

URGENT ACTION

RAKHINE JOURNALIST RECEIVING DEATH THREATS

Journalist Nay Min Aung (known as Min Min) has been receiving death threats after publishing an article about an armed ethnic group operating in Rakhine State, Myanmar. The authorities must take immediate steps to ensure Min Min’s protection, investigate the threats against him and hold those responsible to account.

Nay Min Aung, known as **Min Min**, has been receiving death threats and intimidating messages via Facebook since 10 April 2017. The threats began after he published an article on 10 April about the arrest of activists allegedly connected to the Arakan Army (AA), which he described as a rebel group. The AA is an armed ethnic organization operating in Rakhine State which regularly clashes with the Myanmar military. It rejects being labelled as a rebel group. One message reads “Attention Min Min, we know where you are. We can terminate your life anytime. Take care”. Min Min has reported the threats to the Sittwe township police station and has requested a meeting with senior members of the Rakhine State government. However to date no action has been taken, either to ensure his safety or to identify the perpetrators.

Min Min is the founder and Chief Editor of Root Investigative Agency (RiA), a collective of journalists established in 2015 to report on current affairs in Rakhine State. The organization covers a range of sensitive subjects, including allegations of corruption among local officials, the drug trade, nationalist groups and armed conflict.

This is not the first time Min Min has been targeted in connection with his journalistic activities. On 10 March 2016, a small bomb exploded at his home in Sittwe, the Rakhine State capital. No one was injured, as Min Min and his family were travelling at the time, however the blast damaged the walls of his house. The attack followed a series of online threats against Min Min, some of which accused him of being a “traitor” for reporting about hardline nationalist groups in Rakhine State, offered a cash reward for his murder and identified the location of his home. Despite a police investigation in to the attack, to date no one has been arrested or held to account.

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

- Take immediate action to ensure the safety and protection of Min Min, in coordination with him and subject to his wishes;
- Conduct thorough, impartial, independent and effective investigations into the threats against Min Min and the attack on his home in March 2016 and bring those responsible to justice in trials which meet international standards of fairness;
- Ensure that journalists and other media workers are able to carry out peaceful journalistic activities without fear of surveillance, intimidation, harassment, arrest, prosecution or retribution, and guarantee the integrity of journalists and media workers, including against attacks or threats coming from non-state groups.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 JUNE 2017 TO:

Rakhine State Police Chief
Colonel Sein Lwin
Rakhine State Police Head Office
Sittwe, Rakhine State
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Salutation: Dear Colonel

Rakhine State Chief Minister
U Nyi Pu
Rakhine State Government Office
Sittwe, Rakhine State
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Salutation: Dear Chief 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.



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Rakhine State, in western Myanmar, has seen significant tensions in recent years, in particular after waves, of violence between ethnic Rakhine Buddhists, Rohingya and other Muslims erupted in 2012. The situation remains volatile, and human rights defenders and journalists, face many challenges including restrictions on movement and access, surveillance by state authorities and threats from hard-line nationalist groups and powerful local actors, including those affiliated with local political parties.

Journalists and other media workers often play a crucial role in exposing human rights abuses perpetrated both by powerful state and non-state actors. Under international human rights law and standards the Myanmar authorities have an obligation to ensure all people have the right to freedom of expression and have an obligation of due diligence to protect individuals against abuses of the right by non-state actors. In particular, the police must investigate all threats of violence, including against media workers. Ensuring that journalists and other media workers are able to undertake their professional activities free from harassment, harm and the fear of prosecution and imprisonment is an essential component to the promotion and protection of human rights in Myanmar.

Name: Min Min (also known as Nay Min Aung)

Gender m/f: m

UA: 95/17 Index: ASA 16/6108/2017 Issue Date: 24 April 2017