



## **Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)**

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### **Nelson Mandela International Day**

On today's celebration of Nelson Mandela International Day, AAPP stands in solidarity with political prisoners across the world. AAPP also urges the Burmese government to adopt the UN Standard Minimum Rules (SMRs), also known as the Nelson Mandela Rules.

The SMRs are comprehensive guidelines for the treatment of prisoners and their implementation would establish a framework to ensure they enjoy the full protection of their human rights.

The SMRs set standards related to:

- respect for prisoners' inherent dignity,
- protection of vulnerable groups,
- access to legal representation
- mechanisms for independent inspection of prisons.

Adherence to these standards is sorely lacking within Burma's prison system. Conditions inside prisons remain dire, overcrowded and unfit for habitation. The situation is so bad that AAPP considers current levels of overcrowding as a form of torture.

On this day, as we remember not just Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela but all political prisoners, it is important not to just commemorate those who sacrificed so much in the past in the fight for democracy, but to continue to fight for improvements in living conditions for those detained today. Society must not forget those detained behind bars for exercising their democratic rights.

Human rights are not suspended upon incarceration. The Burmese government must protect the human rights of all its citizens, including those in prison.

In Solidarity