

JUNE CHRONOLOGY 2018

Summary of the Current Situation:

245 individuals are oppressed in Burma due to political activity:

39 political prisoners are serving sentences,

48 are awaiting trial inside prison,

158 are awaiting trial outside prison.

Farmers and land rights activists from Mandalay division attending a court hearing before their case was dismissed.



*Accessed June 2018
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Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

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ACRONYMS

ABFSU	All Burma Federation of Student Unions
BGP	(Burma) Border Guard Police
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
KBC	Kachin Baptist Convention
KIA	Kachin Independence Army
MNHRC	Myanmar National Human Rights Commission
NLD	National League for Democracy
PAPPL	Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
TNLA	Ta'ang National Liberation Army
3MDG	Three Millennium Development Goal Fund

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POLITICAL PRISONERS

CHARGES

Education Officials File Defamation Charge Against Lawmaker

On June 4, education officials from Arakan State's Education Department filed charges against Than Maung Oo, a local lawmaker and Arakan National Party MP, for alleged online defamation over a social media post in which he heavily criticized the State. The charges specifically relate to a Facebook post Than Maung Oo published on June 2, in which he said that Arakan State was the worst for education, economy, health care, and the rule of law, and that it had the worst roads and the most unpopular State Government in Burma. Than Maung Oo was then charged under Section 66 (d) of the Telecommunications Law in Sittwe. [\(6 June 2018 - RFA\)](#) [\(3 June 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(8 June 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Civilian Charged for Shouting at Judge

On June 14, Pyay Town No. (1) Police Station Commander, Police Lieutenant Aung Hlaing Win, filed lawsuit against Win Haling for shouting out judges' names in front of the Pyay Township Court on June 13. Pyay Township Deputy Judge, Zu Zan Min, claimed that his shouting affected the judges' personal freedom and security.

Win Hlaing has been protesting the lack of the rule of law in court by shouting the judges' names during hearings held in Pyay Township Court since January 2017. [\(16 June 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

Five Female Protestors Arrested and Sued in Patheingyi Township

Five female protesters were sued under Section 505 of the Penal Code by the Second

Officer in the General Administration Department for protesting against the destruction of new houses by the Government in Zeeoak New Ward, Patheingyi Township, Mandalay Division. The General Administration Department forbade entering the land and building in Zeeoak New Ward, but people kept building on the land. The Administration Department therefore organized with the City Development Committee to destroy the buildings, beginning on June 26. Authorities also destroyed the houses of some residents who had not built on the forbidden land, so they staged a protest. Police arrested five women participating in the protest.

[\(28 June 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)

Four Labor Activists Collecting Money For IDPs Sued

Four labor activists, including Naing Zaw Kyi Win and Myo Saw, were sued under Section 188 of the Regional Law for collecting money for IDPs caught in the conflict in Kachin State on May 2, 2018. They were sued by the Kamaryut Township Administrator for leading 40 people in collecting donations in front of the Hledan Center, as well as raising awareness of the plight of Kachin IDPs. Only Naing Zaw Kyi Win received the letter to give testimony at Kamaryut Town Police Station, so he went to the police station on June 26.

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

ARRESTS

Aye Maung Supporter Arrested in Sittwe

The police have arrested Aung Than Wai, a supporter of Aye Maung and a community elder from Sittwe. When Narinjara News contacted Aung Than Wai on June 21, he confirmed that he had been arrested and he

was at No. 1 Police Station. He is facing two charges; one under Section 66 (d) of the Telecommunications Law, and another under Section 10 of the Law Protecting the Privacy and Security of Citizens. The first charge relates to posting a picture of Tin Maung Swe, the Arakan State's Government Secretary, under the title, 'Who is responsible for the Mrauk U Murder?' alongside a video file of the meeting with the Arakan State Government. Tin Maung Swe then filed charges against Aung Than Wai.

The Sittwe Myoma Police chief informed him that charges had been filed against him when they met on the street, so he went to the police station. Latest reports revealed that police were arranging to take Aung Than Wai to Sittwe Township Court before transporting him to Sittwe Prison after being remanded.

[\(22 June 2018 - BNI\)](#)

DETENTION

Myanmar Now Reporters Detailed at Yegyi Military Camp

On June 23, Kay Zone Nway, Win Nandar and Phyo Thiha Cho, three *Myanmar Now* reporters, were briefly detained in Ayeyarwady Region while reporting on the alleged recruitment of Maung Thet Min Paing, a disabled child soldier.

The first installment of the story, published on June 20, said he was recruited three months ago and is receiving Military training in a camp in Ayeyarawady Region's Yegyi Township.

On the day of their arrest, the reporters had interviewed Maung Thet Min Paing's family and taken photographs outside Yegyi No 8 basic Military training camp. At around 3pm, they entered the camp with members of his family, who had made prior

arrangements to meet him. The reporters were then apprehended and interrogated by Military officers. The reason for their detention remains unclear. Following their detention, the reporters could not be contacted until around 5:15pm. *Myanmar Now* contacted the Myanmar Press Council, the Deputy Minister of Information, Aung Hla Tun, and the director general of the State Counsellor's Office, Zaw Htay. The journalists were reportedly released from the camp at about 5:30pm. They stated that Military personnel had threatened to charge them under the Official Secrets Act and asked them to promise not to disclose to the media their brief detention.

