

MARCH CHRONOLOGY 2018

Summary of the Current Situation:

There are 248 individuals oppressed in Burma due to political activities,

54 political prisoners are serving prison sentences,

74 are awaiting trial inside prison,

120 are awaiting trial outside prison.



Picture from Aung Khant © The Myanmar Times
Accessed March, 2018



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

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POLITICAL PRISONERS

■ ARRESTS

Nine Suspects Arrested Over Sittwe Bomb Blasts, Five then Released

The number of suspects arrested in connection with the Sittwe bomb blasts reached nine this month. The detainees, Ko Naing Soe, Ko Than Shwe, Shwe Tun Aung, Kyaw Myint Shwe, Maung Myint Shwe, Maung Aye Win, Maung Oo Myint, Maung Thet Soe Paing and Maung Myint Kyi, were detained under Section 50 (a) and (i) of the Anti-Terrorism Law.

Ko Naing Soe, a former political prisoner and member of the Arakan National Council (ANC), was suffering from hepatitis and ailments brought on by his incarceration, and was not allowed family visits following his arrest on February 25.

On March 25, five of the nine suspects, including Ko Naing Soe, were released on bail, as police could not find evidence to bring them to trial. The court approved an extension of the detention for the remaining three suspects; two over the charge of illegally crossing the border, and one for a bomb blast in Mrauk-U. AAPP will continue monitoring the case; please see April Chronology for updates.

[\(2 March 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)
[\(3 March 2018 - Eleven\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(19 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)
[\(19 March 2018 - DVB\)](#) [\(26 March](#)

[2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 March 2018 - BNI/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 March 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 March 2018 - BNI/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 March 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)
[\(28 March 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#)

16 Villagers from Theinny Township Arrested

On March 17, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) arrested 16 villagers in Homone Village, Theinny Township, Northern Shan State. According to residents, the villagers were arrested in connection to a skirmish between the Army and the MNDAA in February.

[\(21 March 2018 - VOA/Burmese\)](#)
[\(21 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(21 March 2018 - BNI/Burmese\)](#)

■ DETENTIONS

Two Villagers Arrested for Preventing Police from Entering Village

On March 29, Ma Thwae Thwae Win and Ma San San Hla, two residents of Wat Hmae village in the Letpadaung copper mining region of Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division were arrested for attempting to stop police from entering their village.

The two women were among a group of villagers who were angered by their settlement being

marked for destruction in order to make way for the Letpadaung copper mine. When police officers forced their way into the village, Man Sa Hla lay down in the road to stop their advance.

The two women were detained, while their ill health led to hospitalization at Salingyi Township Hospital. AAPP will continue monitoring the case; please see April Chronology for updates.

[\(29 March 2018 - RFA\)](#) [\(29 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 March 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(30 March 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(30 March 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(30 March 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(31 March 2018 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(31 March 2018 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(31 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

▪ TRIALS

Hearings Continue for Jailed Reuters Journalists

Hearings continued this month for two *Reuters* reporters jailed in December 2017 for possessing sensitive government documents ([see February Chronology](#)). Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo could be charged with up to 14 years imprisonment under the Official Secrets Act.

Further discrepancies have emerged during this month, including a witness writing crucial details on his hand to help him remember what to say, and the owner of the restaurant where the reporters claim they were given the documents stating that she didn't see the two men, but wouldn't have been able to from where she was sitting anyway. In the aftermath of

the arrest Wa Lone's house was searched by police officers without a warrant. A notepad, hard drive and laptop were seized in the operation.

Kyaw Soe Oo has been suffering from jaundice throughout March, but permission for him to be treated at an outside hospital has not been granted.

The case has continued to receive international attention, with media assistance groups and embassies calling for their release. Amal Clooney, prominent human rights lawyer, has joined the legal team representing the two journalists.

On March 29 the pair's defence team filed a motion asking to dismiss the case, claiming that there was insufficient evidence to support charges. The district court in northern Rangoon agreed to hear arguments from prosecutors and defense lawyers on the motion on April 4.

[\(1 March 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(1 March 2018 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(1 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(3 March 2018 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(6 March 2018 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#) [\(7 March 2018 - DVB\)](#) [\(7 March 2018 - Reuters\)](#) , [\(8 March 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(8 March 2018 - Economist\)](#) [\(14 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 March 2018 - Reuters\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - DVB\)](#) [\(16 March 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(21 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(21 March 2018 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(21 March 2018 - Reuters\)](#) [\(21](#)

[March 2018 - DVB](#) [\(23 March 2018 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 March 2018 - Reuters\)](#) [\(28 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 March 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 March 2018 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(30 March 2018 - The Guardian\)](#)

Aye Maung and Wai Hin Aung in Court for Alleged Inflammatory Speeches

Former Arakan National Party (ANP) Chairman, Aye Maung, arrested January 2018 after allegedly making an inflammatory speech against the Government, attended court this month ([see February chronology](#)). On being cross-examined by the defence, the plaintiff admitted that he did not attend the speech, and only filed charges because his superiors asked him to. Aye Maung has insisted that his words have been taken out of context, calling on the judicial authorities to stand firm against pressure to convict him. Around one hundred protesters rallied outside the courthouse in support of both Aye Maung and fellow detainee and writer, Wai Hin Aung, who faces the same charges for a speech at the same event. Critics believe that a guilty verdict would be widely interpreted as a move to politically oppress the Arkanese people.

