

# MYANMAR – FREE Unity Journalists



Unity Journalists were arrest without a warrant: **Lu Maw Naing on 31 January 2014**, by Special Branch police in Pauk Township; **Yarzar Oo, Paing Thet Kyaw, Sithu Soe**, and the newspaper's chief executive officer **Tint San** at their office in Myanmar's capital Yangon on **1 February 2014**. They all were arrested for their right to freedom of expression and carrying out their legitimate journalism work.

All the arrests occurred after Unity published an article on 25 January about an alleged secret chemical weapons factory in Pauk Township. The article reported that the factory was built in 2009 on land confiscated from farmers and that former army chief Than Shwe had visited it that same year. The government has denied the allegations and the authorities reportedly seized copies of Unity across the country.

They were all **sentenced to 10 years in July 2014**. On **2 October 2014** the Magwe Regional Court in central Myanmar **reduced their sentences** to seven years' imprisonment each. They will all lodge an appeal against their convictions at the Supreme Court in Myanmar's capital, Nay Pyi Taw.

I urge the Myanmar authorities to:

**\*\*Immediately and unconditionally release** Unity journalists **Lu Maw Naing, Yarzar Oo, Paing Thet Kyaw, Sithu Soe and Tint San**.

**\*\*Pending unconditional release, ensure the five men are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, or transferred to remote prisons, but that they have regular access to their families and lawyers of their choosing, and are provided with any medical treatment they may require;**

**\*\*Take immediate steps to repeal or else amend legislation which is used to criminalize human rights defenders and journalists** and to curtail the right to freedom of expression.

**\*\*Ensure that journalists are able to carry out their legitimate work without fear of arrest or other reprisals.**

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Stop Action 30 Dec 2014

Send to: Dr. Tun Shin, Office of the Attorney General Office, No. 25, Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Copies to: U Win Mra, Chairman, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, 27 Pyay Road, Hline Township, Yangon, Republic of the Union of Myanmar (BURMA)

Copies to: Ambassador Than Swe, Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 2300 S Street N.W. Washington, DC 20008