



PRESS RELEASE

BURMA: No proper medical care for jailed leading democracy activist

Geneva - Paris, April 22, 2008. *The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) express their deep concern about the serious deteriorating health condition of Mr. Min Ko Naing, a leading Burmese democracy activist and 88 student leader¹, who has already spent a total of 17 years in prison.*

According to the information received, Mr. Min Ko Naing has been suffering of a serious eye infection over the past three weeks and has been only given eye drops by a prison medical staff. Sources from inside the Insein prison reported that he has been unable to sleep or eat because of the pain caused by the infection. According to prison authorities, an eye doctor will not be available before May 2008.

Mr. Min Ko Naing had been arrested on August 21, 2007 along with fourteen members of the 88 Generation Students Group by members of the Police Special Branch subsequent to peaceful protests against fuel hikes (*see press release OMCT-FIDH August 22, 2007*) and has since been detained without trial. He had already spent over 16 years in prison for his activities from March 23, 1989 to November 19, 2005 and was again arrested on September 27, 2006 and then subsequently released on January 11, 2007.

OMCT and FIDH express their deepest concern regarding Mr. Min Ko Naing's health condition, as well as the refusal of the prison authorities to grant him appropriate medical treatment, which evidences the determination of the Burmese regime to destroy activists both physically and psychologically. OMCT and FIDH urge the Burmese authorities to immediately guarantee Mr. Min Ko Naing appropriate medical care as provided for by international human rights standards, including the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

Furthermore, OMCT and FIDH call again for his immediate and unconditional release, as well as that of all others held for their nonviolent promotion of democracy and the peaceful expression of their opinions.

More generally, OMCT and FIDH call upon the Burmese authorities to ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Burma.

For further information, please contact:

FIDH: Gaël Grilhot, + 00 33 1 43 55 25 18

OMCT: Alexandra Kossin, + 00 41 22 809 49 39

¹ All members of the 88 Generation Students Group are former student leaders who organised in 1988 a major popular uprising in Burma, which the military regime responded to by killing up to 10,000 students and activists throughout the country. They spent over 15 years in prison after suffering severe torture and were released in 2004.