



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

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### **Statement on the Occasion of Union Day and regarding the continued of arrests of ethnic people, youth and students**

**12<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

On today's occasion of Union Day, we are reminded that the government of Burma (Myanmar), Tatmadaw (Military) and ethnic leaders have agreed to work towards creating a federal democratic country. The government of Burma (Myanmar) consistently states that it is working towards National Reconciliation. However, any attempts at National Reconciliation are hindered by ongoing conflicts which are not in conformity with democracy norms. These conflicts will only harm National Reconciliation.

Among those cases, the continuous conflict in Rakhine state has created a dire humanitarian situation due to the outbreak of fighting. The number of IDPs has increased, many people in that area have lost their basic human rights or been killed by heavy artillery. Moreover, many villagers are arrested after being accused of being connected with the Arakan Army. There are 40 people arrested under the 1908 Unlawful Association Act 17(1) in Rakhine State alone.

In Kayah (Karreni) State, the youth and people in that area are in disagreement with the local government regarding the construction of a General Aung San Statue. The youth demonstrated peacefully against its construction, but the regional authority cracked down against the peaceful demonstration and 83 have been arrested. We strongly urge the government of Burma (Myanmar) to hold a meeting to solve this issue peacefully as a democratic government rather than simply using force and cracking down against protestors.

In Mandalay Yadanarpon University, students who held a peaceful demonstration were arrested and charged; today 7 students are on our list of political prisoners. Across the country people exercising their rights to freedom of expression continue to be arrested and charged, of particular concern is Chin, Kachin, Shan, and Tanintharyi (Tavoy) States.

The number of political prisoners are increasing. According to our statistics, 49 political prisoners are behind bars and almost 400 people are facing trial under political charges. We need to understand that the problems emerging in Burma cannot be solved with arms and arrests. No government that is supposedly working towards democracy, national reconciliation and peace should arrest those who are simply exercising their basic human rights.

Therefore, by respecting democratic norms, and in order to improve the success of National Reconciliation and peace, we request and urge the government of Burma (Myanmar) to release all political prisoners and dismiss the cases of the people facing trial for standing up for their beliefs. Only by acting as a democratic government can the government support National Reconciliation and uphold the strength of the Union.

For More Information Contact

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