

# FEBRUARY CHRONOLOGY 2016

## Summary of the Current Situation:

There are **90** political prisoners incarcerated in Burma.

**418** activists are currently awaiting trial for political actions, **132** of whom are incarcerated.



Picture from De Yay Facebook © 2016  
Accessed February 26, 2016

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**Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)**

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# MONTH IN REVIEW

This month, 19 political activists were arrested in total, nine individuals were sentenced and one was released. Eleven political prisoners are reported to be in bad health. Also this month, 45 new charges were piled on activists.

On February 1, 108 former political prisoners, including poets, singers, writers, lawyers, teachers and doctors took their seats as the new members of parliament.

Amidst the transition, the use of Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act to arrest and imprison political activists for their political actions continued. Twelve of the 45 new charges piled onto activists this month were additional charges under Section 18, many of which were for protests occurring over a year ago. Prominent activist and former political prisoner Nilar Thein was arrested and detained this month under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act for her involvement in a protest on February 15, 2015. Despite already facing a raft of charges under Section 18, prominent student leaders Phyo Phyo Aung and Nanda Sitt Aung were slapped with fresh “illegal assembly” charges from an additional two townships for National Education Bill Protests that occurred at the beginning of last year. Four activists who were jailed for their involvement in protests relating to the Letpadaung copper mine also face new Section 18 charges this month for a protest in December 2014 that they have already been serving time for.

Also this month, three Muslim and Hindu interfaith activists, were sentenced to two years in prison with hard labor under the 1947 Burma Immigration (Emergency Provisions) Act for crossing the border to India illegally in 2014.

Bail was ruled out for three detainees this month despite their deteriorating health, one of which was U Gambira who was denied bail three times this month.

Arbitrary arrests and detention of Arakanese suspected of being associated with the Arakan Army has continued, with at least at least five people reported to have been arrested on these grounds. Moreover, 15 people have received charges this month under Article 17 (1) of the Unlawful Association Act for allegedly being affiliated with the Arakanese Army.

Charges relating to activists posts on Facebook have continued. Hla Bhone was charged under the Telecommunications Law for allegedly defaming

President Thein Sein and Commander-in Chief of the Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on Facebook and Zaw Ye Htet was charged under the Electronic Transaction Law for revealing illegal border trade on his Facebook account.

# ARBITRARY DETENTIONS

## **Four Local Villagers Arrested in Arakan State**

On February 22, four villagers, Thein Hlaing, Ngamae Oo, Nyi Nyi Naing and Htoo Htoo Maung, from Kyaukkalay Village, Kyaukphyu Township in Arakan State, were arbitrarily detained by military personnel in Kyaukphyu Township. Families stated that they haven't heard anything about them.

There were reports that Thein Hlaing and Ngamae Oo and Nyi Nyi Naing, three of the four detained, were arrested and beaten by the military on February 17 when they were sleeping at the dam. However, Sanaelay Police Station denies arresting anyone in Kyaukkalay Village and Ba Shin, a Pyithuhluttaw representative, says the district superintendent was unaware of the arrests.

[\(23 February 2016-Narinjara/Burmese\)](#)

## **More Arakan Civilians Arrested On Spurious Grounds**

Aung Tin Moe, who owns a teak plantation in Ma-Ei town, was arbitrarily detained by military personnel from February 1 to February 3 in Ann Township on suspicion of being associated with the Arakan Army. His friend, journalist Tun Tun Naing, also claimed that the military were trying to apprehend him because he was a childhood friend of Col. Nyo Tun Aung, the Arakan Army's vice chief-of-staff.

[\(4 February 2016 - Irrawaddy\)](#)

# SENTENCES

## **Interfaith Activists Sentenced to 2 years in Prison with Hard Labour**

On February 26, three volunteers, Ko Zaw Zaw Latt (28), Ma Pwint Latt (34) and Ko Zaw Win Bo (22) were convicted of violating Section 13 (1) of the 1947 Immigration (Emergency Provisions) Act for crossing the border illegally and sentenced to 2 years in prison with hard labor.