[\(20 June 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(23 June 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 June 2018 - Frontier Myanmar\)](#) [\(25 June 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#)

TRIAL

Court Moves Forward with Case Against Anti-War Activists

On June 5, a former member of ABFSU, Than Htike, and current member of ABSFU, Nin Aung, had their cases heard in court.

They were arrested and detained for organizing a candlelit protest for IDPs on May 12. They were charged under Section 19 of PAPPL. It was announced that they will receive their sentence on June 27, but the judge gave the two activists and the complainant organization a final chance to enable to submit an appeal. The two men boycotted the Court, claiming that they do not believe in the judicial system.

[\(28 June 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

High Court Refuses to Drop Charges Against Former ANP Politician Aye Maung
Arakan State's high court has rejected an appeal to dismiss charges filed against Aye Maung, a former ANP politician, for an allegedly anti-Government speech he gave

in Rathedaung Township on January 15, 2018.

After a hearing on May 31, the defendant's lawyer announced the State High Court's rejection of the appeal, which was made on April 28. The appeal had been based on the Court's decision to prosecute Aye Maung on several charges for one offense, which is against the law.

Aye Maung and Wai Hin Aung are both facing trial under Section 17 (1) of the Unlawful Associations Act, as well of Sections 121 and 505 of the Penal Code. The Sittwe Tract Court did decide to hear all the men's charges together at Sittwe Tract Court on June 20, which their lawyers had applied for in March 2018. The decision was made as their charges all relate to the same issues and evidence.

[\(1 June 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(20 June 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Court Schedules Next Hearing for 3 Kachin Protest Leaders

Myitkyina Township Court has scheduled the next court hearing for Lum Zawng, Zau Jat, and Nang Pu to July 2. The three protest leaders were charged in May 2018 (see page 4 of AAPP's [May 2018 Chronology](#)) for leading a protest on April 30 to call for the rescue of residents trapped in the Military offensive in Kachin State.

The case has been submitted to the State High Court due to lack of evidence in the hearing of the case presented by the Township Court. The first court hearing was held on May 16 and the fifth hearing was held on June 18. [\(19 June 2018 - BNI\)](#) [\(19 June 2018 - BNI/Burmese\)](#)

Anti-Multi-Level Marketing Activists appears in Court

On June 6, Ye Myo Thant, who is accused of breaching Section 66 (d) of the

Telecommunications Law, appeared in Dawbon Township Court for his third hearing. The first and second hearings had been adjourned due to the non-appearance of the plaintiff.

Successmore Being Yangon Trading Company filed the charge against Ye Myo Thant in September 2017 after he shared information about its executives and multi-level marketing activities on his social media page. He was released on bail after he was charged.

Successmore uses multi-level marketing to sell cosmetics, medicine and health supplement products from Thailand. On June 13, Ye Myo Thant said that he campaigns against multi-level marketing companies because he wants to protect unwary consumers from losing money. "Successmore charged me because they want to force me to stop, but we share the true information, so I have to continue," he said.

[\(27 June 2018 - Frontier Myanmar\)](#)

Updates in Reuters Reporters Case

After six months of preliminary hearings, the Northern District Court in Rangoon will hear both the prosecution's and defense's final arguments on July 2, and will decide later in the month whether the two journalists will be charged under the Official Secrets Act (see AAPP's December 2017-May 2018 Chronologies for more information on the case).

The Court has heard from the plaintiff and 22 out of an initial 25 witnesses in the case against Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo. Three witnesses were removed from the list, including Police Sergeant Khin Maung Lin, who was arrested together with the *Reuters* reporters and Moe Yan Naing, but was released after 129 days and then fired by the police. His whereabouts have been unknown since May 2018. The Court

removed the sergeant from the witness list as it claimed he is still at large.

On June 5, defense lawyers argued that the documents found on the reporters' phones were not confidential, because the information was publicly available before they were arrested. The Judge accepted as evidence news articles showing that the so-called classified documents had already been published in State media. This contradicts the earlier testimony from a police witness stating that the documents found on the devices included confidential Government plans. In response, Major Aung Kyaw San, an IT expert called by the prosecution, declared that he was not aware of the news articles because he does not read newspapers.

On June 11, during the cross-examination of Police Captain Myint Lwin, defense lawyers argued that the two journalists were deprived of sleep for three consecutive days, that both were asked if they were spies, and that Kyaw Soe Oo was forced to kneel on the floor for over three hours, all of which occurred at a specialist interrogation facility. Myint Lwin denied the accusations and insisted that the reporters were detained at the police station in northern Rangoon until his team finalized the preliminary probe and handed the case to a police crime investigation unit.

The last plaintiff witness, Police Major Tin Win Maung of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), testified on June 18, after failing to appear on June 12, in the case's 27th hearing. The cross-examination of the witness focused on his actions during the questioning of the journalists at the time of their arrest. Tin Win Maung said he was not present when the reporters were questioned at the Aung Thabyay Military camp, which is in contrast to the journalists' accounts. Wa Lone said his interrogators included officials from the Bureau of Special

Investigation, the Military, the police special branch, and CID.

