



Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma)

နိုင်ငံရေးအကျဉ်းသားများ ကူညီစောင့်ရှောက်ရေးအသင်း (မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ)

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56 political prisoners freed in 12th Presidential release.

Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) welcomes the October 8th release of 56 political prisoners.

It is essential to continue to recognize the difficulties political prisoners face upon their release. Due to the restrictions placed upon them by Article 401, their freedom after prison is not unconditional. Their release does not officially acknowledge their political status and ensures they are released with conditions restricting their freedom. It is unacceptable that the old prison sentence still hangs over them once they have been freed.

AAPP (B) will continue to express the importance of unconditional freedom for political prisoners. Freedom from prison must also mean freedom from persecution and harassment. There still remain 133 political prisoners incarcerated in prisons across Burma. When they are released, AAPP (B) insists that the use of Article 401 must no longer be viewed as a necessary part of their freedom. The UN General Assembly Resolution stated the demand for political prisoners to be released unconditionally. By ignoring this, the government is continuing to maintain barriers to democratic freedom.

In addition, AAPP (B) is aware of over 200 political activists awaiting trial, a majority under section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly Law and Section 505 (b) of the Penal Code. Despite the importance of releasing political prisoners, the ongoing detention of protesters and activists perpetuates the idea that political and human rights defenders will continue to face persecution. Repressive and restrictive laws must be repealed or amended to prevent further harassment of activists.

The August Commemoration celebrations in Burma reiterated the importance of justice, truth and accountability in national reconciliation. Without unconditional releases for all political activists and achieving forgiveness for the past, it will be more difficult to move towards a united future. Continuing to arrest those exercising their basic human right to protest contravenes international standards on human rights. While the government continues with this approach to political activism, Burma will struggle to attain democratic freedom.

AAPP (B) will continue to campaign for the unconditional release of all remaining political prisoners. It is essential that those awaiting trial are recognized and represented, in the hope that soon true political freedom will exist in Burma for people exercising their right to freedom of speech, association and expression.

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