

Statement of Canadian Burma Ethnic Nationalities Organization on the murder of Freelance Journalist Aung Kyaw Naing (aka) Ko Par Gyi

October 30, 2014

Canadian Burma Ethnic Nationalities Organization (CBENO) is very concerned and deeply saddened to learn that an innocent, unarmed freelance reporter Aung Kyaw Naing (aka) Ko Par Gyi was arrested, brutally tortured and killed by the Burmese army "Tatmadaw" while he was under the custody of Light Infantry Battalion 208 in Mon State while covering news in the front line area.

On October 23rd, 2014, Burmese Army sent a statement to the Interim Press Council via email that Ko Par Gyi was shot dead on October 4th 2014 as he tried to escape from the custody. His body was reportedly buried without informing his wife despite her formal complaints and numerous inquiries to the authorities about an illegal detention of her husband.

Ko Par Gyi was a Karen ethnic nationality and once served as a member of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's 19 members student security team formed in November 1988. He was detained without any formal charge while covering news about recent fighting between Burmese army and a Karen armed group, the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA) near Kyaikmayaw Town in Mon State. We understand that no one should be arrested for over 24 hours without formal charges or court order according to the existing law in Burma.

Ko Par Gyi's wife, Thandar, a former political prisoner, filed a missing person report at the relevant township police station and her subsequent inquiries to the Battalion 208, Mon State Border Affairs Minister, and the operation officer (1) of military's Southeastern Commander on October 21, 2014, press conference in Yangon where she received no information from the authorities. She has also sent the complaints about her missing husband to the President, the commander-in-chief of Defense Services, Lower House speaker, Upper House speaker, the chairperson of the Rule of Law and Stability Committee, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission.

This incident highlights the ongoing human rights violations and lack of rule of law in the ethnic areas and across Burma. There were frequent and well-documented arbitrary and summary killing of civilian by Burmese Army. The main reason proffered by Burmese Army killings of a civilian was usually affiliated with ethnic armed opposition forces; however this claim was rarely substantiated with factual evidence.

CBENO supports call from civil society organizations in Burma including 88 Generation Peace and Open Society for an investigation into the death of freelance journalist Aung Naing Kyaw aka Ko Par Gyi during army detention. This case clearly shows Burmese army's violence against civilians. It is a breach of trust between the people of Burma and the quasi -military regime government, which claimed to march on the road of democracy.

We, along with 123 organizations in Burma and worldwide, request Canada to raise this issue with Burmese government and strongly demand for an independent investigation and the justice for the death of an innocent freelance journalist Ko Aung Kyaw Naing (aka) Ko Par Gyi.

Sincerely,

Canadian Burma Ethnic Nationalities Organization (CBENO)

Zaw W. Kyaw
President
+1 416 358 2138

Slone Phan
General Secretary
+1 204 229 6613

Email: cbenoca@gmail.com