



The Law Society

## From the President

U Thein Sein  
President of Myanmar  
President Office  
Office No.18  
Naypyitaw  
MYANMAR

22 June 2015

Dear Mr President

### **Myanmar – Imprisonment of Human Rights Defenders**

The Law Society is the professional body representing more than 145,000 solicitors in England and Wales. Its concerns include upholding the independence of the legal profession, the rule of law and human rights throughout the world.

The Law Society is concerned for Ms. Naw Ohn Hla, Mr. Nay Myo Zin, Mr. Than Swe, Mr. Tin Htut Paing, Ms. Sein Htwe, and Ms. San San Win. The six are human rights defenders who are reported to have been sentenced for taking part in a peaceful demonstration on 29 December 2014 in front of the Chinese Embassy in Rangoon. The demonstrators were reported to be seeking an inquiry into the death of a civilian by the police during an earlier protest at the Letpadaung copper mine site. Ms. Naw Ohn Hla, Mr. Nay Myo Zin, Mr. Than Swe, Mr. Tin Htut Paing and Ms. Sein Htwe are reported to have been involved for many years in a number of peaceful protests against the adverse environmental and human impact of the Letpadaung mine site and to have been arrested on many occasions.

The six are reported as having been sentenced for four years and four months in prison on 15 May 2015 by Rangoon's Dagon Township Court. It has also been reported that they have been arrested and detained by the authorities since December/January in connection with the demonstration.

My colleague and immediate predecessor Nicholas Fluck had previously written to you in June 2014 to express concern over charges against Mr. Ko Htin Kyaw for peaceful protest. I respectfully reiterate this concern for these and all human rights defenders in Myanmar.

We recall that Myanmar became party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) (UDHR) in 2003 and is bound to uphold its provisions, including those contained in Articles 9, 19 and 20.

Article 9 requires that:

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 19 requires that:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20 requires that:

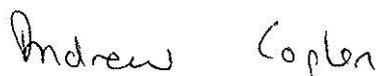
Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

We are concerned that the arrest, detention and imprisonment of these six human rights defenders appears to be for exercising the right to freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly.

We would again strongly urge the Myanmar authorities to immediately and unconditionally release these six human rights defenders.

We would also request the Myanmar authorities to repeal or amend the Penal Code so that it becomes compliant with the UDHR and Myanmar's international and national human rights obligations.

Yours sincerely,



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President

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