



AUGUST NEWS LETTER 2020

7. September. 2020

TRAINING

Basic Human Rights Training Online



During the month of September, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) conducted two basic human rights courses online. Online courses #7 and #8 were held from September 7 to September 14.

A total of 12 people (9 females and 3 males) attended Course #7. The trainees were members of the Eastern Naga Development Organization (ENDO), Chin Social Organization Ann, Kachin Women's Association of Thailand (KWAT), teachers from private school and monastic education schools and Nant Taung Youth and civilians. The trainees were ethnic Burmese, Shan-Kachin, Narga, Chin and Kachin from Sagaing Division, Mandalay Division, Arakan State and Shan state.

In Training Course #8, a total of 11 people (9 females and 2 males) attended. They were members of the United New Democracy Party, Community Peace Support, Kachin Women's Association of Thailand (KWAT), Ta'ang Students and Youth Union, Chin University Students in Rakhine State (CUSR), Mon Myat Myitta, Shining Life "Wa" Youth Organization, students and education staff. They were ethnic Shan, Kachin, Shan-Burmese, Burmese-Kachin, Burmese, Ta'ang, Chin-Burmese, Shanni, Arakanese-Burmese and Wa and came from Shan State, Kachin State, Arakan State and Thailand.

The lectures were provided by AAPP representative, Ko Wanna Nwel. The main topics discussed were the concepts and definitions of human rights, social responsibility, and accountability, and the history of human rights from the Geneva Conventions, to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and contemporary humanitarian law. □

Transitional Justice Online Training



The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) (AAPP) held a training on Transitional Justice Online Training in the month of September. The 8-day training was organized from September 17-24 through online.

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In August

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ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

Diplomatic Briefing with International Diplomats on UPR reports Submitted to the UN Human Rights Council



UPR Submission Briefing with CSOs

These trainings served as capacity building measures, aiming to encourage and inform the participants about democratic principles and help them protect their human rights.

The UN Human Rights Council reviews the human rights situation in each country around the world every five years. Similarly, the human rights situation in Burma is expected to be reviewed in January 2021. Prior to that review, the Myanmar government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are required to submit reports on whether the human rights situation in Burma has improved. There is a Burma/Myanmar UPR Forum in Burma, and the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) has been a member of the group since its inception in 2010. AAPP submitted the report individually and collaboratively with other groups. To include our submissions with comments by international diplomats and the government

we invited diplomats in the country to discuss the human rights situation in Myanmar. The diplomatic briefing was held online on September 29th as it was not possible to have face-to-face contact due to COVID-19.

A total of 62 people including representatives from the civil society organizations, Canada, America and EU attended the diplomatic briefing. There were 11 topics and AAPP's Joint Secretary discussed arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture occurring, political prisoners issues, and issues which should be endorsed by the international community to the Myanmar government at the UN Human Rights Council. ■

From cover

The training was administered by AAPP's trainer, Ko Kyaw Oo. Participants were members of the Ta'ang Students and Youth Union, (TSYU), Community Peace Support, Kachin Women's Association of Thailand (KWAT), Shining Life " Wa Youth Organization and Chin Social Organization Ann, teachers of the prive and monastic

education schools, students and civilian and participants were Ta'ang, Burmese, Shan, Kachin, Rakhine, Wa and Chin Ethnic Backgrounds.

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SUPPORT

Supporting Current and Former Political Prisoners

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) continued to provide support to political prisoners currently incarcerated and former political prisoners struggling with their daily lives. In September, AAPP supported (16) political prisoners from the prisons of Insein (7 prisoners), Maubin (8 prisoners), and Nyaung Shwe (1 prisoner). In addition to this, AAPP supported (2) former political prisoners suffering from a variety of ailments, such as (mental stress and stroke). AAPP also assisted (24) farmers from Palaung Village of Ayeyarwady Division's Maubin Township and (5) workers from Mingaladon Township in Rangoon Division who are facing trial outside the prison. In addition, AAPP supported 105 former political prisoners during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Moreover, since 2015 the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) has provided emergency support to former political prisoners who are in poor health due to the effects of torture in

prisons and interrogation centers. In September, AAPP supported (4) former political prisoners who were tortured in prison.

Supporting political prisoners	16 prisoners
Supporting former political prisoners with ailments	2 prisoners
Supporting Former Political Prisoners who are not in good health due to torture suffered	4 prisoners
Supporting people facing trial outside of prisons	29 prisoners
Supporting Former Political Prisoners during COVID-19 Pandemic	105 prisoner
Total	156 prisoners

INTERVIEW

AAPP's Secretary Interviewed about Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law

On September 7, U Tate Naing, AAPP's Secretary, interviewed with the 7 Day News about Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law. In the interview, U Tate Naing said, "these arrests are due to weaknesses of law, the law is being used as needed, therefore, we are calling on to amend and review the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law."