[\(7 March 2018 - Frontier\)](#) [\(7 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(7 March 2018 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(7 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(8 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 March 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(19 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(20 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(20 March 2018 - BNI/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 March](#)

[2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(30 March 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 March 2018 - DVB\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - BNI\)](#)

Mai Myo Aung, Official-In-Charge of Ta'ang Palaung Legal Supporting Group, Appears before the Court

On March 9, Mai Myo Aung, ethnic minority rights lawyer, appeared before the Muse Township Court for the first time. He was arrested in association with charges related to an incident that left one person dead and another injured at a gambling den December 2017. He is being charged under Penal Code Sections 114, 302 and 307, which are as follows: abettor present when offense was committed, murder and attempted murder, and Section 8 of the Export Import Law. His most recent court appearance was on March 16.

[\(9 March 2018 - mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

Lawyer and Protester Attend 55th Hearing

The Government has yet to reply to a request made in February 2018 by the Union Lawyers and Paralegals Association (ULPA) to close the case against Daw Khin Khin Kyaw, a lawyer who defended students who were part of an education protest in 2015 in Letpadan Township. This was the second appeal seeking closure of the case against Daw Khin Khin Kyaw, who is facing trial for insulting a public officer on duty under criminal law section 228. The first petition was sent in 2016.

Daw Khin Khin Kyaw and Ko Than Htike, who is accused of involvement in the protest, attended their 55th hearing at Minhla Township Court on March 20.

[\(20 March 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

Ko Ni Murder Trial Ongoing

Four men accused of plotting the murder of lawyer and National League for Democracy (NLD) Government advisor Ko Ni appeared in a Rangoon court this month. Lawmaker Lin Zaw Tun, a prosecution witness and USDP MP, at first claimed that he did not know the alleged gunman and instead accused fellow witness Aung Soe of being the murderer. The next day he apologised for these accusations and said they had been misinformed. The latest hearing, scheduled for March 22, was suspended due to the case files having been sent to a different court.

[\(15 March 2018 - DVB\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 March 2018 - DVB\)](#) [\(17 March 2018 - Frontier Myanmar\)](#) [\(22 March 2018 - DVB\)](#)

▪ **SENTENCES**

Former Child Soldier Imprisoned for an Interview about his Ordeal

On March 28, Aung Ko Htwe, a former child soldier, was sentenced to two years imprisonment with hard labor. Aung Ko Htwe was charged under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code for allegedly inciting the public after telling his story of forced conscription to *Radio Free Asia* (RFA). Soon after the interview was published, he was arrested on August 18, 2017.

Aung Ko Htwe consistently refused to testify during the trial, and at one point insisted on withdrawing his own list of defence witnesses. Calling the trial a sham and refusing

to recognise the judicial system, he was given an additional contempt of court charge in February 2018.

[\(13 March 2018 - DVB\)](#) [\(13 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(20 March 2018 - DVB\)](#) [\(20 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(20 March 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(21 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 March 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(28 March 2018 - RFA\)](#) [\(28 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 March 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 March 2018 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 March 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

Families Refusing to Evict for Airport Expansion Sent to Prison

On March 21, Manaung Township Court in Rakhine State dealt prison sentences to two heads of household, U Thar Ni and U Phyu Thee Khine, under Section 35 of the Farmland Law. U Thar Ni was sentenced to seven months in prison for constructing a house on farmland, even though his family has lived there for over 150 years. Family members staged a protest on March 20, demanding that the Government drops charges against the families for refusing to evict their homes for the Manaung Samon-Tae Airport Expansion Project, as they were not given the market price.

One family who initially refused to evict has since accepted the small compensation due to fear of also receiving a prison sentence.

[\(21 March 2018 - BNI\)](#) [\(23 March 2018 - BNI\)](#)

▪ **FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS**

Former Political Prisoner Struggles to Make Ends Meet

Former civil servant, NLD activist, and political prisoner, Aung Hein Yay Oo, has shared an essay online about his struggle to survive without the support of the NLD. Aung Hein Yay Oo worked for the Education Department in Katha, Sagaing Region, in the 12 years leading up to the anti-government protests of 1988. He was arrested and imprisoned under Section 5 of the Emergency Provisions Act for reciting a poem at a rally, and, since his release, has been prevented from claiming his pension and struggles to find work due to the criminal record he received for his pro-democracy activism.

