

PEN CANADA

for FREEDOM of EXPRESSION



Student activist and writer Ko Aung Tun was arrested in February 1998 and reportedly sentenced in March 1998 to 13 years' imprisonment for writing a book on the history of the student movement in Myanmar. U Myo Htun assisted Ko Aung Tun in writing the book, which authorities claimed was "distributed illegally". He reportedly received a seven-year sentence. According to opposition sources, six other people were also arrested in connection with the case and handed down prison sentences ranging from seven to ten years for supplying information to Ko Aung Tun. All are reported to have been refused access to legal counsel during their trials.

According to official reports, Ko Aung Tun and U Myo Htun were charged under the 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration Act, the Unlawful Association Act and the Emergency Provisions Act. At a March 1, 1998 press conference, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) claimed that Aung Tun was arrested for "collaborating with terrorist groups".

Ko Aung Tun is detained at Insein Prison. U Myo Htun, who was reportedly held in Shwebo prison, Sagaing Division, north of Mandalay, is said to have been released in March 2005, upon expiry of his sentence. Ko Aung Tun is reportedly being held incommunicado in solitary confinement and been subject to torture, including threats and severe beatings. He is said to be in very poor health. Ko Aung Tun reportedly suffers from severe asthma and tuberculosis.

Ko Aung Tun was active in the student-led 1988 pro-democracy movement and was previously detained from 1990-1994.

PEN Canada considers writers Ko Aung Tun 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 is also seriously concerned about reports that he has been subjected to ill-treatment while in prison and requests a thorough investigation into these reports. PEN Canada urges the authorities of Myanmar to ensure that Ko Aung Tun be granted access to proper medical care while in detention.

Please send appeals to:

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