

Open Letter to the State Counsellor with regards to the imprisonment of Aung Thant Zin Oo, aka Lin Htet Naing, aka James

29th September 2020

Aung Thant Zin Oo, aka Lin Htet Naing, aka James, who was one of the student leaders during the 2015 student democratic education protest was arrested, sent to Insein prison and was charged by the police back in November 2015.

After the NLD-led Government came into power, the announcement no. 2/2016 was issued by the State Counsellor office on 8th April 2016, ordering the dismissal of charges related to the student democratic education protest and the release of all the imprisoned students and activists. Among those released included Aung Thant Zin Oo, and all the charges made against him were dropped by the respective courts since that time.

In December 2016, the police summoned Aung Thant Zin Oo to appear in Kyauktada township court to close a case which involved finding of a national identity card when he was evading arrest during the student democratic education protest. The police wrote a remark in the summon letter, which was also submitted to the court, that since the case was related to the democratic education protest, it had to be closed in accordance with the Government announcement letter no. 2/2016. However, the Ministry of Labor, Immigration and Population did not drop that particular case and continue to prosecute him. Moreover, the plaintiff from the ministry repeatedly failed to appear in court during the hearings, and the trial was extended for over two years.

On 26th August 2020, Aung Thant Zin Oo was found guilty by Kyauktada township court and was sentenced to a six-month prison term. Although the court verdict allowed to deduct the duration of prior detention from the total sentence, it was decided that the first day of the trial started only after he was released from prison in 2016. As a result, he is now jailed in Insein prison.

As the government has closed all the cases and released all the people related to the democratic education protest according to the announcement no. 2/2016, the arrest which is made at this current period retrospectively in relations to those cases is clearly unjust.

We call on the State Counsellor to help close the case of Aung Thant Zin Oo, aka Lin Htet Naing, aka James, and to release him immediately, and to ensure that all the cases and consequential events related to the democratic education protest are not again prosecuted, by directing the government ministerial departments including the judiciary institutions, according to the announcement no. 2/2016 issued by the State Counsellor Office.

To contact

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List of endorsing organizations

1. Athan - Freedom of Expression Activist Organization
2. Nyan Lynn Thit Analytica
3. The Wings Institute for Reconciliation
4. Generation Wave
5. Synergy - Social Harmony Organization
6. Action Committee for Democracy Development
7. Genuine People's Servants - GPS
8. Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP)
9. Oway Education and Youth Institute
10. Myanmar Cultural Research Society (MCRS)
11. Myaungmya Youth Network
12. The Seagull: Human Rights, Peace & Development
13. Burma Monitor
14. Equality Myanmar
15. Paung Ku
16. Development Media Group (DMG)
17. Students and Youth Congress of Burma (SYCB)
 1. All Arakan Students' and Youths' Congress (AASYC)
 2. All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF)
 3. All Kachin Youth Union (AKYU)
 4. Kayan New Generation Youth (KNGY)
 5. Kuki Students Democratic Front (KSDF)
 6. Karen Youth Organization (KYO)
 7. Mon Youth Progressive Organization (MYPO)
 8. Pa-O Youth Organization (PYO)
 9. Ta'ang Students and Youth Organization (TSYO)
 10. Tavoyan Youth Organization (TYO)
 11. Zomi Students and Youth Organization (ZSYO)
18. Land in Our Hands
19. Citizen Action for Transparency (CAFT)
20. Community Response Group (COMREG)
21. Youth Circle
22. Loka Ahlinn Social Development Organization
23. Myanmar Media Lawyers' Network
24. Karen Peace Support Network (KPSN)