

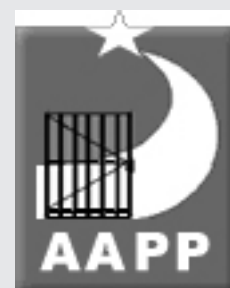
# ANNUAL REPORT

2014

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*There can be no national reconciliation without the immediate and unconditional release of political prisoners in Burma.*

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## Letter from the Secretary

In 2014, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma), otherwise known as AAPP, successfully implemented their activities in Burma and met with their goals this year. However despite the successes, the Committee for Scrutinizing the Remaining Political Prisoners (CSRPP), of which AAPP is a member, was not able to hold its regular meetings. In addition, the remaining political prisoners from 2013 and new political detainees from 2014 have yet to be freed.

AAPP also provided professional mental health counseling to around 300 former political prisoners through the Mental Health Assistance Program (MHAP). In addition, AAPP provided human rights and transitional justice trainings as well as vocational trainings to several former political prisoners. AAPP also organized a six month training camp to provide English language classes and computer skills to more than twenty children of former political prisoners. Although funds are limited, AAPP were able to continue to provide health and education assistance to former political prisoners.

The Rangoon and Mandalay offices have continued to grow their presence inside Burma and they operate in an efficient and professional manner. AAPP has begun collaboration with other civil society organizations that have worked for the affairs of political prisoners and human rights issues. AAPP and the Former Political Prisoners Society (FPPS) jointly held the first honorable ceremony for political prisoners that perished in detention, interrogation centers and prisons. In our continuing collaboration with FPPS, we have collected the data and recorded the experiences of political prisoners who have been imprisoned since 1962. Moreover, the workshop to recognize a definition of political prisoners was held in Rangoon, with 50 civil society organizations in attendance.

AAPP has faced several challenges while trying to implement its goals this year. Activists and farmers have fought for their rights, and factory workers have faced pending trials while they are still being imprisoned. This rapid rise in political prisoner numbers is in addition to all those political prisoners who remained in prison at the end of 2013. None of these human rights or political activists have yet been freed. For these reasons, the number of political prisoners at the end of 2014 will be significantly higher than at the end of 2013.

Human rights violations are still ongoing and it is still a long road to seeing the start of transition. It will be difficult to continue moving forward towards the aims of peace and national reconciliation while there are political prisoners in Burma.

AAPP Secretary Tate Naing



AAPP Members meeting with 88 Generation Peace and Open Society in Rangoon

## About Us

On March 23rd, 2000, a group of exiled former political prisoners from Burma came together and formed the non-profit organization the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma), otherwise known as AAPP, at the Thai-Burma border. The organization has since been dedicated to campaigning for the release of all political prisoners in Burma, as well as providing support and aid to current political prisoners, former political prisoners, and their families.

Through our advocacy and lobbying efforts AAPP has continued to stress the importance of releasing all political prisoners in Burma as part of the move towards national reconciliation and transition towards democracy. Staffed by former political prisoners, the organization carries a wealth of experience and knowledge of the physical and mental damage inflicted on political prisoners, as well as on their families and livelihoods. AAPP has firsthand experience of the conditions political prisoners are imprisoned under, and endeavors to provide medical and financial support both during and after their imprisonment. In order to try to alleviate some of the harm caused by incarceration, AAPP runs a range of assistance programs inside Burma, that provide educational and vocational opportunities for former political prisoners and their families.

Today, AAPP is widely viewed as the foremost source of information on political prisoner issues in Burma, and maintains its dedication to assisting political and human rights activists in their fight for a free Burma.



## Our Vision

We envision a Burma free of political prisoners and a society where human rights are respected and basic freedoms guaranteed

## Our Mission

AAPP will continue to support political prisoners and campaign for their unconditional release; as well as providing aid and rehabilitation to former political prisoners. We are dedicated to providing assistance for those who seek to actively participate in the democratic transition in Burma. We firmly believe that while political prisoners remain there can be no national reconciliation in Burma.

