

For Immediate Release Tuesday 14th April 2015

Call for Support – U Win Tin Blue Shirt Day for political prisoners in Burma/Myanmar on April 21st 2015

We, the undersigned 17 organisations, are calling on people worldwide to wear a blue shirt or blue clothing on Tuesday April 21st, the first anniversary of the death of U Win Tin, in support of political prisoners still in jail in Burma/Myanmar.

“If there are no political prisoners ... I will take off my shirt but up until now I haven’t seen good indications.” U Win Tin

U Win Tin, a journalist and founding member of the National League for Democracy, was one of Burma/Myanmar’s longest serving political prisoners, describing his time in jail from 1989 until 2008 as living in hell. On his release he refused to hand over his blue prison shirt, and pledged to wear a blue shirt every day until all political prisoners were released. He carried on wearing a blue shirt until his death.

As the first anniversary of his death approaches, at least 173 political prisoners remain in Burma/Myanmar’s jails, with a further 316 activists awaiting trial. The number of political prisoners has risen by almost 600 percent since the start of 2014.

On April 21st, we call on people to honour the memory of U Win Tin by raising awareness and taking action for the release of political prisoners still in jail. Please wear a blue shirt or blue clothing, post pictures of yourself wearing blue on social media, and let people know that there are still political prisoners in jail, and that they need our support.

Despite hundreds of political prisoners being released from 2011 to 2013, repressive laws remain in place, and new repressive laws, such as the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law, have been introduced. These laws are being used by the government to intimidate, arrest and jail political activists and peaceful protestors. President Thein Sein did not keep his promise to release all political prisoners by the end of 2013. A new committee formed by the government of Burma/Myanmar, the Prisoners of Conscience Affairs Committee, excludes key civil society organisations, including the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners - Burma, the main organisation which works on political prisoner issues.

We call for fundamental reforms to the Prisoners of Conscience Affairs Committee, to ensure that all political prisoners are released unconditionally, compensation is given to former political prisoners, repressive laws are repealed, and civil society is involved and informed about the work of the Committee.

Supported by:

Actions Birmanie
All Arakan Students' and Youths' Congress(AASYC)
Association Suisse-Birmanie
Burma Action Ireland
Burma Campaign UK
Burma Link
Burma Partnership
Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Forum for Democracy in Burma
Free Burma Campaign (South Africa)
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Norwegian Burma Committee
Students and Youth Congress of Burma
Swedish Burma Committee
US Campaign for Burma