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Myanmar court jails former minister for decade over social media posts

A court in Yangon's Insein Prison sentenced Myanmar's former Information Minister Ye Htut to 10 years in prison Wednesday following a trial highlighting the ruling junta's clampdown on online dissent, sources with ties to the facility told RFA Burmese.

The prolific Facebook poster and former minister from 2014-2016 under Thein Sein's quasi-military government, which handed power to Aung San Suu Kyi following the 2015 elections, received three years in prison for "spreading false news" and seven years for "sedition" in violation of Sections 505(a) and 124(a) of Myanmar's Penal Code.

A source who is close to management of Insein Prison said that the closed-door trial was brief.

"The verdicts were made after questioning a prosecution witness, without asking a defense witness," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity for security reasons.

The judge who sentenced Ye Htut, 64, was from the former minister's home district of Ahlon in Myanmar's largest city Yangon, the source said, adding that Ye Htut defended himself in the trial.

According to pro-junta media, Ye Htut was arrested at his home in Yangon on the night of Oct. 28. Police from Ahlon district filed the case against him for spreading false news, reports said.

Ye Htut was among nearly 40 people arrested after they posted critical comments about the military junta on social media accounts. Pro-junta Telegram channels had accused him of revealing a retired military officer's address on social media, [according to Agence France-Presse](#).

The junta first announced in January 2022 that it would use the country's anti-terrorism and telecommunications laws to arrest and prosecute anyone who spreads anti-junta information on social media platforms.

Through September, 1,316 people have been arrested by the junta for social media comments since that statement appeared in pro-junta newspapers, according to Data for Myanmar.

The junta had yet to release an official statement on Ye Htut's sentencing as of the time of publishing on Wednesday.

Translated by Aung Naing. Edited

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Yangon: Former information minister Ye Htut sentenced to 10 years in prison; he was among 40 people arrested in late October 2023 after they had posted critical comments about the military junta on social media

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