## Our Goals as an Organization

1. Accurately report on the number of political prisoners and monitor the human rights violations perpetrated upon them during incarceration by the Government of Burma.
2. Mobilize governments and international organizations to pressure the Government of Burma to end the continued persecution of political prisoners and advocate for their unconditional release.
3. Lobby for genuine lasting reforms in Burma.
4. Provide political prisoners with various necessities such as food and medicine.
5. Protect former political prisoners from harassment, intimidation and discrimination in their daily lives, as well as supporting them in their educational pursuits, while seeking employment, and especially if they wish to continue political activities.
6. Assist former political prisoners in the transition into daily life, aiding in addressing both physical and mental hindrances that may be disrupting the transition.
7. Provide medical and emotional support to political prisoners upon their release and for the future.
8. Support the families of current and former political prisoners.

“The Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act as well as other laws, are being applied to criminalize and impede the activities of civil society and the media, which has increased the number of political prisoners and has led to disproportionately high sentences”

## **United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Burma, UN General Assembly, 28th October**

### **The Year in Review**

At the start of 2014, 30 political prisoners remained in jail despite President Thein Sein’s pledge to release them all. By the end of December 2014 a total of 159 political prisoners were still incarcerated, with 81 of those imprisoned for political motivations and 78 being farmers protesting the ongoing land confiscations. Furthermore 203 activists were awaiting trial. The lack of rule of law under which Burma operates has allowed for the continuing oppression, harassment and imprisonment of people voicing their concerns regarding violations of human rights and specifically seeks to silence them through intimidation, arrest and imprisonment.

Throughout 2014 basic freedoms and civil liberties have come under threat, with journalists, land rights activists, farmers, political and human rights activists all having been arrested and imprisoned during this year. It is not only the arrests themselves that are discouraging. The tactics employed during arrest and detention, as well as the complete lack of respect for their rights as a detainee, does little to encourage the idea of a Burma steadily progressing towards democracy. Political activists are now being detained without a verdict for several hearings, sometimes awaiting trial for many months. This tactic means that activists now face a lengthy detention without sentence, with the constant threat of their ongoing court case hanging over them. By employing these methods, the government is ensuring the oppression of activists and human rights defenders without immediately imprisoning them. The length of trials and the number of charges brought against an individual are unacceptable ways of harassing and oppressing activists without actually imprisoning them. Keeping people awaiting trial; whilst constantly having to attend several different courts and hearings is both costly and traumatizing. Even when indictments without detention are the charge this still discourages them from continuing their political activities. This is even more disconcerting when considered with the policy of imprisoning people far from their homes and support networks. In trying to show the world that Burma has moved away from the tactics of old, the current government is employing new tactics that still greatly infringe on the basic human rights of their people, whilst pointing to a decreased political prisoner number that supposedly symbolizes that progress is being made.

The need for genuine judicial and rule of law reform before this transition can truly take place is evident. The lack of genuine rule of law or an independent judiciary does little to encourage the idea that the democratic transition is under way. The continued arrest and imprisonment of those attempting to exercise basic human rights and campaign for their civil liberties is indicative of a government that does not respect the rights of its citizens, and a political climate that does not yet protect the basic freedoms of the people in Burma. In last 12 months, crackdowns on basic civil liberties have become more apparent, a fact reflected in the vastly increased political prisoner number. The government has yet to honor their commitment to sign the United Nations

Convention Against Torture (UNCAT), despite accounts coming from many parts of the country of torture in detention, inhumane treatment and the extrajudicial killings of civilians. The supposed reforms the government points to as progress during this year have been disingenuous and ineffective, with no greater respect for the rights of civilians and a political prisoner number that looks set to increase in the New Year.

The CSRPP process experienced numerous difficulties in 2014 with only three meetings taking place, compared to the 12 held in 2013. Members experienced great difficulty in attaining access to prisons as well as information about prisoners. Access to prisoners and information regarding their cases is limited, greatly hindering members' ability to effectively lobby for their release. The stalling of this process is an indictment of the government attitude towards political prisoner issues, with their erroneous statements that no more political prisoners remain in jail supposedly symbolizing the steady progress towards democracy. In reality the CSRPP has had little to no impact throughout 2014, with the government showing little cooperation with civil society to fulfill the CSRPP mandate. No political prisoner definition has been ratified and the political prisoner number at the beginning of the year stood at 30. That number has increased significantly over the last year and is likely to do so further throughout the coming months.