The Muslim and Hindu activists are part of the interfaith group Thint Myat Lo Thu Myar (Peace Seekers). The group allegedly crossed the India-Burma border illegally in 2014. Zaw Zaw Latt claims that the group visited the border town legally, with the permission of immigration officers.

In total, 7 individuals from the group have been charged under Section 13(1) of the 1947 Immigration (Emergency Provisions) Act, 3 have received sentences the other 4 are evading arrest.

All 7 individuals additionally face charges under Article 17(1) of the Unlawful Associations Act. These charges stem from a 2013 trip to Laiza, Kachin State, where the interfaith group met members of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO). A photo on Facebook showed Zaw Zaw Latt posing with members of the KIO.

Ko Zaw Zaw Latt, Ma Pwint Latt and Ko Zaw Win Bo face court for this charge on March 9.

Warrants have been issued the 5 members of the group, who are currently evading arrest.

Police Captain Myo Min Hlaing from the Chan Aye Tharzan township police filed the lawsuits against the 8 activists.

[\(29 February 2016-Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(26 February 2016-Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(26 February 2016-RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(26 February 2016-The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(27 February 2016-RFA/Burmese\)](#)

## **Activist Sentenced to Four Months in Jail**

Than Than Maw, an activist and the wife of jailed activist Htin Kyaw, was sentenced to four months imprisonment by the Kyauktada Township court on February 22 for her alleged leadership role in a protest

in front of Rangoon City Hall on October 10, 2014 against the imprisonment of farmers and government corruption.

Than Than Maw, was charged under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act for the protest over one year ago. A warrant for her arrest was issued during her trial as she failed to attend a court hearing as she was looking after her sick child.

[\(23 February 2016 - Eleven\)](#)

## **Five Activists Sentenced to Imprisonment**

On February 9, 2016, five activists received sentences under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law by Prome Township Court. Their charges pertain to two protests staged in May and June 2014 against a village administrator from Prome Township who sold pasturelands and misused the funds of the village.

Win Hlaing, Myo Naing, Zaw Lay, Than Tun Zaw and Win Hlaing Tun all received three months imprisonment the May 2014 protest. Win Hlaing and Myo Naing received an additional three months imprisonment under an additional count of Section 18 by Prome Township Court for their involvement in the June 2014 protest.

[\(9 February 2016-Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

# RELEASES

## **Thant Zin released after serving 11 month Sentence**

On February 26 2016, Thant Zin was released from Myingyan prison after serving his 11 month sentence. The former chairman of ABSFU, Upper Burma, was arrested on March 30, 2015 for participating in a protest held in Myingyan on March 27, calling for the release of detained students and supporters. He was charged along with five other activists under Articles 143, 145 and 505 (b) and received 9 months in prison.

While the other activists were released on January 28 2016, Thant Zin served an additional two one month sentences under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act. One of these related to a protest on November 22, 2014 supporting students who opposed the National Education Bill and the other was for illegally staging a protest on March 3, 2015 in Myingyan City to oppose a violent crackdown on student protesters who were arriving in Letpadan. He is currently awaiting trial outside of prison under 2 counts of Section 18- one for a protest on October 29, 2014 to reveal the truth of the death of Ko Par Gyian and the other for a protest January 25, 2015 where he marched with student protesters in Myint Gyan township who were marching from Mandalay to Rangoon in protest of National Education Bill.

[\(26 February 2016-Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

## **Letpadan Student and Supporter Released on Bail**

On February 2, student protester Bo Bo Myo was released on bail after being a patient at the Yangon General Hospital since he was admitted in January. He was discharged February 4. Aung Myo Oo aka Solo Aung Aung, a student supporter also involved in the National Education Bill protests was also released on bail from Tharyarwaddy on February 9 to receive medical care.