[\(5 March 2018 - Coconuts\)](#)

Cheery Zahau, a human rights activist from Chin State.

[\(16 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

[\(19 March 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

Journalist and Former Political Prisoner Receives EU Award for Human Rights

Ko Swe Win, chief editor of the news agency *Myanmar Now*, was among this year's recipients of the European Union's Schuman Award for Human Rights for his untiring efforts in covering human rights violations in his investigative stories. Ko Swe Win was also cited for his unwavering fight for freedom of expression in Burma.

The two other recipients of this year's Schuman Award were Daw Khin Than Htwe, a women's rights defender from Mon State, and

RESTRICTIONS ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Protesters Call for 2008 Constitution Abolishment

On February 27, more than 100 people in south-central Burma's Bago Region staged a protest calling for the abolition of the 2008 constitution, in a reprise of grassroots demonstrations demanding the scrapping of the military-drafted charter that filled the streets before the NLD came to power. Key to criticism of the constitution is the veto it provides the Military over key state policies, despite the formal end of military rule.

[\(1 March 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(18 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(19 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(19 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(20 March 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(21 March 2018 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#)

Landless Farmers Request Permission to Plant In Alluvial Land

Landless farmers can send planting requests to the Irrawaddy Division Government. According to farmers, the Government will allow them to grow crops in alluvial land in Isaunt Village, Ngathainggyaung Township, Irrawaddy Division.

Farmers have requested permission to plant since 2014, but it had not been granted until now. Currently, there are 30 acres of fertile land available, but 10 of the acres are reserved for the wealthy, while the other 20 acres are reserved for the Government. According to Farmer Aung Myang, farmers who do not have land are experiencing difficulties.

[\(3 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)

Protesters Demand Compensation from CNPC for Land Confiscation

During a February meeting with Arakan State farmers, the Pipeline Affair Movement Group announced compensation possibilities for the National Pipeline Project in Ann Township. However, on March 22, 600-1,000 civilians from Kyaukpyu district protested against the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) for failing to provide compensation for damaged farmland and plantations.

They also protested against land that had been confiscated to build the Shwe pipeline. More than 1,000 acres have been destroyed because of the pipeline project. Although there are more than 1,000 farmers who have not received land compensation, 75% of farmers have received crop compensation.

The deep-water port, which transports oil and natural gas from Burma's offshore reserves to China, has been dogged by complaints about little or no land compensation along with the loss of livelihoods for local fishermen.

The Government conducted field surveys on the damaged lands and agreed to pay the compensation. However, the CNPC and the MOGE still have not provided the farmers with any compensation.

[\(4 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 March 2018 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 March 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 March 2018 - Mizzima\)](#) [\(23 March 2018 - Narinjara\)](#) [\(24 March 2018 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#)

KIA Arrests Tanai Township Villagers Throughout March

On March 4, 100 Kachin Independence Army (KIA) soldiers arrested villagers in Tayoin Village in Tanai Township, Kachin State, including a Ten Household Head. According to a female village resident from Ward 1, the KIA said that they will recruit women if there is no man in the family. The KIA News and Information Colonel, Naw Bu, denied knowledge of the arrests.

Throughout the month the KIA recruited villagers from Tanai Township. On March 28, the KIA arrested and later released two young Naga men from Hla Mone Village in Tanai Township, Kachin State. The men were gathering firewood at the time of arrest. According to residents, this arrest marks the third time this month that the KIA has recruited villagers from the Township.

[\(5 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(6 March 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(30 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)

Cement Factory Project Protesters Threatened by Military

According to residents, demonstrators were threatened by the Military for protesting the Square Power Group Company cement factory project and limestone excavation business near Wah Khu Taw Village in Demoso Township, Karenni State. Protesters' signs were also destroyed. Residents gathered to protest because they fear the company will not be transparent and the project will damage water sources and the environment. They plan to send a member of the Karenni Farmers Union to the State Government and Union Government.

Local people, as well as four Karenni State CSOs, including the Karenni State Youth Union and the Karenni State Farmers Union, protested against the project.

[\(4 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Peaceful Protest Law Amendments Approved by Upper House

The Government's Upper House has approved plans to amend the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act (PAPPA). It will now be discussed in the Lower House, where 80 representatives have registered to discuss the changes. Several Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are planning to contest its implementation. Protest organizers will now be obliged to inform the local authority of the estimated costs and funding sources of demonstrations. Further, the vagueness of the phrases in changes to Section 18, including wording such as "intentionally or knowingly", will leave the law open to interpretation by officials. The increased penalties can also lead to a maximum of three years' imprisonment or fines if an individual is found guilty, in comparison to the previous prison terms of three to six months.

