

Human Rights Council

Oral statement by George Gordon-Lennox, Reporters Without Borders

Item 4: Inter-active Dialogue with ~~Special Rapporteur~~ Pinheiro, 13.03.05

Mr. President, while thanking Mr. Pinheiro for his patient efforts, we cannot but observe that in Burma the repression of free media continues unabated. Reporters Without Borders and the Burma Media Association just two weeks ago condemned increased government monitoring of the Internet and a deterioration in online connections, as well as the continuing detention of **Nay Phone Latt**, a blogger and owner of two Rangoon Internet cafés who was arrested on 29 January.

Nay Phone Latt has been unjustly held for a month. He is alleged to have been in possession of a film it considers contrary to its ideology and faces up to three years in prison. We call for his release.

We firmly condemn the transfers of journalist **U Win Tin** and **Nay Phone Latt** to Insein prison, near Rangoon.

U Win Tin and Nay Phone Latt have no place in Insein prison. It is a crime to send U Win Tin, one of the country's leading journalists, back to this appalling prison just 20 days after a hospital operation, while Nay Phone Latt's imprisonment is a disturbing sign that the military are ready to try him. We call for their unconditional release.

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Mr. President, in a move to step up control of Internet cafés, owners have been required since January to keep the records of their clients online activity and deliver them each week to a special police unit at the department of information. At the same time the Burmese regime's network of informers are now focusing their attention on Internet cafés.

Reporters Without Borders and the Burma Media Association also call on the authorities to explain the continuing detention of *Myanmar Nation* editor **Thet Zin** and his office manager, **Sein Win Maung**. Police arrested them during a raid on the magazine's office on 15 February after reportedly finding they had downloaded forbidden documents from Internet but no official reason has been given. The office has been closed.

Mr. Pinheiro, would you not agree that the ongoing
The imprisonment of journalists and bloggers and the censorship board's harassment of a number of privately-owned publications at the same time as the military junta is promising a referendum and elections in 2010 show that promises of a democratic evolution in Burma cannot be taken seriously!