November 2017. They recorded 106 complaints during this time, with nine complaints since the August 2017 amendments. The amendments included increasing the likelihood of bail, prohibiting third parties from filing complaints unless given permission by the 'defamed,' and reducing the number of grounds for filing a complaint. However, FEM found the amendments had no apparent impact on the use of the law.

The report identified that the majority of complaints throughout the research period were filed by those in positions of power, with 51% related to the state (public officials, political party leaders, and military). Sixty-one percent of defendants are those whose profession is to hold the Government and those in power accountable (political party members, journalists, religious group members, human rights defenders, and artists). Finally, FEM found that 55% of complaints included a power differential, where officials attempted to censor or punish weaker defendants. FEM calls on the government to repeal the article, and amend the Penal Code to decriminalize defamation in Burma.

[December 2017 - 66\(d\): No Real Change Free Expression Myanmar](#)

[\(11 December 2017 - Frontier\)](#) [\(11 December 2017 - Coconuts\)](#) [\(11 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(11 December 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(11 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)

[\(11 December 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(11 December 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(12 December 2017 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#) [\(12 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(12 December 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

Slow Progress on U Ko Ni Murder Trial

Eleven months after the assassination of Human Rights Lawyer U Ko Ni, authorities are no closer to building a case. A legal adviser for the National League for Democracy (NLD) and critic of the current constitution, U Ko Ni was shot and killed at close range in Rangoon airport in January 2017. According to a statement issued by the President's Office, the prime suspect is a hitman hired by high-ranking Military Official, Aung Win Khaing, the alleged mastermind of the operation. Friends and colleagues of U Ko Ni believe police have been slow to move the case forward as four of the five main suspects are military officials. According to the 2008 Constitution, the ministry that controls the country's police force, the Home Affairs Ministry, is to be run by the military. U Ko Ni was believed to have been drafting a new charter to replace the 2008 Constitution at the time of his death. Three of the four suspects are being held in custody, facing charges under the Penal Code, and Arms Act. Aung Win Khaing remains at-large. A hearing was held December 22, where according to one lawyer representing U Ko Ni's family, the wealth of one arrested suspect, Zeya Phyoo, could explain how the assassination was financed. After the December 22 hearing, the courts had finished hearing testimony from 69 of 80 scheduled witnesses.

[\(12 December 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(22 December 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(29 December 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#)

Kachin State Police Search KIO Search Without Warrant

According to the Kachin Peace Facilitation Team, on December 11 the Kachin State Police Force searched the Technical Advisory Office of Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) in Myitkyina Township without warrant. The search, which involved 15-20 police force officers and lasted an hour, yielded nothing. The police allegedly conducted the search after receiving a tip-off regarding the John San Linn case. John San Linn and his wife were arrested December 5 after police found more than 1,000 bullets hidden under their home. However, a Technical Advisory Team spokesman says the raid was likely because of rising tensions between the military and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA).

[\(13 December 2017 - Mizzima\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - BNI\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - BNI/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

Guide Launched to Help Protect Journalists' Digital Security

On December 12, three media groups launched a guide to help journalists' digital security. Created by the Myanmar Press Council, the Centre for Law and Democracy and International Media Support, the guide teaches journalists how to protect their data, devices, and identities. Experts offered tips to journalists to secure their information by taking measures such as turning off location services when on assignments, and using encryption with sensitive data. The event organizers stressed the need for targeted surveillance only as a national security issue, rather than to monitor citizens' activities in the digital space.

[\(13 December 2017 - Mizzima\)](#)

Government to Compensate Farmland Lost During Ka Ni - Min Kim Road Construction

The government will give compensation to farmers who lost their farmland during a 38-mile long road construction project that connected the main road between Kani Township and Mingin Township, Sagging Division. In January 2018, the government will pay 1.2 million kyat (US\$888) per one acre of paddy field farmland, and 600,000 kyat (US\$444) per one acre of crop land. More than 140-acre farmland were lost during the road construction project.

[\(15 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)

Military Bans Upcoming Shan Political Meetings

On December 17, the military banned the Shan National Political Pre-Public meeting in Panglong Township, Shan State for the first time. Although organizers had arranged for the public to come together to voice concerns and opinions in order to prepare for the national-level meeting next month, the military banned the pre-meeting. According to the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee and the relevant authorities, the national-level dialogues are allowed to be held. They agreed the meetings would be held at Linn Hkay Town in January 2018. After the cancellation of the pre-meetings in Panglong, the military cancelled meetings in Tachileik Lashio, Mandalay, and Kyaukme Townships as well. According to both the Committee for Shan State Unity and Shan State Government Members of Parliament, the pre-meetings will not continue because the military has banned it, and the Shan State Government sent a letter to ban the meeting as well. According to the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) Communication Officer In-Charge, Colonel Sai Oo, the group already has permission to hold their meeting in January 2018 despite the military's interference.