The reporters' lawyer said that Tin Win Maung is an unreliable witness because he had obtained copies of statements made by all other witnesses, an action which is in violation of Burma's Police Manual. During his cross-examination, Tin Win Maung admitted he had copied the statements because "he wanted to know more about the case" as an investigating officer.

On June 19, Aung San Suu Kyi said in an interview with Tokyo-based NHK News that the reporters were arrested for leaking State secrets on Arakan State and for violating the Official Secrets Act. Wa Lone said that he wished that she knew they were charged and are facing trial simply for covering news on Arakan State affairs.

[\(5 June 2018 - DVB\)](#) [\(5 June 2018 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(11 June 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(12 June 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(12 June 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 June 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(18 June 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(18 June 2018 - DVB\)](#) [\(18 June 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 June 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(19 June 2018 - DVB\)](#) [\(19 June 2018 - VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(28 June 2018 - Frontier Myanmar\)](#)

Updates in Case of Former Child Solider Aung Ko Htwe

Aung Ko Htwe, a former child soldier who appeared at Dagon Seikkan Township Court on June 19 to face charges for desecrating Burma's seal after stamping on a copy of the 2008 Constitution, called on the Military to be transparent about its child recruitment. Aung Ko Htwe, who is already imprisoned for doing an interview on his experience as a former child soldier, and three others each face a maximum sentence of three years in prison if found guilty.

"I would like to ask the Military to declare its child soldier recruitment with

transparency,” Aung Ko Htwe told the Court. “I would like to ask the Military Commander-In-Chief not to use child soldiers in battle and [tell him] that they are engaging in warfare based on hatred [against ethnic minority nationals].” Aung Ko Htwe also said that he had been jailed because the Military fears him speaking out about its injustices and human rights violations.

Rangoon’s East Court Judge decided that Aung Ko Htwe’s next hearing would take place at Botahtaung Township Court on June 29. Aung Ko Htwe’s family are still waiting for a decision on an appeal they filed to change the Court where his trial will take place, as the defense argues that the current judge, Chit Ko Ko, is not impartial. [\(19 June 2018 - RFA\)](#) [\(19 June 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 June 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

SENTENCES

Teacher for Arakan State Arrested and Sentenced for Travelling with Fake ID

On May 26, Ma Hla Phyu, a teacher from Arakan State, was arrested in Taungup Township for allegedly attempting to travel from Kyauktalone IDP camp in Kyaukpahu to Rangoon with someone else’s ID. Ma Hla Phyu was reportedly denied access to a lawyer and, on May 28, she was sentenced to a year in prison with hard labor under Sections 6 (2) and 6 (3) of the Immigration Act. She is currently in Thantwe Prison. [\(1 June 2018 - Coconuts\)](#) [\(11 June 2018 - Progressive Voice\)](#)

Three Protest Leaders Sentenced for Staging Protest

On June 13, Mg Soe, a land rights activist, and Than Hlwin and Ye Yint Aung, two farmers, organized a protest against the Madaya Township Administrator outside

the Madaya Township Court in Mandalay Division.

The reason for the protest relates to an earlier protest that the same men organized in July 2017 against land confiscations. Despite meeting with the farmers after this protest, the Madaya Township Administrator later said that the farmers’ leaders were not real farmers, and are in fact only helping farmers in order to get money if their land is returned.

After the protest on June 13, The Madaya Township Superintendent filed a lawsuit against the protest leaders, and they sentenced later in June to one month in prison under Section 20 of PAPPL.

[\(13 June 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 June 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

Demonstration Organizer in Myitkyina Sentenced under PAPPL

On June 11, Sara Ying Kyang, an organizer of a demonstration held on June 9 in Myitkyina to mark the seventh anniversary of the armed conflict in Kachin State has been sentenced under Article 20 of PAPPL. Thousands of people attended a prayer event to mark the anniversary at Manaw Ground. A reenactment of the atrocities of the war was included in the demonstration. Organizers had received official approval for the assembly. The organizer was sentenced for allegedly failing to notify authorities that they would stage a drama during the demonstration, and for continuing the event past the time permitted. The organizer was forced to pay a 10,000 Kyat (US \$7.20) fine.

[\(11 June 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(12 June 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(12 June 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(12 June 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(12 June 2018 - BNI/Burmese\)](#) [\(13 June 2018 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#)

Court Prosecutes Three Out of Ten Farmers

On June 14, Pyin Oo Lwin Court in Mandalay Division prosecuted a land activist and two farmers under Sections 447 and 427. Two other activists and five farmers were released conditionally.

In 2016, the farmers were sued under Sections 26 and 27 of the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands Management Law by the manager of a coffee project for ploughing in vacant land which was confiscated for the coffee project in Saytalone Village, Pyin Oo Lwin Township in 2016. 1,000 acres of land were confiscated in 1996 for the coffee project.

[\(7 June 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(14 June 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

CONDITIONS OF IMPRISONMENT

Farmers Appeal Rejected

On June 25, Kyaukpyu Tract Court in Arakan State rejected Thar Ni and Phyu Thee Khine's appeal. The two men from Myat Ma Chaung Village in Manaung Township had been sentenced under Section 35 of the Farmland Law to seven months imprisonment for refusing to evict their homes for the extension of Manaung airport. Their families had appealed the sentencing on June 20.