The following link is available:

<https://7day.news/detail?id=198290>

Interview with DMG on Arrest of Student

On September 16, U Tate Naing, AAPP's Secretary, interviewed with the Development Media Group (DMG) about the arrested students.

Interview with Mandalay In-depth news about Covid-19 and Prisons Situation

On September 18, U Tate Naing, AAPP's Secretary, interviewed with the Mandalay In-depth news about Covid-19 and the situation of prisons . In the interview, U Tate Naing said, "this is worrying that prisons are overcrowded as the capacity of the prisons are three time higher than it can afford and there is no court hearings in that conditions and also this is the worrying situation that prisoners are not allowed to meet their families and lost contact with them as prison visit is restricted".

The following link is available:

<https://www.facebook.com/mandalayindepthnews/photos/a.528183521038441/935124623677660/>

DOCUMENTATION AND RESEARCH

Publish Monthly Chronology, Lists of Political Prisoners and AAPP Newsletter

With the aim of documenting human rights conditions and how many sentences, arrests and charges of political activists, farmers, workers and civilians have been made in Burma, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) publishes a monthly chronology and list of political prisoners. On September 8, AAPP published its chronology and political prisoners list for August.

In addition to this, AAPP's monthly newsletter details the meetings with parliamentary members, officers of the

government agencies, ambassadors from international embassies and representatives of NGOs and CBOs, delivering human rights discussions, talks and providing training. On September 8, AAPP published our August newsletter.

The following link is available:

<https://aappb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Burmese-Chronology-and-MiR-for-August-Edit-1.pdf>

https://aappb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/newsletter-august_3.pdf

Compiling COVID-19 Newsletter

With the aim of documenting the human rights conditions and how many sentences, arrests and charges of political activists, farmers, workers and civilians have been made in Burma,

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) is compiling cases related to COVID-19 pandemic. Our COVID-19 Newsletter was published on September 7 and has documented cases during August in relation to COVID-19 pandemic with lists of arrests, charges and sentences documenting the violation of the rules related to COVID-19.

The following link is available:

<https://aappb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Final-COVID-19-News-Letter-in-August-Burmese.pdf>

<https://aappb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Final-COVID-19-News-Letter-in-August-English.pdf>

Interviewing and Documenting Victims of Torture

Since 2015, AAPP has been conducting interviews and documented the experiences of former political prisoners who have been subject to torture in prisons and interrogation camps. In September, interviews were conducted on the experiences of 13 former political prisoners who were sentenced between minimum of 3 years

to a maximum of 29 years imprisonment and tortured, both in and out of prison.

From 2015 to the end of September 2020, a total of 196 political prisoners, who were tortured, were interviewed and had their experiences documented.

■

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

Civil Society Organizations in Myanmar Demand Truth And Justice For Three Villagers Who Were Arbitrarily Arrested And Killed

On September 1, Ta'ang Women Organization (TWO) released a joint statement demanding truth and justice for three dead villagers living in Muse and Namkham Townships who were arbitrarily arrested and killed. 32 civil society organizations including the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) signed the statement.

The following link is available:

<https://taangwomen.org/2020/09/14/civil-society-organizations-in-myanmar-demand-truth-and-justice-for-three-villagers-who-were-arbitrarily-arrested-and-killed/>



Statement on Prosecution of Right to Freedom of Expression

On September 7, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) released a statement on “Prosecution and the Right to Freedom of Expression”. According to the statement, civil liberties are restricted by the current PAPPL, this law is used as a tool of repression, AAPP urged for the immediate amendment of this law to protect the people.

The following link is available:

<https://aappb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Foe-statement-7-Sep-20.pdf>
<https://aappb.org/2020/09/statement-on-prosecution-of-right-to-freedom-of-expression/?fbclid=IwAR1oCR8VhooHxB1qVTsVSfZcnj6gH31hrb5w67rNkKrXppURoYzYTVylQwA>

Statement on the Arrest and Prosecution of Students during COVID-19 Pandemic

On September 14, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) released a statement on the “Arrest and Prosecution of Students during COVID-19 Pandemic”. According to the statement, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) earnestly urges and calls on the government to effectively address and end the ongoing arbitrary arrests and human rights abuses in Burma, to cease the civil war during the COVID-19 pandemic, to establish an independent commission of inquiry into

civilian casualties during the war, and take immediate action to stop the misuse of the Natural Disaster Management Law, and to implement the rule of law.