In response to the lack of progress made by the CSRPP, from August 17th-18th, AAPP co-hosted a two-day workshop in Rangoon with (FPPS) aiming to define what constitutes a "political prisoner." There were over 50 participants, encompassing representatives from political parties and NGOs, as well as former political prisoners, activists, lawmakers, lawyers and international experts.



Participants at the two-day workshop in Rangoon in August

They agreed on the following definition:

1. Anyone who is arrested, detained, or imprisoned for political reasons under political charges or wrongfully under criminal and civil charges because of his or her perceived or known active role, perceived or known supporting role, or in association with activities promoting freedom, justice, equality, human rights, and civil and political rights, including ethnic rights, is defined as a political prisoner.
2. The above definition relates to anyone who is arrested, detained, or imprisoned because of his or her perceived or known active role, perceived or known supporting role, or in association with political activities (including armed resistance but excluding terrorist activities), in forming organizations, both individually and collectively, making public speeches, expressing beliefs, organizing or initiating movements through writing, publishing, or distributing documents, or participating in peaceful demonstrations to express dissent and denunciation against the stature and activities of both the Union and state level executive, legislative, judicial, or other administrative bodies established under the constitution or under any previously existing law.



Tate Naing Speaking at the Political Prisoner Definition Workshop in August

The fact that the CSRPP process has stalled so dramatically in 2014 is demonstrative of the challenges civil society have encountered in working alongside the government. The above definition has been presented to Parliament but as yet remains un-ratified. The CSRPP was intended to be a bridge between civil society and the government, and work in tandem to resolve political prisoner issues. The difficulties in achieving genuine progress in 2014 are indicative of the lack of political will to develop and recognize a definition and release all political prisoners.

It is this situation that necessitates the ongoing work of AAPP. 2014 has seen the organization expand its presence inside Burma and continue to provide essential assistance and opportunities to current and former political prisoners, as well as to their families.



## Assistance Program

A key component of AAPP's work inside Burma is that of providing assistance to current political prisoners, former political prisoners and their families.

Access to basic medical care and the necessary health requirements in prison is often restricted, particularly when political prisoners are imprisoned far from their homes and families. A central activity of AAPP is that of providing financial and medical assistance to those currently in jail.

Even upon their release from prison there is no official recognition of their political status and no provisions are made to account for the medical conditions suffered as a result of unjust imprisonment. Medical check ups are provided for as many political prisoners as possible when they are released. The organization also seeks to ensure provisions are available for emergency healthcare if the need arises, a service available to both current and former political prisoners.

The provision of basic medical services and ongoing health care is an essential activity of the organization, with many political prisoners suffering from torturous treatment following their detention in interrogation centers or in prison. In providing this service AAPP and our colleagues seek to minimize the harm caused by periods of incarceration.

Educational Scholarships provided throughout 2014

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## 2014 Assistance Programs

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*Medical Checkups and Basic Healthcare for 84 former political prisoners*

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*Emergency Healthcare for 7 current political prisoners*

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*Financial Support for 66 current political prisoners*

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*Emergency Healthcare for 46 former political prisoners*

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## 2014 Educational Assistance

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### *Academic scholarships provided for 22 Former Political Prisoners*

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In addition to their medical needs political prisoners face many challenges and obstacles in rebuilding their lives after prison. AAPP and our network of colleagues and supporters inside Burma are dedicated to making this transition as easy as possible. Periods of imprisonment have often led to a disrupted education, loss of livelihoods and of vocational skills. The need to address these issues is being taken up by civil society organizations that are attempting to fill the healthcare and welfare gap left by a lack of government support.

Educational opportunities and academic support are offered to former political prisoners who may wish to learn new skills or complete their studies. Their unjust imprisonment must not be allowed to impact on their opportunities outside of prison and this area of the assistance program aims to support them in re entering daily life. Provisions are made throughout the year to provide freed political prisoners with the means to continue their education. Academic scholarships and educational funding have been presented to former political prisoners and allow them to achieve academic qualifications or continue an education interrupted by prison.