[\(21 March 2018 - BNI\)](#) [\(26 June 2018 - BNI/Burmese\)](#)

Almost Half of Inmates Pass Matriculation Exam

47 out of the 104 inmates who sat the matriculation examination in March 2018 passed the test. 28 passed with distinction; five got three distinctions, five got two distinctions, and 18 got one distinction. The Prisons Department said this year's passing rate, at 45.19% was the highest. It also

compared well to the 32.82% national average pass rate.

Approximately 60% of inmates in Mandalay's Obo Prison that passed the exam are serving time for drug charges. Since 2006, the Prisons Department has been offering basic education for inmates. In total, this year 19 inmates from Insein, 27 inmates from Mandalay and 1 inmate from Hpa-an prison passed the exam.

Inmates from Insein Central Prison who passed the exam expressed hope they would be given amnesty as they would like to attend university. Nyan Lynn Maung, who passed with three distinctions, said, "If I don't get amnesty, I cannot join Distance Education University. I will continue as a tutor to help other inmates who are studying at the prison".

[\(2 June 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(4 June 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(20 June 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(21 June 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

MNHRC Inspects Meiktila Prison for the First Time

On June 6, MNHRC carried out an inspection of Meiktila Prison for the first time, and listened to the prison representatives. MNHRC said that Meiktila Prison is one of the biggest prisons in Burma. There are 96 female detainees and prisoners and 618 male detainees and prisoners. The total number of prisoners in Meiktila Prison is 714.

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

Insein Visitors Area to be Upgraded

On June 18, the ICRC announced that the charity will fully finance a 400 million kyat (USD \$295,000) facelift of the visitors area in Rangoon's Insein Prison, with the aim of reducing recidivism. The partners expect the work to be finished early next year.

The ICRC announced that the upgraded

facilities will allow detainees and their family members to maintain better relationships and reduce the strain of separation, and will include improved lighting, ventilation and privacy, new bathrooms, a coffee shop and a playground. Prison officials have insisted that the new facilities would comply with international standards. Insein's current facilities offer little privacy and separate inmates from visitors with mesh wiring.

Aung Myo Kyaw, AAPP's Office Manager in Rangoon, said that an improved visitor building will not create a significant improvement if the number of prisoners is not reduced.

[\(18 June 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(19 June 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(21 June 2018 - Myanmar Now\)](#)

Medical Clinic Built in Myitkyina Prison

On June 18, the first of the four medical clinics built at prisons in the country with the support of 3MDG has been turned over to the Government. The new facility inside Myitkyina Prison in Kachin State will provide basic healthcare, including diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis for both prisoners and staff. The building includes a space for treatment, an office administrative room and separate areas for male and female patients.

Hepatitis C, tuberculosis, HIV and cholera are common in prisons and labor camps due to overcrowding. 3MDG is also funding new health facilities at Insein Prison in Rangoon, and Mandalay Prison and Lashio Prison in northern Shan State.

[\(21 June 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(17 June 2018 - 3MDG\)](#)

RESTRICTIONS ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Military Denies Involvement in Rape and Murder of Kachin Teachers

On January 19, 2015, Maran Lu Ra and Tangbau Hkawn Nan Tsin, two KBC teachers from Kaung Kha village in Kutkai Township, northern Shan State, were brutally raped and murdered in their home. The primary suspects are 28 soldiers from the Military's Infantry Battalion (IB) 503, who were occupying the small village at the time of the incident.

On June 26, Chief Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing claimed in a meeting with the Myanmar Press Council in Naypyitaw that the Military was not involved in the crimes. Instead, he said that an internal investigation had found that two KIA members killed them.

Local residents continue to accuse the Military. "It is impossible that KIA troops came into the village occupied by the Military... The police investigation seemingly has ceased. The perpetrators still can't be identified, but everyone knows who they are", said Hkali, of the KBC. The KBC will cooperate with the Shan State Lawyers Network to continue the case. Locals have staged protests and CSOs have issued joint statements demanding justice for the teachers.

[\(29 June 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(29 June 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

Discussion Postponed Due to Lack of Permission

A discussion titled 'Students and Politics' which was planned to be held in Rangoon University on June 25 was postponed until July, as the University Administrator did not

allow it to take place. The Rangoon University Student Union announced that next time they will not ask for permission from any Government or university authority to hold the discussion.

[\(26 June 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

Kachin Conflict Ceremony Shut Down in Rangoon

On June 9, an event planned to take place in seven neighborhoods of Rangoon to mark the seventh anniversary of the armed conflict in Kachin State was banned by authorities at three restaurants and hotels. The protesters also tried to hold the event at three monasteries but monastic authorities (people or monks who administer Monastic Free Education) would not give them permission, organizers said. The aim of the commemoration was to raise the awareness about the plight of IDPs trapped in the conflict.

[\(11 June 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

Two Kachin Civilians Missing for over One Month

Nhkang La and Nhkum Brang Li from Nyaungtaw Village, Namati Town, Kachin State have been missing since May 4. No information as to their whereabouts has been received since they were last seen heading to their farms, and their families are worried. The families had been in contact with them on the morning of May 4, but someone called Nhkum Brang Li's family with his phone in the evening and spoke Burmese. After that, the families lost all contact with the men. The men are missing in the same area in which the Military has been forcibly recruiting soldiers during its offensive on the KIA's Battalion (11).