[\(5 March 2018 - Burmalink\)](#) [\(5 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(5 March 2018 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(5 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(5 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(5 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(5 March 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(5 March 2018 - Reuters\)](#) [\(5 March 2018 - DVB\)](#) [\(6 March 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(6 March 2018 - Mizzima\)](#) [\(7 March 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(7 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(7 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(7 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(7 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(7 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(8 March 2018 - BNI\)](#) [\(5 March 2018 - AP\)](#) [\(8 March 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(8 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(8 March 2018 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#) [\(9 March 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(9 March 2018 - DVB\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 March 2018 - Mizzima\)](#) [\(18 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 March 2018 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 March 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(19 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(19 March 2018 - The](#)

[Voice/Burmese](#) (20 March 2018 -
[DVB/Burmese](#) (20 March 2018 -
[DVB/Burmese](#) (20 March 2018 -
[RFA/Burmese](#) (20 March 2018 -
[Irrawaddy/Burmese](#) (20 March 2018 -
[Eleven/Burmese](#) (21 March 2018 -
[Myanmar Times/Burmese](#))

Skirmish Between NMSP and Karen EAG over Detention of Mon Villagers

On the morning of March 4, a Karen Armed Group and the New Mon State Party (NMSP) clashed in the the NMSP-controlled area around Phayar-Taung, Yebyu Township. The skirmish was sparked by the Karen Armed Group detaining 27 Mon villagers the previous evening. The plantation workers were arrested while returning to their village, and, according to the NMSP, all 27 were released on the afternoon of March 4.

[\(5 March 2018 - BNI\)](#) [\(5 March 2018 - BNI/Burmese\)](#)

Farmers Protest Against Land Allocation in Ingapu Township

On March 6, 50 farmers protested against alluvial land allocation in Amyaine Village, Ingapu Township, Irrawaddy Division. The alluvial land is located in between Kyote Kone Village and Amyaine Village in Ingapu Township. Hla Mg, a protest leader, said Amyaine Village only received 16 acres of land and Kyote Kone village received more than 60.

[\(6 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

Irrawaddy Division Government To Coordinate Land Compensation for Farmers

On March 6, Ngwe Saung Beach Hotel executives and the Irrawaddy Division Government met in Pathein Township, Irrawaddy Division. According to the Irrawaddy Prime Minister, Hla Moe Aung, attendees discussed land confiscation and compensation for landowners so that they will not suffer from livelihood losses.

In 2000, the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd (UMEHL) confiscated coconut lands from locals on Ngwe Saung Beach. They did not give compensation for the land; only for the crops. Although the Government confiscated much more, officials have only confiscated 40 to 50 square feet of land from farmers. While the UMEHL handed the lands over to the Irrawaddy Division Government in 2010, the Government did not return the land to the people and instead allowed businessmen to continue running the project.

[\(6 March 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

Locals Hold Press Conference on Land Confiscated for Kyaukpyher Project

On March 8, local people held a press conference in Myeik Town, Tennesserim Division about the land confiscated for the Kyaukpyher Project. According to Tu Tu Latt, a Kyaukpyher villager, 1,600 acres of land had been confiscated, but the project only used 100 acres. Although local people presented their case to the Committee on Confiscated Farmland and Other Lands, the President, and various other committees, it has not worked. According to the Tennesserim Minister of Planning and Finance, there are no plans to return to the lands.

[\(8 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(8 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Rangoon Division Government Receives Nearly 900 Land Dispute Complaints

The Rangoon Division Government received 891 land dispute complaints. 146 complaints have been solved, while 745 remain, according to Naw Pan Thinzar Myo, Ethnic Affairs Minister.

[\(8 March 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(11 March 2018 - BBC/Burmese\)](#)

Bodies of Missing Kachin Farmers Found, Relative Accused of Connections with KIA

On March 8, the remains of two Kachin civilians, Hpaugan Yaw and Nhkum Naw San, who were detained by the Military last month ([see February Chronology](#)) were found by residents in a forest in Mansi Township, Kachin State.

In February, Fortify Rights said it had spoken to two witnesses who saw soldiers detain the two men. The witnesses said Nhkum Naw San was severely beaten, and one saw soldiers attempt to put Kachin Independence Army (KIA) uniforms on the men. According to fractures found on their bodies, the two victims appeared to have have also had their hands tied.

The Military has since filed a complaint against Kaw Awng, the daughter-in-law of Hpaugan Yaw, under Article 17 (1) of the Unlawful Associations Act. She is accused of having connections with the KIA.

