

URGENT ACTION

THREE JOURNALISTS RELEASED AFTER CHARGES DROPPED
Former prisoners of conscience Lawi Weng, Aye Nai and Pyae Phone Aung have had the charge against them dropped following an announcement by the Myanmar Army. The three journalists were released from prison on 1 September 2017.

The Myanmar Army announced on 1 September 2017 that it had dropped charges against a number of journalists and activists, including *Irrawaddy* Senior reporter **Lawi Weng** (aka Thein Zaw), and *DVB* reporters **Aye Nai** and **Phyae Phone Aung**. According to the public statement: “in order to keep on working together for the national interest of the country and the people, the Tatmadaw decided to forgive and drop charges against the personnel and media.” The court formally dropped the charges against the three men on 15 September.

Lawi Weng, Aye Nai, and Phyae Phone Aung were arrested on 26 June 2017 and charged under Section 17(1) of the 1908 Unlawful Association Act for being in contact with the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), an ethnic armed group operating in northern Myanmar. They had been to an area controlled by the TNLA to report on a drug burning ceremony to mark International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The three journalists were detained for peacefully carrying out their work, therefore should never have been imprisoned and charged in the first place. Amnesty International will continue to campaign for the release of prisoners of conscience in Myanmar.

Thank you to all those who sent appeals. No further action is requested from the UA network.

This is the first update of UA 159/17. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa16/6627/2017/en/>

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