Students at Sky Age School in Rangoon

The Sky Age education project opened on January 27th. This project is a free mobile education group that focuses on educating students from rural areas of Burma that do not have equal access to free education. It also assists children of former political prisoners, as these families are often discriminated against, making it difficult for them to find work. Throughout 2014 there were two six month programs, each intake consisting of 25 students. The program focuses on three main areas: civil education in cooperation with the American Center, elementary English, and computer skills. The students are also given technical and moral support.



During the first session seven trainers taught the students; 14 out of the 25 came from disadvantaged former political prisoners' families living in rural areas.

During the second training session, three foreign volunteer teachers have concentrated their efforts into pronunciation, listening and speaking skills to enhance confidence and strengthen the students' ability to communicate effectively, notably thanks to group work, paired work and individual conversation.

Finally, in order to improve their learning experience, a new apartment that includes classrooms and living quarters has been set up at the school.

January saw the first ceremony to honor political prisoners who died in prison, in interrogation centers and in detention, held in Rangoon on January 2nd. The death of a political prisoner as a result of the poor conditions and torturous treatment many receive in detention leaves long lasting harm to their families. Tate Naing spoke at the ceremony of the importance of honoring their memory, with the event providing financial assistance to the families of 54 deceased political prisoners. This ceremony sought to mitigate the harm caused by prison by improving the livelihoods of these families.



Ceremony to Honor Deceased Political Prisoners in Rangoon

## Activities in 2014

The following diary demonstrates the extensive educational, vocational and skills based training programs. We aim to support and protect former political prisoners who wish to continue academic learning, meet with friends and colleagues, and learn new vocational skills and re engage in their political activities.

### Trainings

The need to assist political prisoners in adapting to life outside prison is paramount to AAPP's activities. The trainings provided throughout 2014 covered numerous areas of education, ranging from practical computer skills to trainings in human rights principles. The following are some of the training highlights from the year.

January 16th

Digital Security Training at Rangoon office

A Digital Security Training was given by Freedom House at the AAPP Rangoon office. The trainers were from Freedom House and the co-trainer from Myanmar ICT and Development Organization (MIDO). The training sought to improve the participants' knowledge regarding security of information.

February 13th

Basic Driving Skills Training for former political prisoners

11 former political prisoners attended a rehabilitation program in Rangoon. Trainees were enrolled by AAPP and Ex Political Prisoners Network (Upper Burma) and undertook the Training of Motor Vehicle Driving and Road Maintenance course.

March 18th-25th

A one-week workshop in Mandalay discussed Human Rights and Transitional Justice principles. 25 former political prisoners were in attendance at the workshop with much discussion focused on how to achieve a peaceful future for Burma. The workshop introduced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) by looking at specific articles and sections of these international treaties.

April 19th

Basic Accountancy Training

The basic accountancy training sought to develop a basic financial system for community based organizations by using the Excel Accounting Template. This training would help to standardize financial systems with an appropriate reporting mechanism, as well as developing a financial policy for organizations to adhere to.



Basic Accounting and Internal Control Training in April

August 1st-10th

A ten day training was held in Myingyan, Mandalay Region with 23 former political prisoners and local activists from several areas of Burma attended.

## Advocacy and Lobbying

With arrests ongoing and political prisoners still very much a reality for Burma, AAPP continues to strongly advocate to both the Government of Burma and to the international community that all political prisoners must be freed unconditionally. Their freedom is not the only consideration of our advocacy campaigns. There needs to be genuine reforms in the legal and judicial systems, in order to end the unjust detention and imprisonment of Burma's people. Throughout the year AAPP staff members have met with diplomats, embassies, international NGOs, academic researchers, community based organizations and many other organizations who have discussed the current situation in Burma. In addition some staff members have undertaken interviews with Burmese media outlets including Democratic Voice of Burma and The Irrawaddy.

February 3rd

Human Rights Watch (HRW) members met with AAPP staff to discuss the current situation in Burma.

February 7th

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) visited AAPP in Rangoon to learn about the organization history, the activities we carry out in Burma and the current situation for political prisoners.





Political Prisoner Exhibition at the Asean People's Forum in March

February 24th

Bo Kyi attended a discussion on "Transition Imagine Future" at the French Embassy in Rangoon.