The following link is available:

<https://aappb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Statement-for-Arrest-of-Student-in-Rakhine-3.pdf>
https://aappb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Statement-on-student-arrested_FoE_14Sept_KT-eng.pdf



MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MHAP)

Online Mental Health Consultation Program during COVID-19 pandemic

AAPP's Mental Health Assistance Program (MHAP) has been continuing its Online Mental Health Consultation Program during COVID-19 pandemic in September 2020. They received calls from several places including facebook messenger and viber from Yangon, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Ayeyarwady Region, Mon, Thailand and more (Yangon Region – 37%, Bago Region – 16%, Thailand – 14%, Mandalay Region – 8%, Ayeyarwaddy 5%, Magway 2%, and other areas 17% in total.

The people who called our Online Mental Health Consultation Program were also different ages and occupations such as government office staff, migrant workers, sea man, women led household, NGO staff, company staff, quarantined people, PLHIV and more.

In September 2020, MHAP provided coping with stress skills during COVID-19 pandemic to 275 people (124 male age range 18–74, 134 female age range 18–69, and 17 LGBTs). Among them, we provided coping with

stress skills to 69 quarantine people from Yangon and Bago Regions in this month of September.

They have following symptoms:

- Constantly being fearful and worrying about your their own health and the health of loved ones
- Feeling emotionally upset most of the time
- Feeling nervous or anxious
- Changes in sleeping or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Being short-tempered or angered more easily
- Worrying too much about easy infection from COVID-19 especially people living with HIV
- Feelings of sadness and depression
- A loss of interest in things normally interested in.
- Feeling lonely

Tele-CETA training to AAPP supervisors and counselors



In September, AAPP-MHAP trainer Htin Aung continued giving Tele-CETA training to MHAP supervisors and counselors online. It is an online CETA full treatment for distance clients and people who are in the difficult situation to meet in-person like COVID-19 epidemic.

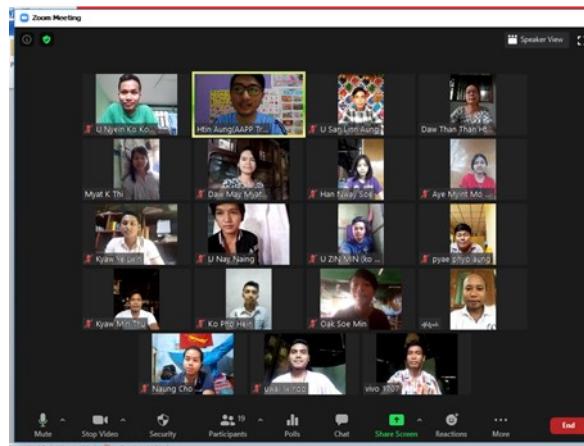
Tele-CETA Online Training

Online Stress Management and Self-Care Training to Human Rights Defenders

1. Between 7 – 11 September, MHAP trainer Ko Htin Aung provided online stress management and self-care training to human rights defenders from Rainbow Alliance, Ayeyarwaddy Youth Network and Pa’O Women Union (PWU). 11 participants of multiple genders attended the training. The participants gained the knowledge and skills to manage the stress in their job and work.
2. Between 21 – 25 September, MHAP trainer Ko Htin Aung provided online stress management and self-care training to human rights defenders from Rainbow Alliance, Basic Education Workers Union (BEWU). 18 participants of multi gender attended the training. The participants gain the knowledge and skills to manage the stress in their job and work.



Online Stress Management and Self-Care Training 7-11 September



Online Stress Management and Self-Care Training 21-25 September

Publish Videos about coping with stress and self-care during COVID-19 pandemic

AAPP’s trainer, Htin Aung, has posted a video and article about coping with stress and self-care during COVID-19 pandemic_online. The following links are available:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=623308218557729>





Interview with One News Myanmar about “Life in Quarantine”



U Tate Naing Interview with MCN News

On September 29, U Tate Naing, AAPP’s Secretary, was interviewed by the MCN TV news about Covid-19 and situations of prisons. In the interview, U Tate Naing said, “There are one hundred thousands of prisoners in Burma’s prisons. The number could be doubled if police stations, detention centers and labour camps are to be included. In such a situation, if someone is infected, there is no way to control it. This needs to be open and transparent. For example, two or three police officers from Tamwe and Botataung Township police stations were infected with COVID-19. If they are

infected, there is concern for inmates inside the cell; once these inmates enter the prison, it is a matter of concern for the prisons; even if these prisoners are imprisoned, there is concern for the cells for the prisoners. As infection rates are not known exactly when it comes to prisons, we do not know how many rates infected and how worrying. But if that happens, it will face a situation that can not be stopped and prevented. Therefore, we strongly urge that precautionary measures be taken in these areas”.

For more information:

Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP)

U Tate Naing (Secretary)
+95(0) 9428 023 828

U Bo Kyi (Joint-Secretary)
+95(0) 9425 308 840

U Kyaw Soe Win (In-charge of the Mental Health Assistance Program)
+95(0) 977 433 6760