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

MNHRC Inspects Prisons in Kachin State

From June 17 to 23, MNHRC conducted checks on prisons, custody and refugee camps in Kachin State with special attention to human rights issues, said Yu Lwin Aung, a senior Commission official. "The main reason for our trip to Kachin State is to spread awareness about human rights in the prisons," he said.

The team was led by central Commissioners Yu Lwin Aung and Myint Kyi. On June 17, the team arrived in Myitkyina Township and visited Mohnyin Prison, where they talked privately with prisoners. Then the team made surprise checks on prisons and custodial centers in Hopin and Mogaung Townships, he said.

"According to our inspections, human rights abuses are very rare in Kachin prisons. So we explained to them that everybody has human rights that need to be respected", said Yu Lwin Aung. Overcrowding was reported to be the main problem in many prisons and labor camps. Some prisons held pre-trial detainees together with convicted prisoners and occasionally held political prisoners with common criminals. Medical supplies and bedding were sometime inadequate. "MNHRC will suggest the basic needs of prisoners that need to be addressed after the inspections. The prisons department would need to fulfill these basic needs", Yu Lwin Aung said.

[\(22 June 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

Prisons Department Refuses to Shut Down Female Labor Camps

On June 7, a senior official of the Prisons Department declared that there are no plans to close a rock-quarry labor camp in Mon State where female inmates work as part of their sentences, in response to a recommendation made by MNHRC in May 2018.

Instead of agreeing to close the camp, the Prisons Department announced that, if the hard labour affects the inmates' health, it will improve medical treatment. According to the Department, regular medical checkups have been conducted at the rock-quarry camps. "We don't make the women carry big boulders. We only made them carry the sizes they can carry," said Linn Bo Naung, State Head of the Mon State Prisons Department. Linn Bo Naung also said that the female prisoners have been taught "domestic science" to help them after their release.

Yu Lwin Aung, a member of MNHRC, said its recommendation was based on its concerns about the health of female inmates, particularly regarding their reproductive health, after visiting two camps. Mupalin camp in Mon State holds 282 female inmates, while Htone Bo camp in Mandalay holds 466 female inmates.

[\(5 June 2018 - BNI\)](#) [\(8 June 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(8 June 2018 - BNI\)](#)

Child Killed in Military Shelling in Shan State

On June 28, Mai Ko Ko, an eight-year-old boy, was killed in shelling by the Military in Shan State's Kutkai Township, according to the TNLA and Metta Shin, a community-funded emergency response team. Seven others were also wounded in the attack.

They said the casualties occurred between 6am and 7am when the Military's Infantry Division No. 88, stationed at a Buddhist monastery on a hill outside the victims' village, shelled the area. A shell allegedly landed on Mai Ko Ko's house. He was wounded and died on the way to a local hospital. They said the shelling also injured his parents and seven-year-old brother, who are being treated at a Military hospital in Kutkai along with a 50-year-old woman.

Major Tar Aike Kyaw, of the TNLA, said that the TNLA had no troops in the village and although there had not been any fighting, the Military shelled the village intentionally. A resident said that TNLA troops had slept in the village overnight but had left early in the morning before the shelling began. The TNLA has repeatedly accused the Military of shelling civilian villages in the past, sometimes fatally, and always with impunity.

[\(28 June 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(28 June 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

Civilian Shot by Military in Arakan State

On June 25, Aung Hla Sein, a 68-year-old ethnic Arakanese civilian, was shot by a Military column of Light Infantry Battalion 551 on patrol in Arakan State's Maungdaw Township. Aung Hla Sein, a local of Kaing Gyi Village, was shot while he was fishing with his son in a creek in the west of the village. The two said that they were shot at five times. Aung Hla Sein was injured in his right thigh and was hospitalized.

The mouth of the creek is off limits to the general public because it is adjacent to the Bay of Bengal and could be used to illegally enter Arakan State, said Myint Khaing, the Maungdaw Township Administrator. He argued that security personnel on guard shot in the air and called for the two civilians to come in, and when they didn't they shot them. He also added that the wound was not serious. Aung Hla Sein is still receiving treatment at Buthidaung Township hospital.

[\(26 June 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 June 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#)

Child Shot and Injured by Military in Arakan State

On June 28, Burmese border guards shot and injured Ansar Ullah, a ten-year-old boy playing in a strip of no-man's land near the Burmese/Bangladesh border on Thursday, according to community leaders. Ansar was

hit near barbed-wire fences erected by Burma on its side of the buffer zone.

The child was shot while playing with other children near the fence during the afternoon. A round of live ammunition was allegedly fired at them from the nearby BGP post, hitting Ansar. He suffered an injury to his thigh and was rushed to a hospital run by Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders for treatment. [\(29 June 2018 - Mizzima\)](#)

Two Residents Wounded in Attack by Armed Groups in Kyaume Township

On June 11, two residents were wounded in an attack by armed groups in Manhtan Village in Kyaume Township, Shan State. A 12-wheel truck was attacked when the driver arrived in Manhtan Village to get some sleep. Myo Myint Oo and Myint Mg, two people who were in the truck, were wounded. They are currently receiving medical treatment at Pyay hospital in Kyaume Township.