[\(17 December 2017 – DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(19 December 2017 – Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(21 December 2017 – Mizzima/ Burmese\)](#) [\(21 December 2017 – DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 December 2017 – DVB\)](#) [\(22 December 2017 – 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 December 2017 – BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 December 2017 – RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 December 2017 – Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 December 2017 – RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 December 2017 – 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 – VOA/Burmese\)](#)

Police Deny Entry to Some at Karen New Year Celebration

On December 18, the police banned some media and local Karen from attending the celebrations for the 80th Karen New Year at Thiri Field Hpa An, Karen State. According to a journalist from *Hittar Journal*, some people without badges were not allowed to attend the event due to security concerns. However, some celebrators without badges were let in. This comes as a policy change from the previous administration, which allowed anyone to attend events.

[\(19 December 2017 – DVB/Burmese\)](#)

Sagaing Regional Government Files Charges Against Alleged Trespassers

According to Sagaing Regional Agricultural and Irrigation Minister Kanzar Mone, the regional Government will file charges against farmers in Myay Mon Village, Kanbalu Township, for trespassing on a Government owned seed farm. Between 1980 and 1981 the government seized more than 4000 acres of farmland without compensating owners, according to residents. In 1997, 3000 acres was transferred to No.8 Military Supply and Transport in Shwebo, Sagaing Region and is currently in use as ‘pure strain farmland’ by the Ministry. Residents have identified vacant lots throughout the Government land, and received permission to hold planting events on the land in April 2017, but are now being sued for trespassing.

[\(20 December 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(20 December 2017 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#)

In Mon State, the Government Returns More Than 16,000 Acres of Land

According to data from the State Agricultural Land Management Project and Statistics Department, the Government gave back more than 16,834 acres of land from February 2016 to December 2017 in Mon State. According to State Land Management and Statistics Department Officer Tin Htoo, the Department will only return non-disputed land. According to State Land Management and Statistics Department figures, the Ministry of Defense Department has given back 3914 acres, while other Ministries have given back 12,902 acres. In addition, 20 acres of land have been given back to expand villages. According to the Ministry of Defense, as of December 15, 2017 a total of 209,062.73 acres were returned to the Government. Currently, there are thousands of acres that have been returned to either the Government or farmers in the following townships: 11,290 acres land in Kyaikhto; 514 acres in Belin; 1,412 acres in Thaton; 224 acres in Paung; 665 acres in Mawlamyine; 1,370 acres in Kyaikmaraw; 251 acres in Mudon; 66 acres in Thanphyuzayat; and 991 acres in Yae. These numbers are according to the State Land Management and Statistics Department.

[\(21 December 2017 – BNI/Burmese\)](#)

Military Allegedly Kills One Civilian, Three KNPP Soldiers After Raid

According to the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), on December 20, three KNPP soldiers and one civilian were executed after being detained during a Military raid of the Karenni Army base in Loikaw Township, Karenni State. One KNPP soldier managed to escape. The Military has denied the executions, and released a statement saying the four were killed during an outbreak firefight between the

sides. On December 28 Military and KNPP officials met to hear testimony of the killings. Although the KNPP signed a ceasefire agreement with the Government and Military in March 2012, it is not a signatory of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) treaty. Before this incident, it had plans to do so. [\(22 December 2017 - BNI/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 December 2017 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 December 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(27 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 December 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(29 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(31 December 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(31 December 2017 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(31 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(31 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Police Investigated Two Reporters in Arakan State

On December 23, Reporter in the English Department of *Irrawaddy*, Moe Myint, and Maungdaw Local Reporter, Kaung Myat Naing, were investigated by the Police Force in Arakan State, according to May Hlaing Thu, Moe Myint's wife. They were released after five hours of investigation; however, their identification cards, phones, and reporter identification cards are still being kept. The reporters were arrested for allegedly taking photos at Say-Te-Pyin Village in Yethedaung Township. Local villagers handed them over to the police. These reporters are now in Sittwe City.

