



Myanmar Industry Craft Service-Trade Unions Federation (MICS-TUsF)

Myanmar Industry Craft Service-Trade Unions Federation (MICS-TUsF) calls for solidarity action to release Myanmar trade union leader and political prisoners arrested by the military junta

Thet Hnin Aung, a prominent trade union leader, General Secretary of the Myanmar Industry Craft Service-Trade Unions Federation (MICS-TUsF) was arrested by the military junta on June 26, 2021. He was charged with Article 17/1 of the Unlawful Association Act. His arrest was linked to his active participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) Committee in the Mandalay Region. The CDM was a massive people movement and resistance against military junta that staged a coup on February 1, 2021.

Following a two-year period of incarceration at Insein Prison in Yangon and Zaymathwe Prison in Kyaikto Township, Mon State, Thet Hnin Aung was released on June 26, 2023. Regrettably, he was subsequently abducted and forcibly disappeared by the military, remaining incommunicado at the South Dagon Military Interrogation Center for nearly five months. On November 15, 2023, Thet Hnin Aung managed to contact his family via a prison guard's phone, revealing that he had been transferred to Insein Prison.

Additionally, he disclosed that he had been charged under Article 52a of the Myanmar Counter Terrorism Law, resulting in a seven-year imprisonment sentence with hard labor, following a trial at the South Dagon military court. Thet Hnin's family filed an appeal for his release to Yangon Regional Military Headquarter early December 2023. On April 25, 2024 the family learned that the appeal was rejected.

In commemoration of Burmese New Year, on 17 April 2024, the Military Junta released 3003 prisoners in a mass amnesty. However, according to the Political Prisoners Network-Myanmar not more than 4 percent of those granted amnesty were political prisoners. On the following day, 18 April 2024, the junta issued Order No 29/24, "Remitting Prison Sentences". Those convicted with Unlawful Association Act and Counter Terrorism Law would not have their sentences remitted. Most of the political prisoners including trade unionists, working people, teachers, and health workers were convicted with those two laws.

We strongly condemn the arbitrary arrest, abduction, and forced disappearance of trade unionists and activists advocating for the restoration of democracy in Myanmar. In light of these grave circumstances, we urgently call upon you to exert continued pressure on the Myanmar Military Junta, to unconditionally release Thet Hnin Aung and all other trade unionists, working people and other political prisoners.

Your Solidarity Matters.

In Solidarity

Naylin Aung
MICS-TUsF Acting General Secretary



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Additional Information :

According to The Assistance Association of Political Prisoners (Burma) (AAPP), per April 26 2024, 26573 people have been arrested in relation to the military coup in Myanmar, in which 20360 are still detained including sentenced and 6213 were released. The AAPP (Burma) recorded that 4946 people were killed by junta. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), as recorded by United Nation High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR), has reached 2.3 million people in 2024.

The martial law declared on March 15, 2021 included 11 townships across Yangon and Mandalay. In February 2023, an additional 37 townships were declared under martial law by the State Administration Council. In Yangon, martial law was declared in Hlaing Thar Yar, Shwe Pyi Thar, South Dagon, North Dagon, Dagon Seikkan and North Okklapa. All are townships where industrial zones are located. Essentially, by declaring martial law, the State Administration Council (SAC) transferred the executive and judiciary power to the regional military commander. All crimes under this will be handled by military courts.

Given that the legal proceeding of his case was held at a military tribunal, according to the Martial Law Order No 3/2021 article 6¹, Thet Hnin Aung or his family could apply for a reversal of the punishment to Yangon Regional Military Commander within fifteen days after the conviction. The chairman of State Administration Council (SAC) or Yangon Regional Military, then, will have internal process to decide the reversal of the punishment. The lawyer activists network provides all necessary legal assistance and support for Thet Hnin and his family for this process.

Thet Hnin Aung, 33 years old, is a prominent young trade union leader. He was first elected as MICS-TUsF General Secretary at the very young age. He was very active in mobilizing workers and youth to join the civil disobedience movement (CDM) after the coup. Due to torture and ill treatment at the military detention in 2021, Thet Hnin has hearing loss and digestion system problem. Thet was also severely beaten and put in a solitary confinement at Insein Prison for organizing a strike inside the prison on the occasion of the International Human Rights Day in 2021.

¹ Martial Law Order No 3/2021 <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/martial-law-order-3-2021/>