

URGENT ACTION

KACHIN PASTOR SENTENCED TO FOUR YEARS IN PRISON

Kachin pastors Dumdaw Nawng Lat and Langjaw Gam Seng have been sentenced to two years and three months imprisonment and Dumdaw Nawng Lat to an additional two years in prison under charges which Amnesty International believes are politically motivated.

Dumdaw Nawng Lat and Langjaw Gam Seng's appeal hearing began on 4 December 2017 in Lashio Township, northern Shan State. On 27 October, both men were found guilty of supporting the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIA), under Article 17(1) of the 1908 Unlawful Association Act, and for having an unlicensed motorbike under Article 8 of the 2012 Import and Export Law, and sentenced to two years and three months imprisonment. The charges relate to the role that the two pastors played in organizing a visit by journalists to Monekoe town, northern Shan state, in November 2016 to show the destruction allegedly caused by Myanmar Army airstrikes.

Dumdaw Nawng Lat was sentenced to an additional two years in prison for "defamation" under Section 500 of Myanmar's Penal Code following a newspaper interview where he discussed the alleged airstrikes. Amnesty International believes that these charges are politically motivated and linked to their role in reporting alleged human rights abuses by the Myanmar military.

The two pastors were arrested on 24 December 2016 and charged in January 2017, after being detained for almost a month in military custody, without charge or any access to their lawyers and family. The men are currently being held in Lashio Prison.

Please write immediately in English, Burmese or your own language calling on the Myanmar authorities to:

- Drop all politically motivated charges against Dumdaw Nawng Lat and Langjaw Gam Seng;
- Ensure that, during their detention, Dumdaw Nawng Lat and Langjaw Gam Seng are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, are held in humane conditions and have access to lawyers, family and adequate medical care; and
- Repeal or amend all laws, including the 1908 Unlawful Association Act and Section 500 of Myanmar's Penal Code, which impose arbitrary or sweeping restrictions on the human right to freedom of expression, in line with international human rights law and standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 JANUARY 2017 TO:

Union Attorney General
U Tun Tun Oo
Union Attorney General Office No. 25
Nay Pyi Taw,
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Fax: + 95 (0) 67 404 106
Email: ago.h.o@mptmail.net.mm
Salutation: Dear Attorney General

Director General of Lashio Prison
Lashio Prison
Lashio Township
Northern Shan State
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Salutation: Dear Director General

And copies to:
State Councillor
Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office No. 9
Nay Pyi Taw,
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Fax: + 95 (0) 67 412 344/ + 95 (0) 67 412 009

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY KYAW ZWAR MINN, Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 19A Charles Street, London W1J 5DX, General Office 020 7148 0740 / 020 7499 4340, Ambassador's Office 020 7148 0749, ambassadoroffice@myanmarembassylondon.com, political@myanmarembassylondon.com, generalenquiries@myanmarembassylondon.com, salutation: Your Excellency

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update of UA 13/17. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa16/6688/2017/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The armed conflict between armed ethnic groups and the Myanmar Army in Kachin and northern Shan states has entered its seventh year. Fighting seriously intensified in November 2016 when the Brotherhood of the Northern Alliance, a new coalition of four armed ethnic groups in northern Myanmar, launched coordinated attacks on security outposts. In a report released in June 2017, Amnesty International documented human rights violations committed by the Myanmar Army in late November 2016 in Monekoe town where the Army arbitrarily detained dozens of civilians from ethnic minorities and then used them as human shields along the inner perimeter of a hilltop base there; several were killed and others seriously wounded by gun and grenade fire. See *“All the Civilian Suffer”: Conflict, Displacement and Abuse in Northern Myanmar* (Index: ASA 16/6429/2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa16/6429/2017/en/>)

The Myanmar authorities continue to arrest and imprison individuals solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression. The right to freedom of expression is enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). There are numerous repressive laws in Myanmar which impose arbitrary and sweeping restrictions on the right to freedom of expression, including the 1908 Unlawful Associations Act and Article 500 of Myanmar’s Penal Code. These laws leave human rights defenders, peaceful activists, journalists and ordinary members of the public at risk of arrest and imprisonment for their peaceful activities.

Amnesty International continues to receive reports about poor prison conditions in Myanmar, which do not comply with those set out in the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. These concerns include a lack of access to adequate medical treatment, clean drinking water, nutritious food and water for bathing.

Further information on UA: 13/17 Index: ASA 16/7554/2017 Issue Date: 5 December 2017