March 21st-23rd

ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN People's Forum 2014 (ACSC/APF)

Civil society organizations from all ten ASEAN countries gathered for the ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN People's Forum 2014 (ACSC/APF) hosted at the Myanmar Convention Center (MCC) in Rangoon. During this event AAPP was invited to hold a photo exhibition, giving fellow ASEAN participants the opportunity to learn about political prisoner issues, as well as speaking directly with former political prisoners.

May 19th

The European Union held a forum in Burma to engage with civil society groups.

August 17th-18th

The need for an agreed and ratified political prisoner definition is still ongoing, with the political prisoner review committee still using a working definition and making little progress in securing an official recognition. 50 civil society groups attended a seminar to establish a joint definition of political prisoners, where many different interests and perspectives could be considered.

September 29th

Professor Roman David of Lingnan University Hong Kong discussed the rehabilitation of former political prisoners from the Czech Republic during a forum held at the AAPP Rangoon Offices. The meeting was attended by around 40 representatives from 88 Generation Peace and Open Society, Former Political Prisoners Society (FPPS) and by former political prisoners.

October 22nd

The Oslo Center visited Rangoon to discuss the progress of the CSRPP. The discussion also served to update the Oslo Center on the current land rights issues and the continued detention of farmers, as well as discussing the power the President holds in parliament and the lack of progress with regards to reform.

October 31st

Bo Kyi met with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

November 13th

Members of the British police force visited Rangoon to discuss policing methods and procedures in Burma.

December 18th

AAPP, Equality Myanmar, and Burma Partnership wrote a statement on “Government Policy on Return and Resettlement of Exiled Activists and Political Forces” urging the government to adopt and effectively implement a clear policy. The statement included measures that must be taken by the government to ensure quick and equal resettlement for exiled activists such as to cease imposing restrictions on individuals and organizations who have different political beliefs to partake in working for democracy, peace, and human rights in Burma, to adopt and implement clear policies based on democratic principles, and a list of elements that must be included when necessary policies are adopted.

## Documentation and Data Collecting

There are estimated to be between 7,000 and 10,000 former political prisoners residing inside Burma, however very little is known regarding their current socio-economic status, nor is there comprehensive data concerning their experiences inside the prison system. Moreover, government efforts to assist former political prisoners to acclimatize and reintegrate into society have been largely nonexistent in Burma. From March 2014 to date, AAPP’s Documentation Project, with the support of the (FPPS), has been implementing an ongoing and vast data collection process both inside Burma and along the Thai-Burma border. In early 2014 the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) conducted a training workshop in Rangoon for the data collectors on how to administer the survey to the former political prisoners. The University Of California Irvine School Of Law undertook the editing and production of the final survey. The survey, comprised of a combination of multiple choice and free response questions, focused on baseline demographic data; mental and physical health; educational needs; needs and aspirations; baseline economic

data; and qualitative responses on post-release reintegration. Many other trainings were conducted throughout the year to ensure the data collectors are well trained and able to carry out the documentation work.

The following diary demonstrates the ongoing nature of the documentation process:



Data Collection in Bogale in February

January 9th

AAPP met with 88 Generation Peace and Open Society to discuss the data collection project.

February 6th

Former political prisoners met at NLD office, Kemmendine Township to carry out data collecting.

February 25th-March 1st

Data collection was also carried out in Bogale with visits to four villages that were invaded by the military in 1991. Many of the villagers have at some point been imprisoned.

March 6th- 12th

Tate Naing and FPPS members travelled to Myitkyina, Kachin State to meet former political prisoners for data collection.

March 27th-28th

Freedom House Community Consultation at YMCA with AAPP and FPPS



Freedom House conducted a research survey in order to identify common on-going problems facing former political prisoners and their family members. 73 former political prisoners were invited to participate in the survey. The consultation successfully concluded with a collective decision on how to use these findings to work toward an effective advocacy plan.



Data Collecting Surveys Completed by Former Political Prisoners

September 10th

Data collection with former political prisoners of Taunggyi, Shan State.

October 7th

AAPP and FPPS met with former political prisoners in Dala Township to continue data collecting.