[\(24 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

Nineteen Cases of Journalists Charged Under New Government

On December 22, We Support Journalists Group released a statement that stated

journalists have continued to be charged under the new government. There was a total of 19 cases where journalists were charged under the new administration. Thirteen out of 19 cases took place in 2017. Within the 19 cases, there were eight cases charged by the Government, Military and police, and 11 cases charged by other individuals. Due to these cases, 33 journalists faced trial. Journalists were charged the most under the Telecommunications Law. In addition, they were charged under Unlawful Association Act, Export and Import Act, Myanmar Aircraft Act, Official Secrets Act, Media Law, and Article 500 of the Penal Code of Defamation. The cases of journalists Min Zayar Oo and Khun Latt are included in the 19.

[\(25 December 2017 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

Protest Held to Demand Release of Reuters Journalists

On December 28, a protest to demand the release of detained Reuters journalists was held in front of the Bogyoke statue in Pyay Township, Bago Division. The protest was organised by 30 journalists from Rangoon, Bago, Magway, and Ayeyawady Regions; lawyers, local civic organisations, young people, and farmers. Member of the Myanmar Committee for the Protection of Journalists, Thalun Zaung Htet stated, "We chained our hands and collected signatures from people passing by to show our solidarity with the arrested journalists."

[\(27 December 2017 - RFA\)](#) [\(28 December 2017 - Eleven\)](#)

Burma Increases Press Freedom Ranking in 2017

The 2017 World Press Freedom Index compiled by Reporters without Borders shows Burma's Press Freedom rose 12 places on the global index compared to 2016. In 2017, it ranks 131 out of 180 countries. In 2016, it had a 143 ranking. After the National League for Democracy (NLD) election victory, Burmese journalists

hoped that they would not have to fear arrest or imprisonment for criticizing the government or the military. However, media freedom has not been a Government priority thus far. Journalists imprisoned under U Thein Sein have been amnestied and the State of Emergency law has been repealed, but self-censorship continues in connection to Government officials and Military officers. The authorities continue to exert pressure on the media and even intervene directly to change editorial pieces.

[\(27 December 2017 – DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 December 2017 – Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

Myanmar CNMC Nickel Company Refuse to Give Crop Compensation

According to Sagaing Division Member of Parliament (MP), Thein Han, Myanmar CNMC Nickel Company (CHINCO) will not give the compensation farmers demanded for loose soil damage to more than 400 acres of land caused by the Takaung Nickel Factory in Thabeikkyin and Htigyaing Townships. He added that on December 26, there was meeting between responsible persons of the company, officials in Nay Pyi Taw and a group led by MPs of the Sagaing Divisional Government. Farmers for that area requested three million Kyat (US\$2,220) per acre of land. CHINCO, however, is only willing to compensate one laht (US\$74) per acre. In an effort to help the farmers, Thein Han said he will report this issue to the Sagaing Division Government. Various organizations signed a petition that CHINCO should give the

compensation farmers have demanded because they cannot cultivate the land due to covering loose soil from the factory each year.

[\(27 December 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

Pyin Oo Lwin Local Farmers Gather to Demand Return of Confiscated Farmland

On December 28, local farmers from Pyin Oo Lwin Township protested at Nyan Taw field in an effort to reclaim confiscated farmland and solve the land issues in Pyi Oo Lwin Township, Mandalay Division. According to protest leader Ko Ko, even though Pyin Oo Lwin Township has one of the largest land confiscation problems, the Government departments are weak in this area, so farmers called a protest to resolve the issues peacefully and immediately.

During the previous government, companies and Government departments took farmland to implement projects on the land; however, some of the land remained unused. When local farmers began using the vacant land, they were arrested and charged under various sections of the law.

[\(28 December 2017 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

LEGISLATION AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

Lawyers' Association Set to Reorganize with Help from Denmark

The Independent Lawyers' Association of Myanmar (ILAM) has invited all lawyer's associations within the country to join them under one organization in an organization-wide restructuring. With more than 4,000 members, the ILAM was established January 2016, and is the first national, independent organization of its kind in Burma. Members are however still facing difficulties when prosecuting powerful opponents, namely government associations, because the courts fear retribution. On December 4 therefore, the ILAM signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Denmark, who will train IALM lawyers on human rights and the rule of law, as well as provide financial assistance. According to the Danish Ambassador to Burma, Peter Hansen, through the MoU activities, the country will begin to build a strong, independent judiciary.