[\(12 June 2018 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#)

New Directive Continues Restrictions on Political Debate in Universities

Student activists accused the Ministry of Education of trying to deceive the public by withdrawing its directive, issued on May 21 (see page 12 of AAPP's [May 2018 Chronology](#)), banning political speech at universities only to reinstate the ban under a new name and directive on May 30. Any event, political or not, may now be organised, but the topic must not differ from the original one submitted to the department. According to activists, it contains no substantial changes to its predecessor.

[\(3 June 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#) [\(5 June 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

Defamation Cases Still Common Despite Amendments to Telecommunications Law

Despite amendments made in August 2017 (see page 15 of AAPP's [August 2017 Chronology](#)) by the majority NLD-led Parliament to the Telecommunications Law, free speech advocates have voiced their doubts as to the effectiveness of the reforms. The most controversial provision of the law, Section 66 (d), which is the main legal tool used to censor reporters in Burma, remains in place.

According to Athan, a freedom of expression activist organization, the only significant change since the amendment has been that no more individuals have been prosecuted under the law for defaming State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi. Further, Athan revealed that the number of legal complaints filed by authorities and agencies against individuals has actually increased since the NLD came to power in 2016.

[\(12 June 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(19 June 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#)

Plainclothes Police Officers Accused of Attacking Journalists in Anti-War Protest

This month, MNHRC has been examining closed-circuit videos, conducting interviews, and reviewing documents to determine whether plainclothes individuals committed human rights violations at an anti-war protest in Rangoon's Tamwe Township on May 12 (see page 5 of AAPP's [May 2018 Chronology](#)), including encouraging the beating and arrest of journalists who were covering the event.

According to MNHRC, its investigations verified that anti-war protesters notified officials of the protest in accordance with PAPPL, but the authorities did not negotiate with protesters when they decided to stop the rally, and did not explain their actions. In addition, the report revealed that officials had been informed of counter protesters who were organizing to protest illegally without permission according to

PAPPL's rules, which ultimately led to conflict occurring that could have been prevented.

In the first week of June, the Protecting Committee for Myanmar Journalists (PCMJ), in a meeting with MNHRC, declared that police officers dressed in civilian attire threatened journalists, and highlighted that police officers did not intervene when officers dressed in plainclothes hit and threatened journalists. The NGO condemned the attacks by police and plainclothes individuals as human rights violations.

PCMJ asked MNHRC to inquire about the identity of the plainclothes individuals and the groups to which they belong. The MNHRC said that they will send the report of the investigation to the Ministry of Home Affairs and the President's Office.

[\(1 June 2018 - RFA\)](#) [\(4 June 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(28 June 2018 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

LAND RIGHTS

Military Refuses to Return Seized Land in Shan and Arakan States

On June 20, the Deputy Defense Minister told Parliament that the Military will not return land that it seized from civilians for security or training purposes in Shan and Arakan States. The Military has also refused to provide residents with compensation.

The refusal was in response to questioning from an Upper House lawmaker as to whether the Military planned to return nearly 160 acres of land that was seized from 46 farmers by the Military in Kaykham Village, Lashio township, northern Shan State. The Military was also asked if villagers who had had their land seized for a new city project would be compensated. 3,835 acres of land were seized in Ann Township, Arakan State. According to a spokesperson, the Military has transferred 1,922 acres of the 3,835 acres to the Government to return to farmers.

The reason for the refusal to return land was that farmers allegedly cannot submit any documents that show they own the confiscated land. Further, the spokesperson stated that the Military has invested manpower and money in the rest of the land for rubber plantations and shrimp farms, so it will not return the land or provide compensation to the farmers whose land it seized.

[\(20 June 2018 - RFA\)](#) [\(20 June 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 June 2018 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

Coal Mining Companies Granted Permission to Continue Operations Despite Protests

On May 30, the Union Government sent letters granting permission to two coal-mining companies in Mongkaing Township

in southern Shan State to resume operations despite opposition from locals.

The two companies, Pyae Aung Hein and Hein Mitter, received permission to restart their coal-mining operations in Mongkaing after temporarily stopping work three months ago following protests by local groups. The letters granting permission also allegedly ask the companies to negotiate with local residents to avoid conflicts.

The Shan Herald Agency for News reported last year that the coal-mining operations would cause irreparable damage to 2,000 acres of land, including conifer forests, mountains and farmland. Local ethnic Shan residents protested several times, and operations at the two mining sites, which are beside each other, were suspended. Hundreds of ethnic Shan protested in May last year to demand the two companies leave the region.

[\(11 June 2018 - Irrawaddy\)](#)

Land Seized for Banana Plantations as Farmers Flee Homes in Kachin State Conflict

As residents in Kachin State flee from their homes due to fighting between the Military and the KIA, Chinese businessmen are planting tissue-culture bananas near the Burmese-China border for export to China. Local people work the plantations for low wages to earn a living. Land is being lost to the expanding banana fields, and it is increasingly difficult to earn a living, the villagers said.