The data collected has been completed in Rangoon and Dala in Rangoon Division; Pegu and Pyay in Bago Division; Laputta, Myaungmya, Eain Me, War Khe Ma, Kyaungkon, Kyonepyaw, Bassein and Bogale in Irrawaddy Division; Pakokku in Magwe division areas of the Kachin and Karen states; Yenangyaung, Chauk, Kyauk Padaung, Meiktila and Mahlaing in Mandalay Division; Kyaukme, Hsipaw and Lashio Townships in Northern Shan State; and Thandwe, Gwa, Tauunggup and Kyeintali in Rakhine State. Data has also been collected from locations along the Thai-Burma border, including in and around Mae Sot, and at Mae La, Umphium and Nupo refugee camps.

Using various micro-networks of former political prisoners, the data collectors have administered the survey to approximately 5,000 former political prisoners so far. In areas where the data collectors were unable to administer the survey with the former political prisoners, surveys were distributed at collection points to be self-administered and returned. Thus far, 2,849 surveys have been returned. The data collected has been both detailed and comprehensive.

The Documentation Project seeks to conclude with the release of two comprehensive publications







## The Mental Health Assistance Program (MHAP)

The physical harm caused during their time in prison does not account for the unseen mental scars left by the inhumane torture political prisoners and other detainees go through. Upon their release former political prisoners have no access to physical or mental health support. The Mental Health Assistance Program (MHAP) seeks to provide former political prisoners and their families with initial help that is needed to handle their trauma, anxiety or depression directly after their release. It also provides tools that will help them cope with and overcome mental health difficulties at the end of their course of treatment.

MHAP began using the Common Elements Treatment Approach (CETA), which was developed by Johns Hopkins University (JHU) in order for people affected by trauma, depression and anxiety in low resource countries to be able to receive vital mental health services. CETA is a proven effective method for dealing with mental health issues in conflict areas and has been used, not only to treat people in Burma, but also in other countries with a dearth of mental health services such as Iraq and Thailand.



CETA Closing Ceremony

In 2013 the MHAP gave mental health counseling to 165 former political prisoners and their families. In 2014 MHAP increased those mental health services to 514 former political prisoners, their families, and other affected peoples in two countries, a significant increase on the previous year.

The MHAP is comprised of 6 teams in total, with a chief clinical supervisor and a deputy clinical supervisor who oversee the running of these teams. 2014 saw the training of 17 new staff, including 13 counselors and 4 supervisors, which will allow for even more people to receive this valuable service. In total the program employs 6 supervisors and 22 counselors.

Despite working primarily with former political prisoners, the MHAP has begun efforts to work with other populations. In the Mae Sot area, migrant workers have become a large portion of the people who receive mental health assistance. The offices in Rangoon and Mandalay have begun to gradually expand the reach of this program. These teams have started providing services to former political prisoners in other areas of the country, as well as other populations who are in need of mental health counseling.

During the course of the year MHAP had many learning opportunities, which allowed the team to gain practical knowledge about the approaches and techniques other mental health programs use. One such opportunity was the trip that the MHAP team took to Cambodia, a country that has its own history of trauma stemming from Cambodian genocide that took place between 1975 and 1979. During the trip the team met with several different groups including the Trans-cultural Psychological Organization and the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association. This trip provided insight into how a country with a more developed mental health infrastructure and similar history of trauma provides effective service to their clients with mental health concerns.

Throughout the year MHAP has given trainings to organizations such as Première Urgence – Aide Médicale Internationale (PU-AMI). The trainings were aimed at providing another organization with the skills needed to reach further populations that are affected by mental health related issues. By providing these trainings, refugees living in the border camps are able to receive the benefits of mental health assistance.

At the end of 2014 MHAP, JHU, and USAID led a CETA dissemination of findings meeting which gave a detailed account of the activities that were undertaken by MHAP and JHU throughout the year, as well to discuss the findings of their research. Along with the dissemination of findings there was a question and answer session which was attended by representatives of the US Embassy, multiple former political prisoner organizations, the U Win Tin Foundation, and Asian Justice and Rights. This meeting produced a concise overview of the MHAP in 2014, helping to plot out the future direction of things to come.