[\(9 March 2018 - DVB\)](#) [\(9 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(9 March 2018 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(9 March 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(9 March 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(10 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(10 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(10 March 2018 - Mizzima\)](#) [\(10 March 2018 - Reuters\)](#) [\(11 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 March 2018 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 March 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 March 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(30 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

Villagers Protest Hydropower in Ahtetye Ywar Village

On March 8, in Hsipaw Township, Shan State, there was a press conference about the hydroelectric power project the Military Government was building on Myintnge river. According to Sai Kham Aung, a Shan State Member of Parliament from Hsipaw Township, the Government will give compensation to residents after the project is completed, but residents are not satisfied with this and announced that they would protest the project. Government officials asked them to move

from Talone Village, but they refused. According to Talong resident Sai Htam Aik, the Government has been asking them to move since 2014. Further, the Government negotiated compensation, but residents do not want to move because they have been growing crops on the land for generations, and it is a good area for jobs.

The project began in 2008, and will finish in 2020.

According to the Government Land Registration Office, there are 143 houses in Talone and the population is more than 600. According to Sai Kham Aung, there are more than 300 acres of traditional pomelo and orange farms.

[\(9 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Civil Society Organization Releases Statement On Use of Telecommunications Law

On March 8, Athan, a freedom of expression activist organization, released a statement analyzing the 118 cases that have been brought under the Telecommunications Law since the law's enactment. Although there were 11 cases brought during former President Thein Sein's administration, the majority of cases have occurred under the National League for Democracy (NLD) Government. Of the 108 cases brought during the NLD Government, according to the statement, seven cases were suits brought by the Army and seven were brought by the NLD. In addition, the statement identifies 14 cases suing media outlets and 22 suing individuals journalists. [\(10 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

Press Conference Held For Seven Children Sentenced Without Fair Trial

On March 11, the families of 7 children, child protection staff and lawyers held a press conference because a judge sentenced seven 14-15 year olds to four years of jail time. They were arrested on July 15, 2017 for fighting one another on July 11, 2017. Originally, Dagon Myothit (South) Police Station filed a lawsuit

against them under Penal Code Sections 325, 294, 403 and 114. However, officers changed the charges to Penal Code Sections 114, 294 and 394. The case had not been to trial for 8 months. On February 5, however, the Judge brought the plaintiff and a few of the children to the stand. A Dagon Myothit (South) judge sentenced them on March 5. [\(11 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)

Military Refuses to Return Land in Kyethi Township, Shan State

The Military told Parliament this month that it will not hand back to farmers land it confiscated in Shan State's Kyethi Township in the 1990s. The land concerned involves 31 acres in the Nam Gon watershed area and 165 acres of farmers' land confiscated by the No. 131 Light Infantry Battalion in Kyethi Township.

The reason for the refusal was the fact that the farmers cannot show ownership documents, and the Home Affairs Ministry has issued land permits to the Military for the areas in question.

[\(13 March 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(13 March 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - BNI/Burmese\)](#)

Tanintharyi Journal Sued for Violating Media Ethics

The Tanintharyi Regional Government has sued the Tanintharyi Journal, a weekly journal published in the region, for violating media ethics under Article 25 (b) of the Media Law. The complaint was filed in December 2018 over a satirical piece deemed to satirize the regional chief minister Daw Lei Lei Maw and her family. The article, headlined "Electioneering Smile," which appeared under the pseudonym "Mu Say Ooh" in the journal's Nov. 20 issue, mocked orders made by a female administrator who planned to contest the election for ward and village administrators, as well as her promises and efforts to get re-elected. Daw Lei Lei Maw had made similar remarks and had given

similar instructions. The following trial took place on March 22.

[\(12 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 March 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 March 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#)

Construction of Hatgyi Dam Displaces Thousands of Karen Civilians

The construction of Hatgyi Dam on the Salween River in Hpapun district, northern Karen State, has been the cause of conflicts between the Military and the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army, its splinter group the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). The conflict erupted after the Government declared its support for the dam in September 2016.

Continuing into March, the fighting has forced some 5,000 Karen from their villages and many refugees remain in IDP camps in Myaing Gyi Ngu. In March, the Military deployed more than 600 soldiers in Hpapun, forcing 1,500 people from 14 villages to flee their homes. 30,000 people from around 50 villages in upstream Hatgyi areas would be forced to move if the dam construction continues.

[\(14 March 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(14 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Confiscated Land Returned to Farmers in Taunggyi

Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Chairman of the Central Committee for Scrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands, attended a ceremony to return confiscated land to their owners in Taunggyi District, Shan State.

At the ceremony, of the 1,969 acres abandoned by the Ministry of Defense in the region, 622.48 acres were returned to 356 farmers and 1,347 acres were handed over to the Shan State Government.

