

TAKE ACTION: Please cut and paste this letter onto your personal or Institutional letterhead demanding the immediate and unconditional release of writer Win Tin.

October 6, 2006

Senior General Than Shwe
Chairman, State Peace and Development Council
C/o Ministry of Defence
Signal Pagoda Road
Yangon, Union of Myanmar
Fax: +011 95 1 652 624

Excellency,

I wish to add my name to this appeal from PEN Canada, the Canadian centre of the international writers' organization, International PEN. PEN Canada is writing to demand the release of writer **U Win Tin**.

The prominent journalist, writer and Central Executive Committee member of the National League for Democracy (NLD) was arrested on July 4, 1989, during a nation-wide crackdown by the authorities on the opposition. Win Tin, now aged 76, worked closely with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. After his arrest in July 1989, he was publicly accused of guiding and influencing her. He was also accused of being a "leftist" politician who urged the NLD to adopt a civil disobedience campaign against martial law, quoting the works of philosopher Henry David Thoreau and the example of Mahatma Gandhi.

Despite the political allegations against him, he was formally charged with a criminal offence and sentenced to three years' hard labour in October 1989. He was accused of having offered hospitality to an NLD member whose companion had allegedly undergone a criminal abortion - on these grounds he was accused of sheltering a criminal under Article 216 of the Criminal Code. It is believed that this accusation was politically motivated and intended to justify his detention. In June 1992, just a few months before completion of his three-year sentence, Win Tin was sentenced to an additional 10 years' imprisonment under Section 5(j) of the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act. This vaguely-worded security legislation is frequently used to sentence political detainees to long terms of imprisonment. Win Tin's third prison sentence was imposed on March 28, 1996, bringing the total years of incarceration to 20.

Since the start of 2006, Win Tin has no longer been able to receive visits from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Win Tin is entitled to a twice-monthly visit from a relative for 20 to 25 minutes. They are allowed to bring him medication, food and magazines, but a censorship bureau within the prison checks all documents brought in to him.

According to recent information, Win Tin currently needs treatment for high blood pressure and inflammation of the prostate. Even though he is checked twice a month by a prison doctor, he is dependent on the help of his relatives who regularly bring him medication and food. His health has seriously deteriorated and he has suffered two heart attacks.

PEN Canada considers writer Win Tin to be detained in violation of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We call for his immediate and unconditional release. PEN Canada urges the authorities of Myanmar to ensure that Win Tin be granted access to proper medical care while in detention.

Sincerely,

[Your name and address]

Copies to:

Lieutenant General Soe Win
Prime Minister
State Peace and Development Council
c/o Director of Defence Services Intelligence (DDSI)
Ministry of Defence
Signal Pagoda Road
Dagon Post Office
Yangon, Union of Myanmar
Fax: +011 95 1 652 624

Embassy of the Union of Myanmar
85 Range Road, Suite 902-903
Sandringham Building
Ottawa ON K1N 8J6
Fax: (613) 232 6435
E-mail: meott@rogers.com

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
E-mail: mofa.aung@mptmail.net.mm

Permanent Representative of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations
10 East 77th Street
New York NY 10021
Fax: (212) 737 2421
E-mail: myanmar@un.int

Please send copies of your appeal to the following Canadian authorities:

The Hon. Peter MacKay
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Lester B. Pearson Building, Room A-10
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa ON K1A 0G2
Fax: (613) 996 3443
E-mail: peter.mackay@international.gc.ca

Peter Harder
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Foreign Affairs Canada
E-mail: peter.harder@international.gc.ca

David Mulroney
Assistant Deputy Minister, Asia Branch
Foreign Affairs Canada
E-mail: david.mulroney@international.gc.ca

James Fox
Director General
South and Southeast Asia Bureau
Foreign Affairs Canada
E-mail: james.fox@international.gc.ca

Alexandre Leveque
Deputy Director
Southeast Asia Division
Foreign Affairs Canada
E-mail: alexandre.leveque@international.gc.ca

Glenn Sheppy
Desk Officer, Thailand and Burma
Foreign Affairs Canada
E-mail: glenn.sheppy@international.gc.ca

Julanar Green
Policy Officer (ASEAN)
Foreign Affairs Canada
E-mail: julanar.green@international.gc.ca

Gwyn Kutz
Director, Human Rights Division
Foreign Affairs Canada
E-mail: gwyn.kutz@international.gc.ca