



The Human Rights Foundation of Monland Condemns Rising Cases of Arbitrary Arrests & Calls for Immediate End to Sentencing of Political Prisoners

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The Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) condemns the ongoing arbitrary arrest of innocent civilians and subsequent outlandish sentencing of political prisoners by the military junta. By the end of 2021, over 2500 people in target areas of Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi regions were unlawfully arrested and detained. Over the last week alone, HURFOM documented 19 arbitrary arrests. Arbitrary arrest is a human rights violation as it deprives civilians of their liberty to live protected under the law with the right to legal counsel.

According to the Dawei Political Prisoners Network, three Dawei women who were arrested on suspicion of associating with local People's Defense Forces (PDFs) were sentenced on 4 February 2022 to nine years each in prison. Daw Aye Aye Khaing, a 51-year-old Tailor, Daw Mya Mya Lwin, a 52-year-old market vendor, and Daw Mya Mya Soe, 34, were arrested in August 2021 and charged under Section 505 (a) of the Penal Code and Section 52 (c) of the Anti-Terrorism Law. They were sentenced and charged during closed-door military court hearings which the press and general public are denied entrance to. The lack of transparency speaks to the levels of corruption the regime is capable of.

Eight women political prisoners from Dawei Prison, including these three, who were arrested on suspicion of associating with PDFs, were sentenced to between two and nine years in prison each by the junta-run court in Dawei:

Daw Aye Aye Khine, 9 years
Daw Mya Mya Lwin, 9 years
Daw Mya Mya Soe, 9 years
Ma Theint Theint Zin Phu, Dawei Tech University Student, 2 years and continued trial
Ma Lin Myat Moe, 2 years
Ma Hnin Hnin Yu, 2 years
Ma Myat Myat, 2 years
Daw Thet Thet Htwe, 2 years

A family member of one of the women told HURFOM: ***“It is too much to be sentenced to nine years in prison on terrorism charges. They are not terrorists.”***

Following their failed coup, the military junta has struggled to maintain control as the civilian population has spearheaded a powerful Spring Revolution in pursuit of safeguarding their fundamental rights and freedoms.

The continuation of arbitrary arrests and abductions is the result of the junta's failed efforts to detain democracy activists in an attempt to stifle the pro-democracy movement. This will not succeed. Nothing can quiet the voices of the people in Burma whose long-time struggle for peace and freedom will outlast the junta's incessant violence.

HURFOM calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and for the military junta to be held accountable by the international community for their mass crimes against humanity and unjust treatment of innocent civilians. The leaders of the failed coup, and those complicit in the junta's crimes must be held responsible and punished according to the rule of law for their actions through international accountability mechanisms.

Media Contact

Nai Aue Mon, HURFOM Program Director

Email: info@rehmonnya.org

Signal: +66 86 167 9741

HURFOM was founded by exiled pro-democracy students from the 1988 uprisings, recent activists and Mon community leaders and youth. Its primary objective is the restoration of democracy, human rights and genuine peace in Burma. HURFOM is a non-profit organization, and all its members are volunteers with a shared vision for peace in the country.