[\(15 March 2018 - President's Office\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - BNI/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

Son From Army Family Ordered to Leave Base After Joining Student Union

Thet Maung Maung, the son of a soldier serving with Myanmar Army Infantry Battalion 256, has been banished from the base in Pakokku Township, Magway Division because of his involvement in the All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU).

On discovering that Thet Maung Maung was a secretary for ABFSU in Pakokkuat, battalion officers ordered him to immediately leave the base.

The Pakokku University's student union held a press conference on March 15 in Rangoon to criticise his expulsion.

[\(11 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(11 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 March 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(16 March 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(16 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)

90% of Complaints Sent to Mandalay Division Parliament Are About Lands

According to Regional Public Affairs Committee Chairman Zaw Zaw, during the past two years, the Mandalay Division Parliament received 1770 complains and 90% have been land complaints.

According to Zaw Zaw, the Public Affairs Committee handed lands complaints over to the Mandalay Division Government because the Confiscated Farmland Committee solves land disputes for the Government.

[\(16 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

Confiscated Land Returned to Farmers in Tachileik

The Government has returned approximately 385 acres of land to 82 farmers in Tachileik, eastern Shan State. The Ministry of Defense had previously

confiscated a total of 1,081 acres. Another 696 acres of such land have also been returned to the Shan State Government.

[\(16 March 2018 - Mizzima\)](#) [\(16 March 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

Burma Considers Law Restricting INGO Work

The Government is contemplating legislation that would enable it to further oversee the work of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), including the UN. The Draft Law on International Non-Governmental Organizations contains a vague definition of the groups it would regulate, proposes local monitoring of aid groups' work, and limits INGOs' ability to prevent the Government from suspending their work. This has led to concerns that it could be used to limit the effectiveness of INGO efforts in Burma.

[\(18 March 2018 - Washington Post\)](#) [\(19 March 2018 - Sydney Morning Herald\)](#)

2,000 Karen Civilians Flee Homes After Land Confiscated

CSOs have urged the Military to withdraw troops from the Karen National Union's (KNU) Fifth Brigade area in Karen State, where approximately 2,000 civilians from 14 villages have fled their homes after soldiers confiscated their land for an infrastructure project. Government troops began entering the area on March 4 to build a new road.

The Karen Peace Network issued a statement urging international NGOs to help internally displaced persons through local CSOs instead of through the Government.

[\(20 March 2018 - Mizzima\)](#) [\(20 March 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

Military Tortures Civilians in Shan State

On March 18 there was a clash between Military troops from LIB 578 and the Restoration Council of Shan State

(RCSS/SSA) near Wang Mong village, Mong Kung Township in southern Shan State. Following the fighting, Military officers tied up and severely tortured a local farmer, Sai Myint, accusing him of being an RCSS/SSA spy. They released him the same evening, giving him 10,000 kyats (about \$7.50 USD) to treat his wounds.

[\(26 March 2018 - Shan Human Rights\)](#)

Villagers Protest Against Business Owners Who Confiscated 3,000 Acres of Land in Bago Township

On March 26, in Bago Division, approximately 70 farmers protested for the fifth time against seven businessmen who confiscated 3,000 acres of their lands and garden lands in Hlawkar Village, Bago Township. The Land Records Department issued titles of approximately 300 acre of lands and garden lands to seven businessmen, even though the 200 acres were already titled to local farmers in 2006. Villagers who protested face trial and landowners were arrested and jailed. Farmers had already protested in Bagon and Nay Pyi Taw, but officials have not solved the problems.

[\(26 March 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

Farmers Demand Return of Land

In the third week of March, six farmers from Sinbo Village, Phayagyigone Village Tract, Einme Township in Irrawaddy Division submitted a letter to the Irrawaddy Division Government asking for to return their 30 acres of lands which were confiscated by #18 Light Infantry in Hinthada in Irrawaddy Division. Throughout 1997 and 1998, #18 Light Infantry confiscated 140 acres, but only returned 110 out of 140 acres of lands. Pantanaw Land Records Department informed these farmers on December 16, 2017 that their 30 acres of lands would not be returned, so farmers submitted a letter demanding the return of their land.

[\(26 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)

Defendant Died Due to Torture in Taunggyi Myoma Police Station

On March 9, a defendant arrested in connection with a drug case died in his cell. Htoo Aung was arrested March 7 by Taunggyi Narcotics Police and was detained in the same cell as five other detainees at Myoma Police Station, Southern Shan State.

Myoma Police Station informed Htoo Aung's family that he died on the way to the hospital for treatment. According to autopsy results, however, Htoo Aung died due to being beaten. His family claims this alleged torture was by the five detainees with whom he shared a cell. A lawsuit was filed against the police officers for carelessness, and the five detainees face new charges under Section 302 of the Penal Code.

