

# URGENT ACTION

## HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER RECEIVING DEATH THREATS

**Human rights lawyer Robert Sann Aung has been receiving death threats and insulting messages since the assassination of another prominent lawyer in Myanmar. The authorities must take immediate steps to ensure Robert Sann Aung's safety, investigate the threats and to hold those responsible to account.**

**Robert Sann Aung** has been receiving regular death threats, insulting messages and phone calls since the assassination at Yangon airport of prominent lawyer U Ko Ni on 29 January 2017. In some of the phone calls he has been asked by an anonymous speaker "aren't you afraid of dying?", and threatened with "we know where you go so don't think you are so smart and don't touch the Constitution". Robert Sann Aung has also received crude and deeply offensive text messages.

In addition to receiving threatening phone calls and messages, Robert Sann Aung reports he is also being monitored by Myanmar's security forces. According to Robert Sann Aung, while having to transit in Mandalay for work, he has been followed by a man wearing civilian clothes who claims to be from the Military Intelligence. The man waits for him at the airport and follows him until he boards his connecting flight. This has now happened on four separate occasions since 19 December 2016.

As a former prisoner of conscience, Robert Sann Aung is hesitant to report the death threats and intimidation to the authorities. In addition to believing that they would not listen to him, he fears that the authorities might be connected to the threats and increased surveillance he has been receiving in the past few months.

### **Please write immediately in English, Burmese or your own language urging the authorities to:**

- Take immediate action to protect and ensure the safety of Robert Sann Aung, in coordination with him and subject to his wishes;
- Immediately order an impartial, independent and effective investigation into the threats against and harassment of Robert Sann Aung and bring those responsible to justice in trials which meet international standards of fairness;
- Ensure that all members of the police and other security forces are made aware of the role of human rights defenders and their responsibility to protect them, as set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and ensure they are able to carry out their work free from harassment, discrimination, and the threat of criminalization.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 MAY 2017 TO:**

Myanmar Police Chief

Pol. Maj-Gen Zaw Win

Ministry of Home Affairs

Office No.10,

Nay Pyi Taw

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Fax: + 95 412036

Email: [epolice@myanmarpoliceforce.org](mailto:epolice@myanmarpoliceforce.org)

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Minister of Home Affairs

Lt. Gen. Kyaw Swe

Ministry of Home Affairs

Office No. 10,

Nay Pyi Taw

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Fax: + 95 67 412 439

Email: [mohamyanmar@gmail.com](mailto:mohamyanmar@gmail.com)

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**And copies to:**

State Counsellor

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Office No.9, Nay Pyi Taw

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Fax: +95 67 412 396

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:**

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Robert Sann Aung is a well-known human rights lawyer and human rights activist from Myanmar. He is also a former prisoner of conscience who has been imprisoned six times for his peaceful political and human rights activities. His defence of peaceful political activists, who were charged by the former military government, led the authorities to revoke his lawyer's license in 1993. Ever since it was reinstated in 2012, Robert Sann Aung has continued to represent human rights defenders and peaceful activists charged in politically motivated cases, as well as victims of human rights violations and their family members. He is a 2015 finalist for the prestigious Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders.

U Ko Ni was a lawyer and legal adviser to the National League for Democracy, the ruling party led by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi. His work included reforms to Myanmar's 2008 Constitution, which was drafted by the former military government. He was assassinated at Yangon International Airport on 29 January 2017, after returning from Indonesia. To date four people have been arrested in connection with the killing and are currently on trial.

Under Article 2 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, each state has a duty to create the conditions necessary to defend human rights within their jurisdictions. However, Amnesty International continues to receive reports of intimidation, harassment and surveillance against human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists. Activists are still subjected to many forms of surveillance by Special Branch and other intelligence units. Tactics used against activists include being followed; having their photograph taken when attending events and meetings; late night inspections of their homes and offices by police and General Administration Department (GAD) officials; and harassment of their family members, colleagues or friends. Women human rights defenders are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment and intimidation. In recent years, Buddhists nationalists have also been the author of threats and smear campaigns against human rights defenders speaking out against religious intolerance.

Name: Robert Sann Aung  
Gender m/f: m

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