[\(22 June 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

Farmers Whose Villages were Swept Away Can Apply for Land Provision

It was announced in a regional parliamentary session that farmers and

small-scale growers in some townships of Rangoon Region could be granted up to 50 acres if they apply for vacant virgin alluvial land.

Thein Zaw Latt, a Regional MP, said four villages were swept away in Kayan Township due to coastal erosion, and as the original location of the villages have now become alluvial land, the locals need to have their lands redistributed. As vacant and virgin lands, more than 5,200 acres can be farmed.

To date, Rangoon Regional Government has allocated 2,300 acres at Mottama Gulf for mangrove forest replanting. Although the villages caught up in the bank erosion were not officially permitted, they are currently using the land for their convenience.

[\(15 June 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

Mae-Ka-Ne Residents Demonstrate over Land Seized by Government

On June 10, over 300 residents of Mae-Ka-Ne Village in Karen State's Myawaddy Township held a peaceful demonstration from the Village Sakhan Gone to Shwe Mya Sandi Thaba Thukha Pagoda. The purpose of the protest was to demand the return of 371.71 acres of farmland seized from 17 farmers by the Government in 2013 for the Shwe Mya Sandi housing development project.

Local residents said they submitted complaints twice in 2015 to the Karen State Chief Minister and the State Security and Border Affairs Minister to demand the return of the seized farmland. They also submitted two more complaints under the NLD Government, with no success. Residents are planning to submit another complaint to the State Chief Minister. "We are not taking another person's land. We are taking our land back since this is the land of our grandparents," said Saw Kal Do, whose land has been seized.

Protesters stated that an unknown male called Thaung Hlaing, a protest leader, three times and made threats.

[\(11 June 2018 - BNI/Burmese\)](#) [\(12 June 2018 - BNI\)](#)

Residents Oppose Government Land Seizures in Arakan State

Over 100 residents have expressed objections to the Government's acquisition of 90 acres of their land for inclusion in the Kyaukphyu SEZ in Arakan State. About 4,000 acres of land have been earmarked for the SEZ, which will include a deep sea port and an industrial zone. A new SEZ committee was formed by the NLD in November 2017. Residents of the villages of Chaung Wa, Min Din, Zai Chaung, Doe Ma Taung and Pya Te submitted objections to the Government earlier this month.

Shwe Hla Aung, the Administrator of Kyaukphyu Township, said the local Government is negotiating with the Land Records Department on the issue. He stated that phase 1 of the land acquisition would involve 76 people being compensated for over 250 acres of land. He also said that the villagers are objecting to creek land that is owned by the Government, meaning that they cannot show ownership papers.

Shwe Hla Aung argued that advertisements for objections had been made, but Poe San, a Kyaukphyu MP, said that he didn't know about any invitation for objections, and that the new committee is not as transparent. "Under the old committee, they called us every time they held a meeting. I attended them 17 times. But I have only been to four meetings under the new Government," he said. Residents are worried that after the land confiscation there will be more seizures for oil and gas pipelines.

[\(26 June 2018 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

Residents Face Difficulties Due to Military Land Seizure in Kyaume Township

Residents from Kyaume village, Kyaume Township, Northern Shan State face livelihood difficulties due to the Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 501 Military column seizing their land to construct fences. Since 2014, LIB has confiscated 70 acres of grazing land from 12 Kyaume villagers. In order to maintain their livelihoods, residents continued to cultivate the land until 2017. However, after 2017, the Military not only continued to build fences, but it also sued residents for land invasion. They were each sentenced to pay 30,000 kyats (US \$21.12) in fines. One resident stated that they lost the case because the Military and the Land Registration Office worked together so that they could show fake proof of land ownership.

Residents are demanding that their local Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) MP resolves the issue because they are struggling to make a living and to pay for school costs.

[\(3 June 2018 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(7 June 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

Residents Demand Return of Land Seized for Myingkalay Cement Factory

On May 30, the original owners of land confiscated in 1981 for the construction of a cement factory in Myingkalay in Hpa-An Township, Karen State complained that they did not receive any of the excess land that was returned to some residents this month.

When they had confiscated the land, officials in charge of the cement factory had taken more land than was needed. Although only 849 acres of land were necessary for the cement factory project, the company actually seized 2,771 acres. They gave the original landowners small amounts of

compensation - 500 kyats (US \$0.35) for small houses and 1,000 kyats (US \$0.70) for large houses - for being forced to relocate.

Residents said that their children had to quit school and work abroad to help maintain their families after their land was confiscated, as it destroyed their livelihoods. Landowners had previously tried to cultivate the excess land, but eight residents were later sued.

[\(1 June 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

Military Forbids Four Pekon Farmers from Cultivating Land

Four farmers have been prevented from cultivating ten acres of their land in Pekon Township, Southern Shan State due to a letter sent by the Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 421 to the Township Administrator on May 30.

Farmers had been cultivating the ten acres of land since 1980, until the Military confiscated it between 1991 and 1992. The Military dug drains and constructed fences. It has threatened to take action if the farmers continue cultivating the land.

Pekon farmers had reported the seizure to the Committee on Confiscated Farmland and Other Lands to stop the Military from building fencing in their farmland and other land and to ask for the confiscation be reviewed. However, to date their demands have been ignored.

