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Myanmar's junta releases more than 9,600 prisoners

Myanmar's junta granted amnesty to 9,652 prisoners on Thursday, according to a statement released by the junta's State Administration Council on Thursday.

The prisoner release took place on the 76th anniversary of the country's independence from the United Kingdom.

The amnesty was conditioned on the agreement that, should they reoffend, they would be required to serve both the remaining sentence and any new punishment.

About 114 foreign prisoners were included in the amnesty, according to a separate statement from the junta. It said they were released to maintain friendly relations with other countries.

Among those released is Kaung Set Lin, a photojournalist from the Myanmar Press Photo Agency in Yangon, who had been sentenced to three years on charges of damaging public interest.

ecoi.net description:

Military junta releases 9,652 prisoners in amnesty

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Kaung Set Lin was arrested while injured when police and soldiers, using a vehicle, charged into an anti-coup protest he was covering on Pan Pin Gyi Street in Yangon's Kyimyindaing township.

“Yes, he is freed. My son is among the released. Now we are about to go home. Needless to say, I am so happy. I wanted to see my son’s face before I died. Now my wish has come true,” Myo Myint, the father of the journalist, told RFA Burmese.

However, another journalist, Hmu Yadanar Khat Moh Moh Tun from the Myanmar Press Photo Agency, who was arrested alongside him, has not been released.

Actress Thin Zar Wint Kyaw and model Nan Mwe San, who faced criticism from the junta and were sentenced to several years in prison on charges of undermining Myanmar culture and sexual orientation, were also released, according to media reports. But RFA has not been able to independently verify this information.

While a few political prisoners were released today, detained former political leader Aung San Suu Kyi and former President Win Myint, who have received lengthy prison sentences under various charges, along with members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) Government, lawmakers, university students, and democracy activists, remain incarcerated.

A family member of Tun Tun Hein, NLD-led government’s deputy speaker, said he has not heard any news about his release yet.

Tun Tun Hein, the 72-year-old deputy speaker who also served as the chairman of the country’s lower house in the parliament, had been sentenced to more than 30 years.

“I wished he would be released because he is old. I hope he comes out with amnesty and I am praying for it. I haven't heard any news yet,” said the family member.

A lawyer, who is handling the cases of political prisoners and requested anonymity for security reasons, informed RFA Burmese that none of the political prisoners serving long-term sentences were among those released on Thursday.

English

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Only those who had been sentenced to terms between two and three years and were close to their scheduled release dates were freed, the lawyer added.

Based on the junta statements, there have been 14 amnesties granted since the coup, including the one on Thursday. In total, more than 92,000 prisoners have been released during these amnesties, but only a small number of them were political prisoners.

Edited by Taejun Kang and Elaine Chan.

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