



Call for the Release of Burmese Union Leader Myo Myo Aye & STUM Activists

We, the undersigned, call on the Burmese authorities to surface and release Solidarity Trade Union of Myanmar (STUM) leader and human rights defender Myo Myo Aye and other STUM union members, including Myo Aye's daughter, Chue Thwel, who were arbitrarily arrested and detained under unknown charges and without due process.*

On July 25, 2025, Myo Myo Aye, aged 56, was arrested at her home in Shwe Pyi Thar Township, Yangon. The arrest was carried out under distressing circumstances, where the authorities forced Myo Myo Aye's son to kneel and pointed guns to his head in front of both her and her husband, to demand Myo Aye hand over her digital devices. After raiding her room, the authorities took her away in handcuffs, along with her belongings, money, and household registration document, which contains the list of residents in the household. At the same time, the authorities also raided STUM's office, where Chue Thwel, aged 27, was present. About a dozen people in plain clothes, including the Shwe Pyi Thar ward administrator, forcibly entered the office and confiscated laptops and mobile phones.

As the news about the arrest spread, on the night of July 27, Chue Thwel briefly mentioned Myo Myo Aye's arrest on social media and urged the media and the public to respect their privacy. The next evening (July 28th), the authorities also arrested Chue Thwel and three other STUM staff members. Another STUM staff member was arrested in the early morning of July 29. The authorities also locked up and sealed all of STUM's three offices, including an office of STUM's affiliate organisation, Solidarity of Township Garment Labour Organisation.

To date, we do not know where human rights defender Myo Myo Aye, her daughter, and the other detainees are being illegally held, or the reasons for their detention. We are, however, concerned that they may be held at the interrogation center at Shwe Pyi Thar, which is notorious for its use of torture and degrading treatment against detainees. Myo Myo Aye also urgently needs access to her regular medication for her pre-existing medical conditions. However, it has been impossible to deliver the medication to her, and we are thus concerned for her well-being and safety, as well as that of the other detainees.

Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 9 states that "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile." Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 9(2) states that, "anyone who is arrested shall be informed, at the time of arrest, of the reasons for his arrest and shall be promptly informed of



any charges against him,” and Article 14(3)(b) states clearly that everyone should “have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of his defence and to communicate with counsel of his own choosing.” Additionally, the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders acknowledges the right of human rights defenders to freely and safely advocate for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms. However, all these basic human rights and guarantees have been denied to Myo Myo Aye, Chue Thwel and the other STUM staff members being held incommunicado. We also note that Articles 330 and 331 of the Burmese Penal Code of 1957 prohibit torture and ill-treatment during interrogation, but we are not able to ascertain if these laws are being upheld by the authorities.

Myanmar’s military leader Min Aung Hlaing said that the regime plans to hold “a free and fair election” by the end of this year, but unfair and arbitrary detentions against innocent civilians, human rights defenders and labour representatives like Myo Myo Aye and other STUM members continue to persist. A [report](#) of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights published in May this year highlighted that, “According to credible sources, as at 31 March 2025, [...] some 28,961 [civilians] had been arrested, 22,165 remained in detention and 172 had been sentenced to death by military-controlled courts that do not ensure any respect for judicial guarantees and fair trial rights.” The Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders has [repeatedly](#) expressed concerns for the safety of defenders in the country.

In the United States Department of State’s 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices on Burma, it was reported that, “many political prisoners were held incommunicado, and there were numerous reports of political prisoners being denied medical services,” and even where “political prisoners were vulnerable to sexual violence and hard labour.”

In 2021, the Burmese authorities declared 16 labour unions and labour activist organizations illegal, including [STUM](#). STUM and Myo Myo Aye have continued to exercise their right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, and have been advocating relentlessly for stronger worker protections in increasingly fraught Myanmar; however, Myo Myo Aye has constantly faced harassment from the authorities and businesses alike. In April 2021, Myo Myo Aye was [detained](#) for over six months before she was released in October 2021. Her current disappearance is a continuation of the political persecution she faces due to her labour organization and human rights work.

We call on the international community and governments to take action, and to advocate for the safe return and protection of Myo Myo Aye, Chue Thwel, and other detained STUM staff



members. At the immediate, we also enjoin the international community and governments to support by:

- Calling for the immediate and unconditional release of human rights defender Myo Myo Aye, her daughter Chue Thwel, and other detained STUM staff members;
- Enquiring on the whereabouts of Myo Myo Aye and other STUM members, and the conditions of their detention;
- Advocating for fair treatment, legal representation and humanitarian support for Myo Myo Aye and other STUM members;
- Calling for respect of the rights for freedom of expression and freedom of association and assembly of labour rights defenders like Myo Myo Aye and other STUM members; and
- Continuing to publicly call for the immediate release of all political prisoners and condemn further arbitrary arrests, intimidations and retaliations.

We call on international organizations to show solidarity and support for Myo Aye and fellow STUM members by posting on your social media or to your government representatives, to request that they take action as well.

Undersigned organizations:

- Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC)
- Just Associates (JASS)
- Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)
- Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
- Korean House for International Solidarity
- Federation of United Indonesian Workers Union (FSBPI)
- Cambodian Food And Service Workers Federation (CFSWF)
- Digo Bikas Institute, Nepal
- Center for Women's Resources (CWR), Philippines
- Kilusan ng Manggagawang Kababaihan (KMK or Movement of Women Workers), Philippines
- FAMM Indonesia (Indonesia Young Women Activists Forum)
- Ranao Women and Children Resource Center, Inc. (RWCRC), Mindanao, Philippines



- Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU or May First Movement), Philippines
- Perempuan Mahardhika, Indonesia
- Beyond Beijing Committee
- Dabindu Collective, Sri Lanka
- Human Rights Now, Japan
- Human Rights Watch (HRW)
- Tanggol Bayi, Philippines
- KARAPATAN, Philippines
- Front Line Defenders
- GABRIELA, Philippines
- Backyard Politics, Thailand
- Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU)
- BCHRD-Bangladesh Centre for Human Rights and Development

*International human rights law provides that those arrested shall be informed of the reasons for their arrest and promptly brought before a judge and informed of any charges against them. The junta's failure to provide information on the whereabouts of Myo Myo Aye or allow her access to counsel raises concerns of enforced disappearance. Enforced disappearances are defined under international law as the arrest or detention of a person by the authorities or their agents followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty, or to reveal the person's fate or whereabouts. Enforced disappearances violate a range of fundamental human rights protected under international law, including prohibitions against arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. "Disappeared" people are often at high risk of torture, particularly when they are detained outside of formal detention facilities such as prisons and police stations.