[\(27 March 2018 - BNI/Burmese\)](#)[\(31 March 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

Policemen Arrested Over Torture of Suspects

On March 25, four policemen were arrested for the torture of Khing Maung Latt and Soe Myat Aung, two burglary suspects, in a village in Irrawaddy Region's Labutta Township. The chief of the Poe Laung police station and other ranks allegedly tortured two burglary suspects during interrogation sessions.

The policemen were arrested and are currently being held in the Labutta police station after families of the two suspects filed a complaint. The chief of the Myaungmya District police force has launched an investigation into the allegations.

Locals said the police held the two suspects for weeks without remand. During this time they were subject to physical and sexual torture. One of the men claimed that he signed a confession due to the torture. Khin Maung Latt and Soe Myat Aung have been receiving medical treatment at Labutta Hospital since March 23.

[\(25 March 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 March 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 March 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 March 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(29 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 March 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(29 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(30 March 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(31 March 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(31 March 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

Farmers Whose Land Is Included in Forest Reserve Find Difficulty Planting

13 farmers have found it difficult to keep planting because their lands are included in the Forest Reserve Area as classified by the Forest Department in Paintchint Village, Loi Lin Lay Township, Karenni State. According to affected farmers, Forest Department officials classified 41 acres of land in this way in order to plant trees.

According to Karenni State Farmers Union Member Dee De Sint Mone, the Forest Department should consult the residents prior to reclassifying land. Farmers will soon meet with the Karenni State Prime Minister and present their difficulties.

[\(28 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

Second Time Compensation Given For For Htamanthi Hydroelectric Power Project Confiscated Lands

March 28 was the second time the Sagaing Division Government Group gave land compensation to farmers to implement the Htamanthi Hydroelectric Power Project. They annualized compensation for 41

plots of lands for 38 farmers. On February 2, the Sagaing Division Government gave land compensation to 18 farmers for the first time at a fixed price of 100 million kyat (\$75,000 US) per acre. In February, they gave 181.5 million kyat (\$136,125 US) for 33 plot of lands and this time they gave 225 million kyat (\$168,750 US) for 41 plot of lands.

The compensation is due to the confiscation of land 20 years ago for the Htamanthi Hydroelectric Power Project by the Electric Implement Department and Sub-Investigate Department.

[\(28 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

News Media More Restricted Under NLD Government

On March 30, journalists and media experts held a meeting on "Media Freedom in Conflict Areas." Journalists said they face more restrictions in gathering news under the National League Democracy (NLD) Government than under the former U Thein Sein Government.

[\(30 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

LEGISLATION AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

New Drug Policy Aims to Eliminate Burma's Drugs Scourge

A new drug policy announced in Burma has been praised for being one of the first in Southeast Asia to tackle the issue of narcotics from an evidence-based perspective. The National Drug Control Policy marks a shift from previous punitive approaches, focusing on the needs of drug users as opposed to criminalising them.

Developed in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the policy recommends responses centered around health and human rights, establishes a path for sustainable alternative development for opium farmers, and promotes international cooperation. Other notable components include investing in research and analysis to better understand the drugs issue, introducing development programs in drug-producing areas, and making mental health services available to young people.

[\(6 March 2018 - VOA\)](#) [\(7 March 2018 - VOA/Burmese\)](#)

INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

More Than 100 Prisoners Took Matriculation Exam

106 prisoners took the matriculation exam in March. According to the Department of Myanmar Examinations, 34 prisoners in Insein Prison, 56 prisoners in Mandalay Central Prison, 1 in ShweBo Prison, 8 prisoners in Hpa-An Prison, 2 prisoners in Myeik Prison, 2 prisoners in Taungoo Prison, 1 Sittwe Prison and 2 prisoners in Myaungmya Prison took the exam. According to the Correctional Department Deputy Director U Myo Oo, most of the students who took the exam are incarcerated due to drug related offenses, although some are serving time for murder or stealing charges.

Seven prisoners passed the exam with distinction at Insein and Mandalay prisons in 2017 and were released under presidential amnesty. The remaining prisoners who passed the exam without distinction received deducted sentences.

[\(7 March 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(9 March 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

Monywa Female Prisoners Given Basic Florist Training

Monywa prisoners were given basic florist training March 5-9, at Monywa Prison, Monywa Township, Sagaing Division. According to Monywa Prison Correctional Department Assistant Director Khin Mg Tun, current female prisoners are doing this training so they will be prepared for vocational opportunities upon release. Prisoners have previously taken part in vocational trainings such as sewing, cosmetology, training, cooking and knitting.

The Monywa Prison population is currently are more than 900 and 60 are female prisoners. Although the course was originally planned for 15 female prisoners,

due the the great interest, trainers accepted 25 participants.

