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## RFA – Radio Free Asia (Author)

### Junta troops kill 2 political prisoners after removing them from jail

Junta soldiers killed two inmates after secretly removing them from a prison in southern Myanmar, activists told Radio Free Asia on Thursday.

Troops took 25-year-old Min Thu and 35-year-old Ko Win Thiha from Tanintharyi division's Dawei Prison on the night of March 17. Both were arrested under the country's anti-terrorism act, a set of broad laws that cover many actions related to opposing the military junta.

Since the country's 2021 coup, civilians and activists have been subject to mass arrests for actions ranging from social media posts to suspicion of participating in or funding one of the many rebel groups opposing the military dictatorship.

A Dawei Political Prisoners Network official, declining to be named for security reasons, told RFA that Min Thu and Ko Win Thiha's families were informed of their relative's deaths only after they submitted visitation requests to the prison.

"Min Thu and Win Thiha, with black hoods on their heads, were taken out of prison by junta soldiers," he said. "Before they were taken, extensive searches were conducted in the prison. They were taken out of jail and killed after being accused of having things that were prohibited in jail."

In late March, relatives who went to the prison to request visitation were informed by prison officials of the two men's deaths, a source close to Dawei Prison said.

Min Thu was an Islamic studies teacher serving a ten-year sentence. RFA could not confirm when he was arrested. Win Thiha was arrested in February 2022 and sentenced to seven years in prison under Section 51(c) of the Counter-Terrorism Law for production or intention to distribute a

weapon and Section 505(a) of the penal code for incitement against the military.

RFA contacted the junta's Prisons Department deputy director Naing Win for comment on the deaths at Dawei Prison, but he didn't answer the phone.

As of Wednesday, 217 political prisoners are serving prison terms in Dawei Prison, according to a report from the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

*Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Kiana Duncan and Mike Finn.*

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