

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 438/91 (ASA 16/13/91, 13 December 1991) - Fear of torture and ill-treatment

MYANMAR (BURMA): Students arrested during protest demonstrations

including
Bo Bo Htun
Zaw Min Khing
Ba Htoo Maung

Amnesty International has recently received further information from unofficial sources about the arrests of students during or after demonstrations in Yangon (Rangoon, the capital) on 9, 10 and 11 December 1991. On 9 December, Bo Bo Htun, a final year Physics student from Yangon University, was arrested for distributing leaflets asking for the release of 1991 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and previously detained students, at a student volleyball game on the Yangon Arts and Sciences University (YASU) campus. He was reportedly tortured, and his whereabouts are not known. Other students who were also distributing pamphlets were arrested in their homes that evening by Military Intelligence.

The next day, seven student leaders spoke on the campus, demanding that Aung San Suu Kyi and detained students be released from detention. The students dispersed in the afternoon, but that evening an estimated 150 students who had participated in the demonstration were arrested by security forces. Forty-five of these students were women.

At 10 am on 11 December, students gathered on the campus of YASU again, and were reportedly subsequently arrested in the streets, in teashops, and in their homes. Sixty-four students were allegedly arrested in their dormitories. Among them were Zaw Min Khing, a final year Geology student, and Ba Htoo Maung, a third year Botany student, who were arrested at the Taung Ngu and Dagon dormitories.

Nine other students were arrested in their homes on the evening of 11 December, among them two women. They were reportedly taken directly to Insein Prison near Yangon, Myanmar's largest detention facility where thousands of political prisoners are detained. Altogether hundreds of students were reportedly arrested. Most were taken to Insein prison, but some students suspected by the authorities of being leaders were taken to a Military Intelligence interrogation centre. Amnesty International is concerned that the detained students may be prisoners of conscience, arrested for peacefully expressing their rights to freedom of expression and assembly. Amnesty International is also gravely concerned for the safety of the students.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/airmail letters:

- urging that the students, including Bo Bo Htun, Zaw Min Khing, and Ba Htoo Maung, be treated according to international standards and that they be given access to their families and lawyers of their own choice;
- expressing concern that the students may be detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and assembly, and asking that they be fairly tried, or released immediately and unconditionally.

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APPEALS TO:

1) Senior General Saw Maung
Chairman of the State Law and Order Restoration Council
Yangon (Rangoon), Union of Myanmar (Burma)

Telegrams: Senior General Saw Muang, Yangon, Myanmar
Telexes: 21313 MOFARN BM (Attn: Senior Gen Saw Maung)
Faxes: +95 1 2 2950 (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Senior General

2) Dr U Pe Thein
Minister of Health and Education
Ministers' Office
Yangon (Rangoon), Union of Myanmar
Telegrams: Dr U Pe Thein, Yangon, Myanmar
Faxes: +95 1 2 2950 (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Myanmar in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 29 January 1992.