[\(4 December 2017 - BNI/Burmese\)](#) [\(5 December 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(5 December 2017 - BNI\)](#) [\(7 December 2017 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#)

No Progress in Human Rights Under Civilian Government

In December, Equality Myanmar, Myanmar Fifth Estate and other civil society organizations held an event for the 69th International Human Rights Day at Thakhin Mya park in Rangoon. According to a statement released by the Celebration Committee of Human Rights Day Rangoon, the reasons for the challenging human rights situation are because of repressive laws, and the fact that those who violate human rights receive exemption from

punishment and are protected under the law. In addition, the statement called on the Government to impose a new rule to protect women, children, people with disabilities, indigenous people and minority populations. The law will stop interference with the judiciary system, help end bribes and corrupt practices, and gain the public's trust in order to implement a human rights complaint mechanism. Finally, the rule will to enable schools to begin a human rights education program in the curriculum. Through this rule, the current government is attempting to uphold and respect human rights, end the ongoing civil war, secure the safe return of refugees, release those facing sanctions under the repressive law, and encourage the ongoing peace process.

[\(10 December 2017 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(10 December 2017 - BBC/Burmese\)](#)

Ethnic Minority Groups Demand Federalist System Plan

At a recent book launch, the Ethnic Nationalities Affairs Center (ENAC) called on the Government and Military to announce the type of federalist plan states should expect. On December 12, the ENAC released a book that provides suggestions to the Government and Military on implementing federalist systems. The book focuses on power-sharing policies between central and state governments, such as more political autonomy, and the ability for state governments to collect taxes. The book calls for a 70/30 split in taxing, with states receiving the larger portion, a proposal accepted by many civil society and ethnic minority groups. The ENAC additionally recommends that the government should provide a budget for ethnic children to study in their mother tongue, using Mon

State as an example. Although the Government has moved forward in reform, it still has not outlined or implemented a federalist plan for the states, which the ENAC believes is the next step to revitalize Burma's faltering peace process.

[\(12 December 2017 - The Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(12 December 2017 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

Mon State Civil Society Urges Government to Uphold Their Rights

Mon State civil society organizations (CSOs) are urging the Government to provide for collective and individual rights of the Mon people and their right to self-determination. In a statement released on December 10 (Human Rights Day), more than 50 organizations asked for their rights to be realized. Acknowledging that the National League for Democracy (NLD) has used decentralization when dealing with the Mon ethnic group, the statement expressed that many of the most basic rights are still being denied to Mons, which was the rationale behind releasing the statement.

[\(12 December 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

Second ICCPR Workshop Held in Nay Pyi Taw

The second workshop on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) was held from December 14-15 in Naypyidaw. The workshop was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Centre for Civil and Political Rights. Of the 50 attendees, representatives from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defense, and Ministry of Education, among others, were present. The first workshop took place earlier in the year.

[\(15 December 2017 - Global New Light\)](#)

Myanmar Press Council Urges Reform of Media Laws

In a December 20 statement the Myanmar Press Council called on the government to amend repressive media laws in order to protect journalists. The organization has

reached out to media members across the 14 states and regions to collect their ideas amends to the law, and have presented their findings to the Ministry of Information. The Council issued this statement in the wake of the arrest of two Reuters journalists earlier in the month, who the Council stands ready to defend should they face trial.

[\(21 December 2017 - Mizzima\)](#)

Regional Government to Closely Monitor Land Return Through Investigative Group

Ayeyarwady Region Minister of Agriculture Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Ba Hein, said that the Regional Government will monitor the progress of returning land to owners previously confiscated by Ayeyarwady ministries and companies. In order to track progress, Ba Hein plans to use an investigative team to understand why it has taken so long to return confiscated lands. According to Ayeyarwady Division Parliament Member of Parliament (MP,) Aung Tun, the groups that confiscated the land have returned the land to the Government for the past two years; however, the original owners have not received it yet. The Central Committee for Re-scrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Land has started to return land, but are still investigating who the rightful owners are. Moreover, vacant, virgin lands were returned to the Government, but the Regional Government has not been able to create a system to distribute this land to farmers who do not have any.

[\(21 December 2017 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)

Government to Give Substituted City Land to Farmers at 20 Percent Per Acre

Zaw Aye Maung, Arakanese Ethnic Affairs Minister from Rangoon Divisional Government, stated that there were negotiations between the Rangoon Divisional Government and land owners to build an industrial zone and low cost housing near Twante Bridge in Twante Township. He further stated that the

government will give back 20 percent of substituted lands per acre for farmers who wish to own city land. He added that farmers are facing trouble to cultivate their land and want to change farmlands to city lands. However, privately owned land cannot be classified as city land, and constructing buildings is illegal on farmlands. The Government will take action against anyone who does build on this land, and those who do will likely be sentenced, according to Zaw Aye Maung. Therefore, farmers must give their farmland to Government, who will then define it as city land. If these farmlands are reclassified as city land, farmers will receive 20 percent substituted lands per acre. Rangoon Divisional Government defines 4000 farmlands from Twante Township as city lands and has planned to implement the industrial zone and low-cost housing beginning January 2018.

