



Burma's Political Prisoners

Letter Writing Guide

There are still political prisoners in Burma

When the NLD won the election in November 2015, we were hopeful that all political prisoners would be released immediately and unconditionally. However, many political prisoners remain in jail and people are still getting arrested. Repressive laws continue to be used by the authorities to intimidate and to detain political activists. There are around 126 political prisoners in jail and 84 more activists are on trial.

No political prisoner left behind

One political prisoner is one too many. If we draw the attention of the NLD-led government to the remaining political prisoners, hopefully they will also be released. So we are going to continue our campaigns for the release of all remaining political prisoners in Burma so they can also go home and be with their families.

Pressure works

Since 2012 we have highlighted the cases of many political prisoners. Highlighting these cases makes it more difficult for the British government and other countries to ignore the issue.

We have seen the releases of more than 41 of the political prisoners who were highlighted by Burma Campaign UK. We believe that highlighting these cases encourages the government of Burma to release them.

However, there are political prisoners still in jail. Please take action to help these prisoners.

Three kinds of action

1. Write to political prisoners

First, you can write to the prisoners themselves. We know that letters can get through to these political prisoners, and that it makes a real difference to them when they receive a letter. It lets them know that they haven't been forgotten, that people are working for their release, and that there is hope.

Addresses for each political prisoner are provided below.

Letter writing tips:

- Letters can be as long or as short as you like. Even a half page letter is better than no letter at all!
- Tell them a little bit about yourself, your family, what you do.
- Tell them how you found out about their case.
- Say something about why you care and are taking the time to write this letter.
- Be encouraging, let them know that you and others will never give up campaigning for their release.
- If you have written to political prisoners before and they have been released, write about it. It will give them hope.
- Include an email address if you have one. When they are released they may be able to contact you.

2. Demand international action for the release of political prisoners

You can write to key international figures demanding action to free all political prisoners now.

Rt. Hon Boris Johnson MP

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

Federica Mogherini

High Representative
European External Action Service
1046 Brussels
Belgium

Alok Sharma MP

Minister of State
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

Your MP

House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

3. Write to the government of Burma

President Htin Kyaw

President's Office
Nay Pyi Taw
Myanmar

Tun Tun Oo

Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General Office
No. 25, Nay Pyi Taw
Myanmar

Lt Gen. Kyaw Swe

Minister of Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
Office No. 10
Nay Pyi Taw
Myanmar

Key points to make to political leaders

- Express concern that political prisoners are still in jail.
- Use the example of one or more political prisoners highlighted in this briefing.
- Call for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners in Burma.
- Call for the repeal or replacement of repressive laws which are used to jail political prisoners.
- Call for the government of Burma to apologise for jailing political prisoners, and to provide compensation and medical care to prisoners who have been released.
- Call for the establishment of a permanent and independent review committee, with international experts, to review all cases where a prisoner may be in jail for political reasons, including their ethnicity and religion.
- Draft letters are available on our website at: www.burmacampaign.org.uk/no-political-prisoner-left-behind

Easy ways to send post internationally

If you live in the UK, you can now check how much postage will cost and buy and print stamps online via the Post Office website:

<http://www.postoffice.co.uk/price-finder>

You can also take action online

If you prefer to take action online, visit www.burmacampaign.org.uk/no-political-prisoner-left-behind

More information

More information about political prisoners, including reports and briefing papers, is available on the Burma Campaign UK website at: www.burmacampaign.org.uk

Make a difference. Take action

Sending a letter or card of solidarity to a political prisoner in jail can make a real difference. Burma Campaign UK supporter John Neasel sent a card to political prisoner Patrick Kum Jaa Lee. Patrick is a peace activist who was arrested for sharing a picture on Facebook. He has now been released.



After Patrick received the postcard in his prison cell, his wife, May Sabe Phyu, told us:

“He received a postcard and message from UK in his prison room last week. What a surprise for him and such a powerful encouragement when he feels lonely and depressed ... [The postcard] really help to support Patrick when he felt the world just forgotten him. He asked me to share how much he feels good and thanks to a person even he does not know. But caring and sending love to him means a lot.”

Political Prisoners Still In Jail

Zaw Zaw Latt and Pwint Phyu Latt

Zaw Zaw Latt and Pwint Phyu Latt are Muslim campaigners and members of Thint Myat Lo Thu Myar (Peace Seekers and Multiculturalist Movement), an interfaith foundation founded by a Buddhist monk.

The authorities arrested Zaw Zaw Latt in July 2015 after the Buddhist organisation for the Protection of Race and Religion, known as Ma Ba Tha, and other Buddhist nationalists started a public campaign on social media calling for Zaw Zaw Latt’s arrest for insulting their religion. They claimed that Zaw Zaw Latt has insulted Buddhism by encouraging interfaith “mating” and working with a “Buddhist monk who betray Buddhism.” The authorities subsequently arrested his colleague, Pwint Phyu Latt.

