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Urgent Diplomatic Release on Insein Prison Strike

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At around 8 am this morning, anti-dictatorship chants were heard from inside Insein Prison, Yangon Region. The protest began in the women's detention block annexe to Insein Prison. This block detains female prisoners arrested for pro-democracy protests and the CDM movement. The protest has now spread across the prison and some staff have joined. Currently, junta forces are storming the prison compound and confiscating all of the prison staffs' weapons. Some of these staff have confirmed to us military vehicles have entered the prison compound.

The situation COVID-19 situation has been deteriorating in the two female detention blocks, but the prison authority has only given treatment to those in special cells and prison hospital. The protest reportedly began because prisoners have not been provided with medical care, and neither have prison staff been given protection from COVID-19. These events follow an announcement by the director of Yangon Imprisonment Department they plan to release more than 1000 inmates from Insein Prison on 22 July who were incarcerated for narcotics and theft.

In September 1990 dozens of political prisoners in this same Insein Prison as today staged a hunger strike to demand the military transfer power to the democratically elected National League for Democracy. In the brutal crackdown that followed, over 40 prisoners required hospitalization and six were reportedly beaten to death. Prison guards had played songs over loudspeakers from security towers to drown out the sound inside and outside the compound's walls, of the prisoners screams, the guard's verbal assaults, and sound of beating bodies. In response, the SLORC said "internationally-recognized batons" had been used and that only three prisoners had been "slightly injured".

AAPP has great concern the protests in Insein Prison will be viciously suppressed and there will be a massacre and rampant use of torture. Like-minded governments must apply pressure on junta officials to protect the lives of these pro-democracy supporters and secure their release from arbitrary detention.

In Solidarity,