[\(Aye Aye Khaing's Facebook Page/Burmese\)](#)

# CONDITIONS OF DETENTIONS

## **Court Rules out Bail for U Gambira**

On February 23 U Gambira, aka Nyi Nyi Lwin had his bail denied for the third time this month. Three police officers testified at this hearing but could provide no evidence that U Gambira had contravened immigration laws.

U Gambira was previously denied bail at court hearing on February 10 and 16 by Mandalay's Mahar Aung Mya Township court. At the hearing on February 16, a policeman testified that his arrest occurred following a verbal request from Immigration officers without any evidence. Two other police officers due to testify at the same time failed to appear in court. Gambira, a leading figure in the 2007 Saffron Revolution, was arrested on January 19, facing a charge of violating immigration law. U Gambira is known to suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder resulting from his imprisonment following the 2007 Saffron Revolution, and his family appealed to the court for his release on this basis.

U Gambira's next hearing will be on March 1.  
[\(3 February 2016 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(3 February 2016 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(3 February 2016 - DVB\)](#) [\(4 February 2016 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(10 February 2016 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(10 February 2016 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(10 February 2016 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(10 February 2016 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(10 February 2016 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(11 February 2016 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(17 February 2016 - Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(23 February 2016 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 February 2016 - Myanmar Times\)](#)

## **Court Denies Bail for Two Student Supporters**

On February 23 2016, students and supporters detained in Tharyarwaddy Prison appeared before Tharyarwaddy Township Court. At the court hearing, the judge denied the two supporters bail application because the date of the medical documents were not updated. Khin Maung Win and San Lwin Oo, who have been detained in Tharyarwaddy Prison since March for their involvement in a protest against the National Education Bill, suffer from heart disease, hypertension as well as eye aches, ear aches and backache and have received medical treatment in prison.

[\(23 February 2016 - RFA/Burmese\)](#)



# DEMONSTRATIONS & RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL & CIVIL LIBERTIES

## **Two Student Activists Charged by the Kyauktada Township Court**

On February 26, 2016, Min Kvaw Thu, Chairman of the Rangoon Economic University Students Union and Phoe Thar, members of the University Students Union from Dagon University were charged under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act by the Kyauktada Township Court and sent to the Insein Prison.

The charges relate to their alleged involvement in a protest staged by University Students Union members on August 23, 2015, near Mahabandoola Park in Rangoon, for the release of political prisoners and against the failure and unjust nature of the rule of law in Burma.

[\(25 February 2016-RFA/Burmese\)](#)

## **12 People Charged by the Kyauktaw Township Court**

On February 24, 2016, 12 people were charged under Article 17(1) of the Unlawful Association Act by the Kyauktaw Township court in Arakan state. They were arrested in December 2015, suspected of having links to the Arakan Army (AA).

In December 2015, over 30 people were detained by the army in connection to clashes occurring in Kyauktaw Township.

[\(24 February 2016-RFA/Burmese\)](#)

## **Prominent Activist Detained for Role in Protest One Year Ago**

Nilar Thein, who was a leading member of the 88 Generation Peace and Open Society was arrested on February 24. She attended court in Rangoon Division's Mayangone Township and was charged under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act for her involvement in a protest on February 15, 2015 supporting students demanding amendments to the National Education Bill in Letpadan.

She is currently incarcerated in Insein Prison. On February 26, activists condemned the arrest of Nilar Thein, with lawyer Robert San Aung accusing the outgoing government of 'taking revenge before their term expires and creating a political crisis for the incoming government.'

[\(11 February 2016-RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(22 February 2016-RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 February 2016-RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 February 2016-VOA/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 February 2016-Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 February 2016-Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 February 2016-The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 February 2016-Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(24 February 2016-Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(25 February 2016-Mizzima\)](#) [\(26 February 2016-Irrawaddy\)](#)

## **Three Local People Charged Under Article 17/1 of the Unlawful Association Act**

On February 22, three local people in Arakan State were charged under Article 17(1)/(2) of the Unlawful Association Act by the Kyaukphyu Township Court. On January 21, Maung Aye, chairman of the Kyaukphyu Township Rural Development Association from LakeKhaMaw Village in Kyaukphyu Township, Tun Thar Phyu from YinYeKan Village in Pauktaw Township and Zaw Win Maung from KuLarChaung Village in Ponnagyum Township were arrested at the house of Maung Aye by military personnel as they were suspected of having contact with the Arakan Army. They appeared at the Kyaukphyu Township Court on February 8 and were later detained.