[\(10 March 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

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[\(Protesters Demand Compensation from CNPC for Land Confiscation - Narinjara\)](#)

March 24

[\(Protesters Demand Compensation from CNPC for Land Confiscation - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#)

March 25

[\(Policemen Arrested Over Torture of Suspects - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

March 26

[\(Nine Suspects Arrested Over Sittwe Bomb Blasts, Five then Released - DVB/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Nine Suspects Arrested Over Sittwe Bomb Blasts,](#)

[Five then Released - BNI/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Nine Suspects Arrested Over Sittwe Bomb Blasts, Five then Released - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Military Tortures Civilians in Shan State - Shan Human Rights\)](#)
[\(Villagers Protest Against Business Owners Who Confiscated 3,000 Acres of Land in Bago Township - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Farmers Demand Return of Land - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Policemen Arrested Over Torture of Suspects - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

March 27

[\(Nine Suspects Arrested Over Sittwe Bomb Blasts, Five then Released - DVB/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Nine Suspects Arrested Over Sittwe Bomb Blasts, Five then Released - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Nine Suspects Arrested Over Sittwe Bomb Blasts, Five then Released - BNI/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Nine Suspects Arrested Over Sittwe Bomb Blasts, Five then Released - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Defendant Died Due to Torture in Taunggyi Myoma Police Station - BNI/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Policemen Arrested Over Torture of Suspects - RFA/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Policemen Arrested Over Torture of Suspects - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

[\(Policemen Arrested Over Torture of Suspects - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

March 28

[\(Nine Suspects Arrested Over Sittwe Bomb Blasts, Five then Released - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Nine Suspects Arrested Over Sittwe Bomb Blasts, Five then Released - Irrawaddy\)](#)
[\(Hearings Continue for Jailed Reuters Journalists - Reuters\)](#)
[\(Hearings Continue for Jailed Reuters Journalists - DVB/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Hearings Continue for Jailed Reuters Journalists - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Former Child Soldier Imprisoned for an Interview about his Ordeal - RFA\)](#)
[\(Former Child Soldier Imprisoned for an Interview about his Ordeal - RFA/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Former Child Soldier Imprisoned for an Interview about his Ordeal - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Former Child Soldier Imprisoned for an Interview about his Ordeal - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Former Child Soldier Imprisoned for an Interview about his Ordeal - DVB/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Bodies of Missing Kachin Farmers Found, Relative Accused of Connections with KIA - DVB/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Policemen Arrested Over Torture of Suspects - Irrawaddy\)](#)

[\(Farmers Whose Land Is Included in Forest Reserve Find Difficulty Planting - DVB/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Second Time Compensation Given For For Htamanthi Hydroelectric Power Project Confiscated Lands - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

March 29

[\(Two Villagers Arrested for Preventing Police from Entering Village - RFA\)](#)
[\(Two Villagers Arrested for Preventing Police from Entering Village - RFA/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Two Villagers Arrested for Preventing Police from Entering Village - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Two Villagers Arrested for Preventing Police from Entering Village - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Hearings Continue for Jailed Reuters Journalists - DVB/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Hearings Continue for Jailed Reuters Journalists - VOA/Burmese\)](#)
[Aye Maung and Wai Hin Aung in Court for Alleged Inflammatory Speeches - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Former Child Soldier Imprisoned for an Interview about his Ordeal - RFA/Burmese\)](#)
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[Ordeal - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Former Child Soldier Imprisoned for an Interview about his Ordeal - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Bodies of Missing Kachin Farmers Found, Relative Accused of Connections with KIA - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Bodies of Missing Kachin Farmers Found, Relative Accused of Connections with KIA - Irrawaddy\)](#)
[\(Policemen Arrested Over Torture of Suspects - DVB/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Policemen Arrested Over Torture of Suspects - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)
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[\(Two Villagers Arrested for Preventing Police from Entering Village - Irrawaddy\)](#)
[\(Two Villagers Arrested for Preventing Police from Entering Village - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Two Villagers Arrested for Preventing Police from Entering Village - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Hearings Continue for Jailed Reuters Journalists - The Guardian\)](#)
[\(Aye Maung and Wai Hin Aung in Court for Alleged Inflammatory Speeches - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)
[\(KIA Arrests Tanai Township Villagers Throughout March - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)

[\(Bodies of Missing Kachin Farmers Found, Relative Accused of Connections with KIA - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Policemen Arrested Over Torture of Suspects - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)
[\(News Media More Restricted Under NLD Government - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

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[\(Two Villagers Arrested for Preventing Police from Entering Village - BBC/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Two Villagers Arrested for Preventing Police from Entering Village - BBC/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Two Villagers Arrested for Preventing Police from Entering Village - RFA/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Defendant Died Due to Torture in Taunggyi Myoma Police Station - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Policemen Arrested Over Torture of Suspects - RFA/Burmese\)](#)
[\(Policemen Arrested Over Torture of Suspects - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

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