

TAKE ACTION: Please cut and paste this letter onto your personal or Institutional letterhead calling for the release from prison of Win Tin.

23 March 2007

Senior General Than Shwe
Chairman, State Peace and Development Council
C/o Ministry of Defence
Signal Pagoda Road
Yangon, Union of Myanmar
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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**.

This past 12 March, Win Tin celebrated his 77th birthday behind bars. The prominent journalist, writer and Central Executive Committee member of the National League for Democracy (NLD) was arrested on 4 July 1989, during a nation-wide crackdown by the authorities on the opposition. Win Tin 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. He is serving cumulative prison sentences totalling 20 years.

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 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 a friend who recently visited him, Win Tin said, "All political prisoners must be freed and the democratic parliament must meet. We must not abandon these demands." The journalist insisted on his rights as a political prisoner: "I am not going to beg you to free me. It is my right to be freed because I have served 18 years of my 20-year sentence and I qualify for early release."

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

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