Their next court hearing is scheduled for March 7.

[\(23 February 2016-Narinjara/Burmese\)](#)

## **USDP Secretary Charged Under Article 66(d) of the Telecommunications Law**

On February 22, Than Tun, joint secretary of the Kangyidaunt Township chapter of the USDP, was charged under Article 66(d) of the Telecommunication Law by the Kangyidaunt Township court. On September 2 2015, he posted the picture on his Facebook account, showing the head of Aung San Suu Kyi photoshopped onto a nude body. Sithu Aung, a volunteer with Hand to Hand Free

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Education Network, filed a lawsuit against Than Tun on October 17 after he refused to make a public apology.

He was arrested on October 20, 2015 and released on bail on November 2, 2015 because there was insufficient documentation to charge him. On November 25, 2015, he was arrested again by the Kangyidaunt police and sent to the Bassein Prison.

The next court hearing was scheduled on February 29. [\(22 February 2016-Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

## **President Blocks Peacebuilding Forum in Karenni State**

A community peacebuilding forum scheduled for February 18 at Loikaw, Karenni state, has been blocked by the President. The forum was supported by USAID and incorporated civil society groups, ethnic armed organizations, political parties, local authorities and international observers. The purpose of the event was to foster community peace building in the community.

According to the event director, Htoo Chit of the Burmese migrant rights group, Foundation for Education and Development (FED), organizers had sought permission at the township, district and regional level but were issued with a verbal warning that the President had not approved the event.

[\(18 February 2016-DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 February 2016-2016-RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 February 2016-Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 February 2016-Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 February 2016-Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(19 February 2016-DVB\)](#)

## **A Student Charged Under Section 18**

On February 16, Paing Phyto Min, a student activist from the Dagon University Students Union, was charged by Pabedan Township Court under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act. The charge relates to a protest he staged a protest along with Zayar Lwin and Paing Ye Thu from the University Students Union on June 30 2015, calling

for an end to military representation in parliament and changes to the 2008 Constitution.

Zayar Lwin and Paing Ye Thu, who already face charges under 505 (b) of the Penal Code from both Pabedan and Kyauktada township courts, are being detained in Insein Prison and are facing trial for the same protest.

[\(14 February-RFA/Burmese\)](#)

## **Four Activists Charged Under Section 18**

On February 11, four activists were charged under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act by the Seikann Township Court. In March 7, 2015, Moe Thway from Generation Wave, Zin Lay, Ye Win Htut and Ei Ei Moe organized the praying ceremony in Botahtaung Pagoda along with 50 people regarding a violent crackdown on farmers demanding the closure of the Letpadaung Copper Mine and on students staging a protest to amend the National Education Bill.

The Sikkann Township court granted them bail and the court hearing was set for February 18.

[\(14 February 2016-Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

## **Police Seize another Facebook User**

On February 10, Hla Bhone, a 38 year old sailor from Mayangone Township, was arrested by the police after a lawsuit was filed against him by Rangoon military command for allegedly posting manipulated pictures of President Thein Sein and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on Facebook. Hla Bhone has been charged under 66(d) of the Telecommunications law.

Hla Bhone has claimed the arrest is a case of mistaken identity. It has also been reported that the controversial Facebook account behind the charges, Kyat Pha Gyi, which translates to 'the big rooster', was found to be active a week after the arrest, despite the accused user, Hla Bhone, being in prison. Furthermore, nearly a week after Hla Bhone's arrest a new post appeared reading: "I was sorry for Ko Hla Phone who has been mistaken [...] as Kyat Pha



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Gyi. Please pray for him.” At the end of the post, the account user disclosed his name: “Kyaw Kyaw Min a.k.a. Kyat Pha Gyi.”