[\(27 December 2017 – The Voice/Burmese\)](#)

Prison Reform Bill Will Be Submitted to Parliament in Three Months

According to a member of the Commission for the Assessment of Legal Affairs and Special Issues, Kyaw Sein, the 2015 Union Parliamentary Prisons Draft Law will be submitted to Parliament within three months. He added that the current prison law, which was enacted in colonial era, was written by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Commission for the Assessment of Legal Affairs and Special Issues and is not in line with international standards. On December 21, the Commission for Drafting A Bill met with the Supreme Court of the Union, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Sports, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, and Office of the Auditor General of the Union. The Commission for Drafting A Bill also asked for input from the Former Political Prisoners Society (FPPS).

[\(27 December 2017 – 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Newly Built Prison Will Begin to Accept Prisoners

Correction Department Officer Min Tun Soe said two new 1,000-person capacity prisons will begin accepting inmates in December. The new prisons will be Kyaikmayaw Prison in Mawlamyine and Daik-U Prison in Bago. Mon State Correction Department Officer, Lin Bo Naung, said they are not moving prisoners to the new Kyaikmayaw prison yet. The construction timeline depends on the State budget every year. There is no prison security yet, which is why no prisoners have been moved. Further, the state currently has no plan for what will happen to the current prison (Mawlamyine) after prisoners are moved to Kyaikmayaw prison. Currently, Kyaikmayaw prison is 85 percent finished. The two new prisons will be able to solve the overcrowding problems found in Insein prison. Min Tun Soe said that with no overcrowding, there will be better health within the prisons. Additionally, with the prison expansion happening, inmates may be sent to prison in their township, which would be helpful to families who wish to visit their relatives. Aung Myo Kyaw from Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) said there should have been research done on where to build the prisons before they are constructed, taking these consideration into account. Further, in order to reduce overcrowding, prison staff should review prisoner cases, release those who should be released, and release some prisoners on bail. Min Tun Soe said the newly built Mohnyin prison began accepting prisoners in October.

[\(3 December 2017 – 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

[\(12 December 2017 – BNI/Burmese\)](#)

Detainees Temporarily Held At New Prison in Naypyidaw

According to Deputy Director of the Prisons Department, Min Tun Soe, detainees are temporarily being held in a newly built prison in Naypyidaw. He added even though relatives of detainees can easily come to visit after the prison is officially open, they do not yet know when this will be, and asked for the opening date from the Ministry of Home Affairs. The new prison will be able to accommodate up to 800 detainees who are currently on trial.

[\(4 December 2017 – 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

Male inmates at Ohbo Prison to Receive New School Building in January

According to a senior officer at Ohbo Prison, Mandalay Region, male inmates will be able to use a new two-story school building in January 2018. Funded by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), construction cost between K70 million-K 80 million (US\$511,00-US\$584,00). Government teachers will teach more than 80 prisoners at the middle and high school levels, and 52 will sit for higher education exams. Last year, only 11 prisoners sat for this exam. The new women's schoolhouse at Ohbo opened in June 2017.

[\(12 December 2017 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#)

Individuals Now Able to Report Human Rights Abuses to National Human Rights Commission

The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) recently invited citizens to file complaints with the Commission directly. In its December 12 statement, the Commission asked individuals and groups to file concerns

about abuses relating to the 2008 Constitution, and international human rights conventions Burma has ratified, such as Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Committee on the Rights of Child (CRC). Between 2011 and 2015, individuals submitted more than 9000 complaints to the Commission. According MNHRC member Yu Lwin Aung, the Commission received 350 complaints between January 2017 and November 2017. [\(12 December 2017 – DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 December 2017 – 7Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

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[Satirical Article Publication \(Myanmar Times\)](#)
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[Military Allegedly Kills One Civilian, Three KNPP Soldiers After Raid \(BNI/Burmese\)](#)

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[Burma Increases Press Freedom Ranking in 2017 \(DVB/Burmese\)](#)
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[Government to Give Substituted City Land to Farmers at 20 Percent Per](#)

[Acre \(The Voice/Burmese\)](#)
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[Minority Rights Lawyer Detained and Allegedly Abused In Connection to Shooting \(Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)
[Michael Kyaw Myint Appeared Before the Court \(Eleven/Burmese\)](#)
[Moe Thu Receives One Month Imprisonment For Holding Solo Protest Calling for Abolishment of 2008 Constitution \(Eleven/Burmese\)](#)
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[Lawsuit Filed Against Five Men for Leading Protest \(RFA/Burmese\)](#)
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[Soldiers After Raid \(DVB/Burmese\)](#)
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