



**Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP)**  
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**Statement on 2020 Presidential Pardon**

Date: Friday 17<sup>th</sup> 2020

AAPP welcomes the release of prisoners in today's presidential pardon, but remains concerned by the lack of political prisoners included in the release .

At the moment, only 18 political prisoners have been included in the presidential pardon. 58 political prisoners remain behind bars. They must be freed immediately and unconditionally and we call on the government to do so.

Today's release of 24,896 political prisoners is a positive step forward, it is the largest prisoner pardon in 10 years. The released prisoners will now have the opportunity to be reunited with their family. This will be beneficial for their, and their family members, mental and physical health, during this pandemic period. However the prison population in Burma remains high and prisons are still operating well over capacity. Prisons and prison staff are still overstretched and food and medical supplies are inadequate for the high prison population. Therefore we urge the government to release more prisoners as soon as possible. This will also be helpful to reduce the harmful effects of COVID-19 in prisons.

We have a request for Burmese society. It can be difficult to return to society after being incarcerated for many years. It will be especially challenging for released prisoners this year with the COVID-19 quarantine period and the economic challenges they will face as a result of COVID 19. Please treat all released prisoners with the empathy and sympathy they deserve.

We also request all released prisoners to follow local government instructions for dealing with COVID 19, and self quarantine, if requested to do so.

In Solidarity.

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