Hla Bhone remains in detention, awaiting trial. [\(11 February 2016 - The Voice/Burmese\)](#) [\(12 February 2016-Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(12 February 2016-Eleven\)](#) [\(15 February 2016 - RFA/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 February 2016 - Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 February 2016 - DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 February 2016 - Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 February 2016 - Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(15 February 2016 - BBC/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 February-Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(16 February - Eleven\)](#) [\(23 February 2016-Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(23 February 2016-Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)

## **Political Meetings Banned at 10 Nay Pyi Taw Hotels**

The Nay Pyi Taw Council has written to 10 city hotels banning political meetings on their premises. The letter, signed by Colonel Min Naung on February 11, gives no explanation for the order.

The Myanmar Times reports that the council justified the ban claiming that because the hotels in question are repaying government loans, the government currently owns the properties.

The order follows the holding of a training session by the NLD for MP's at a hotel owned by Htoo Group, which the ban is now imposed upon.

[\(16 February 2016-Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(16 February 2016-Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 February 2016-Myanmar Times/Burmese\)](#) [\(18 February 2016-Myanmar Times\)](#)

## **Kayin newspaper executive charged under Electronic Transaction Law**

Zaw Ye Htet, the CEO of *Hpa Si Than Journal*, was charged under Sections 34(a) and 38 of the Electronic Transaction Law for revealing illegal border trade on his Facebook account. Bae Lu Wa, a betel nut trader who disclosed the secret smuggling to Zaw Ye Htet, also faces the charges under the Electronic

Transactions Law and faces an additional charge under Article 500 of the Penal Code.

[\(5 February 2016 - Eleven\)](#)

## **Jailed Chinese Embassy Protesters Faced Additional Charges**

On February 5, four activists, Naw Ohn Hla, Nay Myo Zin, Ba Myint and Than Swe were charged under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act by the Lanmadaw Township court for participating a protest calling for justice for the death of farmer Khin Win and to mark the 26-month anniversary of the crackdown against protesters at the Letpadaung copper mine. Protesters marched from the Rangoon City Hall to the Chinese Embassy in December 2014. The activists have already been sentenced for this protest by multiple townships under various charges including Section 18 and Article 505 (b) of the Penal Code. Ba Myint, was released in the Presidential Amnesty on January 22, and is awaiting trial outside of prison. The other three currently incarcerated in Insein prison.

[\(2 February 2016 - Eleven\)](#)

## **Student Leaders Face Additional Charges**

On February 3, prominent student leaders Phyo Aung and Nanda Sitt Aung were given fresh charges under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act from Botahtaung and Tamwe Township for their involvement organizing unauthorized protests on February 3 2015. The student activists are facing a raft of charges from different townships for a range of protests against the National Education Bill between November 2014 and March 2015. The charges under multiple townships requires them to travel to different townships almost every day to attend court hearings. Phyo Aung and Nanda Sitt Aung are currently incarcerated in Tharrawaddy Prison.

**Phyo Aung**, the student leader of All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU) currently faces 24 charges- most of which are under Section 18.

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**Nanda Sitt Aung** is currently facing over 80 different charges.

[\(3 February 2016 - Irrawaddy\)](#) [\(3 February 2016-DVB/Burmese\)](#) [\(3 February 2016-Eleven/Burmese\)](#) [\(3 February 2016-Mizzima/Burmese\)](#) [\(4 February 2016 - DVB\)](#) [\(5 February 2016 - Eleven\)](#) [\(5 February 2016-Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

# RELATED HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS

## **Govt ignores Amnesty Report on rights abuses**

U Zaw Htay, director in the President's office, has refused to respond to a Amnesty International report on human rights released on February 24.

The government did not give a reason for their lack of response.

[\(25 February 2016-Myanmar Times\)](#)

## **MP's Say Student Release a Priority**

MP's have formed the parliamentary education committee naming Dr Tun Aung as chairman. He said that one of the first tasks for the committee would be a review of the National Education Law and promised that a solution would be found for student protesters who have been detained for almost a year.