After initially working in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University, the Mental Health Assistance Program has moved towards working on a more self sustaining model with the gracious support of donors including the USAID Victims of Torture Program and the US Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, and Partners Asia. This will allow the program to further develop techniques to provide assistance to a growing number of people. Over the course of the next year MHAP will continue to expand the scope of the program and increase the target population. The partnerships that have been created in the last 12 months will continue to be strengthened in order for MHAP to reach its ultimate goal of making mental health assistance a universal right for all people in Burma.

## AAPP Staff Members

Over our three offices in Mae Sot, Thailand, and in Rangoon and Mandalay, Burma; AAPP retains 46 Burmese staff, with two international staff and three international interns.

AAPP continues to appreciate the hard work and dedication that our local and international staff and volunteers bring to the organization.

## Future Vision

The key mandate of AAPP remains the same. We will continue to advocate for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners, for their humane treatment while in prison, and for their dignity to be preserved through a recognition of their political prisoner status. We endeavor to provide political prisoners with access to those basic services which are denied to them, through both financial aid and medical assessments upon release. We will also strive to improve access to education and employment opportunities for former political prisoners and their families, services that as of yet are only being provided by civil society.

The success of the Mental Health Assistance Program in 2014 has encouraged its expansion. There are plans to increase the number of supervisors, counselors and trainers working inside Burma and along the Thai-Burma border, in order to expand the scope and reach of the MHAP. This will allow us to widen the target population for this essential program. Throughout 2014, the MHAP steadily grew, with an increasing number of political prisoners and/or family members in attendance. AAPP seeks to facilitate the growth of the MHAP services in 2015.

Human rights violations have not abated in Burma and political activists are still harassed, intimidated and imprisoned for their commitment to a free Burma. AAPP will continue to monitor the situation in the country and keep records of these ongoing abuses. Documentation and research are invaluable to our advocacy work, ensuring that political prisoners are not forgotten and their liberty is fought for. The ongoing data collection project will continue to establish information about the lives and livelihoods of former political prisoners.

Former political prisoners have an integral role to play in the national reconciliation process and in ensuring that democracy takes a lasting hold in Burma. They are a key component in the democratic transition. We hope to see the government recognize the importance of human rights treaties and conventions and ratify them, affirming a commitment to the rights and freedoms of people in Burma and recognizing the ongoing unjust existence of political prisoners.



## Our Supporters

Without the generous support and solidarity from our supporters we would not be able to continue our mission. We would like to express our deepest thanks and appreciation to our primary benefactors, including but not limited to: The National Endowment for Democracy, The Open Society Foundation, The Bureau of Democracy, Rights and Labor, The Prisoners of Conscience Fund, John Hopkins University, The Netherlands Embassy in Thailand, Partners Asia and Professor James C. Scott, all of whom made invaluable contributions to our activities this year. Without these supporters we would not be able to provide political prisoners with the support we do.

We are also grateful to the many individuals and organizations that make donations to our cause throughout the year. These contributions are greatly appreciated and assist with many of the day to day costs at AAPP and in helping us to continue our activities. In 2014 AAPP received visits from many areas of work including academic researchers, journalists, student groups, diplomats, international organizations, civil society colleagues and other supporters from around the world. Visitors came from all around the globe including UK, US, Denmark, Hong Kong, Australia, Canada, France, Turkey, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Mexico and Chile. The interest visitors take in the work of AAPP and in the current situation in Burma is much appreciated and we look forward to welcoming future visitors throughout the coming year.

In addition to our financial contributors, we would like to thank Former Political Prisoners Society, 88 Generation Peace and Open Society, Human Rights Watch, National League for Democracy, Amnesty International, Project 2049, Burma Campaign UK, US Campaign for Burma, Freedom House, the UN Special Rapporteur, University California Irvine School of Law, The International Centre for Transitional Justice, FIDH and many others inside Burma and around the world for continuing to stand with us in our fight for the unconditional release of all political prisoners. We are indebted to you for your steadfast support and solidarity.

Visitors to the AAPP museum in Mae Sot





*AAPP is dedicated to all those who have sacrificed their lives in prison, and to all of those who continue to risk their lives and freedom in the ongoing struggle for democracy, human rights and national reconciliation in Burma*