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Myanmar activists sentenced to decades in prison

By RFA Burmese

Two activists were sentenced to heavy prison terms after participating in anti-regime activities, sources close to the families told Radio Free Asia on Thursday.

Since the country's 2021 military coup, the junta has imposed harsh punishments on citizens suspected of joining or financing resistance groups.

Tanintharyi resident Yin Yin Cho was sentenced to 32 years in prison for supporting the People's Defense Forces. Sagaing native Man Zar Myay Mon was sentenced to 11 years in prison last week for his role as a strike leader. Junta soldiers arrested both earlier on initial charges of acts of terrorism.

Yin Yin Cho, 34, is a business owner in the southern coastal region's capital of Dawei. A court found her guilty under three more counts of the country's Counter-Terrorism Law, including acts committed against the state and acts of terrorism that result in death or injury. She was sentenced in a military court in Dawei last week, according to members of the Dawei Democracy Movement Strike Committee.

Man Zar Myay Mon, who is from Chaung-U township in Myanmar's northern Sagaing region, was sentenced to 11 more years in prison on Wednesday by Monywa Prison Court, said one person close to the family. This is in addition to a 10-year sentence for incitement against the junta, bringing his total to 21 years in prison.

He will serve time for three counts under the Counter-Terrorism Law, including possession or distribution of explosives.

Yin Yin Cho has been in prison since May for donating to People's Defense Forces, and her total sentence is 44 years after a prior charge for terrorism. This is the longest prison sentence a woman from Tanintharyi region has faced since the coup began, said one member of Dawei Democracy Movement Strike Committee, asking to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals.

"Yin Yin Cho was arrested at her home along with her younger brother in January this year. Their garment shop was closed soon after their arrest," the member of Dawei's strike committee told RFA. "She is the first who was sentenced to 40 years in prison [in Tanintharyi]."

He added that on the day of her arrest, her younger brother, Thet Zaw Win, was also arrested by the police and army. The court sentenced him to 22 years in prison last week for three counts under the Counter-Terrorism Law for supporting the People's Defense Forces.

Families told RFA they're concerned about the excessive sentences. The punishment seems long for 20-year-old Man Zar Myay Mon, who never faced any criminal charges before the coup, a source close to the family said.

The military council put out a warrant for the young man's arrest in April 2021, just two months after the coup. Troops shot and arrested him while he was fleeing from Shan Htu village in Chaung-U township on June 8.

After his arrest, he was tortured at the Monywa Interrogation Center, said a member of the Chaung-U strike committee, who did not want to be named for security reasons.

"His fingers were flipped and broken during the interrogation, so his movement was not normal like before. He was shot in his thigh and injured when he was arrested," the committee member said. "He was not allowed to receive full medical treatment, and the injuries did not heal in time. In other words, his health is very bad."

He added that Man Zar Myay Mon has not been allowed to meet with family, and was only recently permitted to receive food and medicine through the prison authorities.

RFA attempted to contact officials in the Naypyidaw Prisons Department by phone regarding the heavy punishment being imposed on civilians, but they did not respond at the time of publication.

The junta has sentenced several young activists nationwide to heavy prison sentences for anti-regime activities. Kyaw Thet, 27, from Mandalay region's Wundwin township and Aung Khant Oo, 28, from Magway

region's Taungdwingyi township both have sentences surpassing 200 years.

As of Wednesday, there are over 19,000 political prisoners jailed across the country, according to the [Assistance Association for Political Prisoners](#).

Translated by RFA Burmese. Edited by Mike Firn.

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ecoi.net description:

According to their families, the junta sentenced activist Yin Yin Cho to 32 years in prison for supporting the People's Defense Forces (PDF) and activist Man Zar Myay Mon to 11 years in prison for his role as a strike leader

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