[\(22 February 2016-Eleven\)](#)

## **Entrenched Military Power Could Stifle the Release of Political Prisoners**

Some observers have raised concerns over the ability of the NLD to release prisoners of conscience. Organizations such as AAPP claim that under the 2008 Constitution, the army controls three important ministries, effectively entrenching the political position of the army. While Article 204 (b) states that the president has 'the power to grant amnesty in accord with the recommendation of the National Defense and Security Council,' the army commands the majority of this council.

Ko Zaw Moe, from AAPP has also raised concerns that due to the entrenched military power as written into the 2008 Constitution, the human rights situation may not alter significantly with the introduction of the NLD. Further to this, concerns have been raised regarding the dissatisfaction of some former political prisoners who were rejected from contesting the polls under the NLD party's banner, for not being 'loyal to the party.'

[\(19 February 2016-Myanmar Times\)](#) [\(18 February 2016-Irrawaddy\)](#)

## **Fortify Rights Called for the Release of the Interfaith-Peace Activists**

On February 17, Fortify Rights urged the Burma authorities to immediately and unconditionally release three Mandalay-based Muslim and Hindu interfaith-peace activists Zaw Zaw Latt, Pwint Phyu Latt, and Zaw Whi Bo claiming that the charges are politically motivated and should therefore be dropped immediately.

[\(17 February 2016 - Fortify Rights\)](#) [\(18 February 2016-Myanmar Times\)](#)

## **UN Support is still required to improve the human rights situation: Amnesty**

Amnesty International's written statement to the UN Human Rights Council highlights the need for the UN to remain present in Burma. The statement notes that despite the recent democratic elections, the human rights challenges faced by the new government are vast and will require the United Nations support. Amnesty International expresses the need for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish a country office in Burma, in order to ensure that the human rights situation is properly monitored.

[\(17 February 2016-Mizzima\)](#)

# CONCLUSION

Amidst the transition to the new government arrests, sentences and charges brought against activist did not relent. This month, authorities continued to use laws such as the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act, the Unlawful Association Act, the Immigration (Emergency Provisions) Act and Telecommunications Law to arrest and detain activists. Authorities used a raft of tactics to suppress dissent and punish activists; new cases and charges were dredged up against activists for protests that occurred almost a year ago, additional charges were slammed on activists already serving time and charges were brought against activists by multiple townships.

Activists such as Phyoe Phyoe Aung and Nadar Sitt Aung were forced to travel between different townships almost daily from Tharrawaddy prison -where they are detained- as a result of receiving charges from multiple townships for National Education Bill protests between November 2014 and March 2015. Not only is this a means to increase the activists' period of incarceration, it is also a means of exhausting activists effectively punishing them before they are convicted.

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**"The use of these tactics and targeting of activists demonstrates that the military is intent on maintaining authoritarian control regardless of the transition to the new NLD-led government."**

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Further evidence of the irresponsibility of police and their complete disregard for the rule of law was demonstrated by the arrest warrant issued for Nilar Thein-despite police having conducted no investigation into her whereabouts. There was no other reason for an arrest warrant other than to dishonor the prominent activist. This, coupled with the continued denial of bail to U Gambira demonstrates the resentment the government continues to harbor against former political prisoners and their relentless determination to lock them in prison in order to keep them out of the public eye.

Arrests related to Facebook posts continued this month and are of growing concern in Burma. The charging and sentencing of members of the public for Facebook posts critical of the government highlights a worrying trend towards greater suppression in the digital sphere that must be immediately curtailed.

This month the Burma Army continued to arbitrarily arrest and detain civilians they suspected of having affiliation with the Arakanese Army, demonstrating their complete lack of respect for the rule of law. Arbitrary arrests, detentions and charges have been steadily increasing since the Arakan Army refused to sign the National Ceasefire Agreement in October 2015. The lack of action against the Burma Army for these arbitrary arrests is indicative of the blanket of impunity the Army operate under and is symptomatic of the entrenched military power in government.

