

URGENT ACTION

CHARGES AGAINST TWO MEDIA WORKERS DROPPED

The charges against journalists Kyaw Min Swe and Kyaw Zwar Naing were dropped following an announcement by the Myanmar Army on 1 September 2017. The men had been detained solely for their peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and should never have faced charges in the first place.

In a statement released on 1 September 2017, the Myanmar Army announced it had dropped charges against a number of journalists and activists including **Kyaw Min Swe**, chief editor of *The Voice* and **Kyaw Zwar Naing**, one of its writer and regular contributor. The statement provided that, “in order to keep on working together for the national interest of the country and the people, the Tatmadaw decided to forgive and drop charges against the personnel and media.”

Both men were arrested on 2 June 2017 for a satirical article written by Kyaw Zwar Naing which mocked a military-produced propaganda film. They were later charged under Article 25(b) of the 2014 Media Law for “a writing style which deliberately affects the reputation” of a person or organization. Kyaw Min Swe was also charged for “online defamation” under Section 66(d) of the 2013 Telecommunications Law. Kyaw Min Swe and Kyaw Zwar Naing were released on bail on 4 August and 16 June respectively.

The charge under Article 25(b) of the 2014 Media Law was formally dropped by the court on 14 September, the remaining charge of Section 66(d) of the Telecommunications Law still needs to go through procedural process to be formally dropped.

Kyaw Min Swe and Kyaw Zwar Naing had been detained solely for their peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and should never have been imprisoned and charged in the first place. Amnesty International will continue to campaign for the release of prisoners of conscience in Myanmar.

Thank you to all those who sent appeals. No further action is requested from the UA network.

This is the third update of UA 137/17. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa16/6898/2017/en/>

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