

TAKE ACTION: Please cut and paste this letter onto your personal or Institutional letterhead requesting that the Canadian government request the release of Burma's leading comedian Zargana.

October 5, 2007

The Hon. Maxime Bernier
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Lester B. Pearson Building, Room A-10 125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa ON K1A 0G2
Fax: (613) 996 3443

Dear Sir:

As a member of PEN Canada, the Canadian branch of International PEN, I acknowledge with gratitude your ongoing concern for the people of Burma.

I particularly wish to draw your attention with urgency to the arrest last week of the poet and activist, **Maung Thura ('Zargana')** and request that the Government of Canada exert pressure on the Myanmar regime for the immediate and unconditional release of Zargana and all those currently detained in Myanmar in violation of Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

According to PEN's information, Maung Thura ('Zargana') was arrested on 25 September 2007 for his support of the monks demonstrating in the capital, Rangoon. He is thought to remain detained, and there are mounting concerns for his well-being and safety.

Maung Thura, more commonly known by his nick-name 'Zargana', is Burma's leading comedian, popular for his political satires. Zargana spent several years in prison in the early 1990s for his opposition activities. During that time he was taken up as a main case by the Writers in Prison Committee of International PEN. He was held in solitary confinement in a tiny cell in Rangoon's Insein Prison, where he began writing poetry. After his release from prison in March 1994, Zargana was banned from performing in public, but continued to make tapes and videos which were strictly censored by the authorities. In May 1996, after speaking out against censorship to a foreign journalist, he was banned from performing his work altogether, and stripped of his freedom to write and publish.

There are reports that at least 138 people have been killed and as many as one thousand arrested; their actual names, numbers and whereabouts are unknown. We ask that you take action on at least one detainee whose name is known, on behalf of many others.

Sincerely,

[your name and address here]

COPIES TO:

Leonard Edwards
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa ON K1A 0G2
Email: leonard.edwards@international.gc.ca

David Mulroney
Associate Deputy Minister
Foreign Affairs Canada
Email: david.mulroney@international.gc.ca

Deborah Paul
Director, Southeast Asia and Pacific Division
Foreign Affairs Canada
Email: deborah.paul@international.gc.ca

Alexandre Leveque
Deputy Director, Southeast Asia Division
Foreign Affairs Canada
Email: alexandre.leveque@international.gc.ca

Chrystal Waddington
Desk Officer, Burma, Thailand and Laos
Foreign Affairs Canada
Email: chrystal.waddington@international.gc.ca

Gwyn Kutz
Director, Human Rights Division
Foreign Affairs Canada
Fax: (613) 943-0606
Email: gwyn.kutz@international.gc.ca

Please also send copies of your appeal to the following:

Embassy of the Union of Myanmar
85 Range Road, Suite 902-903
Sandringham Building
Ottawa, ON K1N 8J6
Fax: (613) 232 6f435
Email: meott@rogers.com

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