More charges against civilians this month under Article 17(1) of the Unlawful Association Act demonstrate how draconian laws in Burma continue to be used to suppress political opposition, and the way that Unlawful Association Act is primarily used to suppress ethnic minority groups.

The use of these tactics and targeting of activists demonstrates that the military is intent on maintaining authoritarian control regardless of the transition to the new NLD-led government. While it is clear that the NLD intends to bring about reforms regarding the release of political prisoners, rule of law and national reconciliation, the realization of these goals requires structural and constitutional change. Therefore, rather than calling on the government to take action on these specific issues we must insist on the amendment of the constitution and demand structural change to finally relinquish the military's hold on Burma.

# REFERENCES

## **February 2**

[Jailed Chinese Embassy Protesters Faced Additional Charges \(Eleven\)](#)

## **February 3**

[Student Leaders Face Additional Charges \(Irrawaddy\)](#)  
[Student Leaders Face Additional Charges \(DVB/Burmese\)](#)  
[Student Leaders Face Additional Charges \(Eleven/Burmese\)](#)  
[Student Leaders Face Additional Charges \(Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)  
[Court Rules out Bail for U Gambira \(RFA/Burmese\)](#)  
[Court Rules out Bail for U Gambira \(Irrawaddy\)](#)  
[Court Rules out Bail for U Gambira \(DVB\)](#)

## **February 4**

[Court Rules out Bail for U Gambira \(Myanmar Times\)](#)  
[More Arakan Civilians Arrested On Spurious Grounds \(Irrawaddy\)](#)  
[Student Leaders Face Additional Charges \(DVB\)](#)

## **February 5**

[Student Leaders Face Additional Charges \(Eleven\)](#)  
[Student Leaders Face Additional Charges \(Eleven/Burmese\)](#)  
[Kayin newspaper executive charged under Electronic Transaction Law \(Eleven\)](#)

## **February 9**

[Five Activists Sentenced to Imprisonment \(Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

## **February 10**

[Court Rules out Bail for U Gambira \(Irrawaddy\)](#)  
[Court Rules out Bail for U Gambira \(DVB/Burmese\)](#)

[Court Rules out Bail for U Gambira \(RFA/Burmese\)](#)  
[Court Rules out Bail for U Gambira \(Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)  
[Court Rules out Bail for U Gambira \(Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

## **February 11**

[Court Rules out Bail for U Gambira \(Myanmar Times\)](#)

## **February 12**

[Police Seize Another Facebook User \(Myanmar Times\)](#)  
[Police Seize another Facebook User \(Eleven\)](#)

## **February 14**

[A Student Charged Under Section 18 \(RFA/Burmese\)](#)  
[Four Activists Charged Under Section 18 \(Eleven/Burmese\)](#)

## **February 16**

[Police Seize another Facebook User \(Irrawaddy\)](#)  
[Police Seize Another Facebook User \(Eleven\)](#)  
[Political Meetings Banned at 10 Nav Pvi Taw Hotels \(Mizzima/Burmese\)](#)  
[Political Meetings Banned at 10 Nav Pvi Taw Hotels \(Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)

## **February 17**

[Fortify Rights Called for the Release of the Interfaith-Peace Activists \(Fortify Rights\)](#)  
[UN Support is still required to improve the human rights situation: Amnesty \(Mizzima\)](#)  
[Court Rules out Bail for U Gambira \(Myanmar Times\)](#)

## **February 18**

[President Blocks Peacebuilding Forum in Karenni State \(Irrawaddy\)](#)

[President Blocks Peacebuilding Forum in Karenni State \(DVB/Burmese\)](#)  
[President Blocks Peacebuilding Forum in Karenni State \(RFA/Burmese\)](#)  
[President Blocks Peacebuilding Forum in Karenni State \(Irrawaddy/Burmese\)](#)  
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