They were told that the reasons for their arrests were for visiting the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) as part of their interfaith trip, and for allegedly illegally crossing into India. They were charged under 17(1) of the Unlawful Association Act and the 1947 Burma Immigration Act.

On 26th February 2016, Zaw Zaw Latt and Pwint Phyu Latt were sentenced to two years with hard labour under the Immigration Act. On 8th April 2016, they received two more years in prison under the Unlawful Association Act. They are currently serving their prison sentences in Obo prison in Mandalay.



Write a letter to Zaw Zaw Latt and Pwint Phyu Latt to express your solidarity:

Zaw Zaw Latt
C/O The governor of Obo Prison
Obo Prison
Mandalay
Myanmar

Pwint Phyu Latt
C/O The governor of Obo Prison
Obo Prison
Mandalay
Myanmar

Mading Zau Bawk

Mading Zau Bawk is a 23-year-old Kachin farmer who was arrested in May 2012 and tortured brutally by the military-backed government in Burma. While he was farming, he was arrested by Burmese Army 37th battalion on suspicion of being a soldier from the Kachin Independence Army (KIA). The KIA is the armed wing of the Kachin Independence Organisation, which works for democracy and more autonomy for the Kachin people.

He was kept in a dark cell for several days when he was first arrested. During interrogation, he was beaten and hit on the head with a gun. He was brutally tortured and forced to confess. According to a family member, he has been suffering pain all over his body due to severe beatings and he has had trouble hearing.

He is currently still on trial and he has been charged under the Unlawful Associations Act 17(1), which the military-backed government in Burma uses to ban people from associating with pro-democracy groups. His uncle said, "My nephew is only 23 years old and he has never been a KIA soldier. He fainted and collapsed after being beaten in an interrogation. Last time when I saw him in prison, he was crying."

No address available at this time.

Lahpai Gam

Lahpai Gam is a Kachin farmer, who was arrested in June 2012 by the military-backed government in Burma. He was charged under Article 17/1 of the Unlawful Association Act, and he is serving a 21 year prison sentence in Myitkyina Prison.

Lahpai Gam was living in a refugee camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with his family after fleeing from conflict areas in Northern Burma. To support his family, he requested permission from a camp supervisor to work as a herdsman outside the camp. While taking a lunch break during the trip, he and his friends were taken by the Burmese Army 37th battalion for questioning. At first he was not given any reason for the arrest but later he was accused of being a soldier from the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), and carrying out bombing operations near Myitkyina. The KIA is the armed wing of the Kachin Independence Organisation, which works for democracy and more autonomy for the Kachin people.

He was brutally tortured and forced to make false confession about his connection with the KIA and different bombings in the area. He was also accused of leaving the refugee camp several times to attend military training sessions with the KIA.

According to family members, during the interrogations, he was repeatedly kicked, beaten, forced to drink water mixed with fuel, and was forced to have sexual intercourse with another male prisoner.

He was charged under Article 17/1 of the Unlawful Association Act. After more than a year in detention, he was sentenced to 2 years in prison in November 2013, and an additional 5 years were added to his sentence on 19th December 2013. An additional 14 years were added again to his sentence on 5th June 2014, and now he is serving a 21 year prison sentence in Myitkyina Prison.

On 30th January 2014, the United Nations Working Group On Arbitrary Detention issued a ruling that the Burmese government's detention of Kachin farmer Lahpai Gam is arbitrary, and demanded his immediate release. The official opinion of the UN Working group is that the detention of Lahpai Gam is in contravention of Articles 13, 18, 19 and 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Write to Lahpai Gam at:

Lahpai Gam
C/O The governor of Myitkyina Prison
Myitkyina Prison
Myitkyina Town, Kachin State
Myanmar

Khaing Myo Htun

Khaing Myo Htun is spokesperson in the Information and Organizing Department of the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP). His arrest was related to a statement issued by the ALP which exposed human rights abuses committed by the Burmese Army in Rakhine State.

After the statement was issued in April, Rakhine State Border Affairs and Security Minister Colonel Htein Lin summoned Khaing Myo Htun to the government office in Sittwe and threatened him personally with prosecution if the ALP's allegations could not be substantiated.

Khaing Myo Htun provided evidence of the allegations to the authorities in May. However, an army officer filed a complaint against Khaing Myo Htun claiming that he had committed the offences of sedition/ endangering public tranquility and incitement.

He was arrested on 25th July and charged under Section 505 (b) and (c) of the Myanmar Penal code. He was denied bail and is currently being detained in Sittwe Prison while his trial continues.

Write a letter to Khaing Myo Htun to express your solidarity:

Khaing Myo Htun
C/O The governor of Sittwe Prison
Sittwe Prison
Sittwe
Myanmar

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**for Human Rights, Democracy
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