



The Human Rights Foundation of Monland Condemns the Treatment of Political Prisoners in Military Custody

For Immediate Release

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The Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) condemns the ongoing ill-treatment of political prisoners, which has resulted in death by the military junta. Over the last week, HURFOM reported on two cases of critically ill detained political prisoners who both died due to a lack of access to adequate and reliable medical treatment. The thousands of activists and rights defenders unlawfully detained across the country are evidence of the erosion of the rule of law and the sabotaging of fundamental rights and freedoms. The junta has failed to prioritize their health and well-being and must be held accountable for their deaths.

According to the rights monitoring group, Political Prisoners Network - Myanmar (PPNM), seventeen political prisoners died in 2023 because their medical symptoms were ignored and treated too late by junta-staffed personnel.

Ko Yar Shin, a 43-year-old political prisoner who was serving a life sentence, had been in poor health since November last year due to internal injuries from being beaten and tortured during interrogation. During this time, he failed to receive adequate medical treatment. His internal injuries did not heal, and he was taken to a hospital outside the prison for emergency treatment on 11 January. However, by then, it was too late, and he died on 12 January. Last year, Ko Yar Shin was sentenced to life imprisonment under Sections 54 and 52(a) of the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Another political prisoner recently died due to a lack of proper medical treatment at the Central Prison in Kyaikmayaw Township. The deceased, age 31, Ko Pyae Phyo Aung, was transferred from the prison dormitory to the prison hospital for treatment for a stomach problem at 10:00 PM. As the warden of the prison hospital was resting, the dentist on duty gave him one injection. An hour later, he passed out with pus coming out of his mouth.

After the arrival of the prison hospital director, he was given two life-saving injections and was transported to Mawlamyine Hospital with emergency oxygen. He died at 1:00 a.m. on January 16th.

A firefighter for the Civil Disobedience Movement, Ko Pyae Phyo Aung, a native of Insein, Yangon Region, was arrested on January 3, 2022, at the Thanlwin Bridge checkpoint in Hpa-An Township, Karen State, and was sentenced to 7 years in prison under Section 52(a) of the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Patients are dying because the junta has restricted foreign medicines in prisons and does not provide sufficient access to medical treatment. In addition, prisoners are not allowed to be transported outside hospitals in emergencies.

The deaths of these two political prisoners was preventable, especially because they should have never been arrested and detained for exercising their fundamental rights and freedoms. HURFOM calls for an immediate investigation into both the deaths of the young men and the many others who have been killed in military-run detention centers and prisons.

As echoed by many civil society organizations, including the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), the unlawful detention of innocent civilians violates international norms and principles. The security and protection of detainees remain an ongoing concern as we call upon the international community to investigate conditions in prisons in Burma and to hold perpetrators responsible for the demise of the health and ultimate deaths of political prisoners.

Media Contact

Nai Aue Mon, HURFOM Program Director

Email: auemon@rehmonnya.org

Signal: +66 86 167 9741

HURFOM was founded by exiled pro-democracy students from the 1988 uprisings, recent activists and Mon community leaders and youth. Its primary objective is the restoration of democracy, human rights and genuine peace in Burma. HURFOM is a non-profit organization, and all its members are volunteers with a shared vision for peace in the country.