[\(5 June 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

Farmers Receive 125 Acres after Land Dispute with Matkyan Militia

On May 3, villagers from Northern Nansand Town in Nansang Township, Loilem Tract, Southern Shan State received 125 acres of land which they had been fighting to get back from the local Matkyan Militia.

The Military gave the land to the villagers for cultivation in 1962, but also gave land to

armed groups which later became a local militia. Land disputes occurred because the militia began ploughing in the villagers' land.

On December 19, 2017, villagers were given 200 acres of their land back because of an intervention on the part of the NLD-led Government.

[\(4 June 2018 - DVB/Burmese\)](#)

Farmers Stages Solo Protest Against Land Invasion

On June 18, Phoe Kho, a farmer from Saipyinkyi village, Depayin Township, Sagaing Division, staged a solo protest in Monywa in order to demand justice for his father, Kyi Lin, another farmer whose land was invaded by other villagers. He also demanded that Kyi Lin be given a bank loan.

Phoe Kho said that his father has a land ownership title but the landlord gave the title to the wrong person, who coincidentally has the same name as his father. He also said that invasions on 2.79 acres of Kyi Lin's farm have been occurring since 2014. Although he has reported it to the village group, the Township Administrator and the regional Government have not done anything to resolve the issue.

[\(18 June 2018 - 7 Day Daily/Burmese\)](#)

Land dispute in Kani Township

On June 27, a land dispute occurred between farmers, the police and private companies in Inntaingtaw Village, Kani Township, Sagaing Division. The land dispute was triggered by the court's decision that the land belongs to Tin Win Tun, a private company, but farmers prevented Tin Win Tun from being given the warrant.

In 2009, Tin Win Tun received permission to plant sugar in 3,200 acres of land for 30 years in the Pakinthaung forest reserve. Land belonging to approximately 300

farmers was included in the land allotted to the company, but farmers did not receive any compensation. Additionally, Tin Win Tun rented the land out to some farmers, even though it was already theirs.

Land disputes between the company and the farmers have been ongoing since 2009. Moreover, seven farmers were sued and sentenced to time in prison for land incursions, while others have been threatened by the company.

[\(27 June 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Protest on Returning Confiscated Land and Amending Farmland Law

Approximately 100 farmers and the Farmers' Union of Burma organized a demonstration from Kawhmu Township to Rangoon City Hall on June 30 to July 1 in order to demand the return of confiscated land and amendments to the Farmland Law. Protesters demanded seven things, including the return of land which the Government confiscated illegally in 1894, the installment of a law which will enable action to be taken against the Land Management Committee, and the immediate release of jailed farmers.

Protesters included civilians from Kawhmu Township, Twantay Township and Dala Township, along with other farmers who have been suffering due to private companies, the Military and the Government departments confiscating their land.

[\(30 June 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

President's Office Order No Delay in Resolving Confiscated Land

On June 27, the President's Office issued an order stating that there should be no delay when resolving confiscated land cases. In particular, it issued a statement saying that actions must be taken which are based on the Land and Other Lands Recruiting Committee's analysis and its remarks

concerning returning abandoned land to the owners as soon as possible. In addition, it said that action must be taken against officers who cause trouble when returning abandoned land and who make it difficult for farmers to receive land ownership titles, along with those people who invade abandoned land.

[\(29 June 2018 - Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#)

Taking Action To Return Back Over 9,000 Confiscated Lands in Mandalay Before the End of the Year

In a press conference held on June 28, the Head of Mandalay's regional Government, Dr. Zaw Myint Mg, said that authorities are trying to return 9,379 acres of confiscated land in Mandalay Division before the end of December 2018. He also said that they have been checking carefully and negotiating with farmers to ensure the return of land to the rightful owners.

[\(29 June 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

Dawei University Pays Out \$700,000 in Land Compensation

Dawei University has provided approximately one billion kyats (US \$700,000) in land compensation for 350 acres of seized land. The land was confiscated in 1988 to build the university in Launglon Township, Dawei Tract, Tanintharyi Division. Only four people are still awaiting compensation, the Dawei Tract Administrator said.

[\(22 June 2018 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)

Hukawng Farmers Discuss Return of Confiscated Land

On June 22 and 23, farmers from Hukawng valley, Kachin State held a discussion on retrieving their land, which had been passed down over generations for years before being seized by the Yuzana company. Farmers from 25 villages along Stilwell Road and Ledo Highway attended the discussion. They talked about the company's confiscations and other issues. Despite filing complaints regarding the seized land since the Military dictatorship, farmers have still not got their land back.

[\(26 June 2018 - BNI/Burmese\)](#)

Protest in Kalay for Right to Cultivate Farms

On June 30, over 70 farmers from Inndinelay Village, Kalay Township, Sagaing Division protested for the right to cultivate farmland. The Military said that it owns the land, and constructed fences. Farmers will have trouble maintaining their livelihoods if the farm fields are confiscated, protest leader Aye Aye Kyu said. She also said that grazing lands will disappear because the Military is staying on the land. Farmers will protest before various departments so that they can cultivate the land. Since the beginning of this year, 255.5 acres of farmland have been seized by the Communications Force near Indinelay Village.

[\(25 June 2018- The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(30 June 2018 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

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