

PAING PHYO MIN, MYANMAR

Paing Phyto Min (aka De Yay) loves singing, playing the guitar and Taylor Swift. The 22-year-old student leader is also a member of the Peacock Generation, a poetry troupe dedicated to Thangyat – a traditional version of slam poetry. Fusing verse with comedy and music, Thangyat is usually performed in April during Myanmar’s New Year Water Festival.

In April and May 2019, Paing Phyto Min and other Peacock Generation members were arrested after performing Thangyat dressed as soldiers. They made fun of the military, saying it couldn’t take criticism, was desperate to hang on to power, and was bankrupting the country while its generals accumulated wealth.



Paing Phyto Min was convicted and sentenced to six years in prison. The charges against him include “incitement”, that is, encouraging military officers to abandon their duties; and “online defamation” for sharing photographs and videos of their performances online. A shared image of a dog in military uniform seemed particularly upsetting to authorities.

“We have been performing Thangyat every year since 2013,” says Paing Phyto Min. “We have been directly communicating with the public, expressing... what is wrong in our society... including criticisms of the government. But in 2019, the military targeted us. They are undermining Myanmar’s democratic transition. We may be imprisoned, but we will not be deterred from speaking our minds.”

Support Paing Phyto Min.

Tell Myanmar to release him immediately and unconditionally.

WRITE TO MYANMAR’S STATE COUNSELLOR

Tell her to immediately release Paing Phyto Min and other members of the Peacock Generation.

H.E. Aung San Suu Kyi

State Counsellor

Ministry of the State Counsellor Office

Office No. 20, Nay Pyi Taw

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Twitter: @MyanmarSC

Salutation: Your Excellency

STAND WITH PAING PHYO MIN

Send him your messages of friendship and hope to help lift his spirits in prison.

President of the Student Union

Dagon University Students’

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar

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SAMPLE TARGET LETTERS

WRITE
FOR
RIGHTS
AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL

POPI QWABE & BONGEKA PHUNGULA, SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Minister

It has been three years since Popi Qwabe and Bongeka Phungula were shot dead. Both aged in their twenties, the two young women were talented drama students with brilliant futures ahead of them.

But their dreams were cut short one night in May 2017 when they were killed, and dumped by the side of a road. The police investigation that followed was riddled with mistakes: a bloodstained taxi was recovered but the forensics and autopsies were never published. As a result, key suspects were released due to lack of evidence.

Popi and Bongeka's families want answers and demand justice. You can help them by ensuring a prompt, thorough, fair and impartial investigation into the murders.

Impunity for acts of gender-based violence cannot continue.

Yours sincerely



Minister of Police
Private Bag X463
Pretoria 0001
South Africa

PAING PHYO MIN, MYANMAR

Your Excellency

I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Paing Phyto Min, a 22-year-old poet and student leader serving six years in prison solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

*In April and May 2019, Paing Phyto Min and other members of the Peacock Generation, a satirical poetry troupe, performed *Thangyat* critical of the military. The military took offence at their performances and brought charges against them.*

Paing Phyto Min should not be in prison simply for criticising the military. Everyone must be free to express their views in Myanmar, even if these are critical of the authorities. I urge you to release Paing Phyto Min immediately and unconditionally, and your government to repeal or amend all repressive laws that violate the right to freedom of expression.

Yours sincerely



H.E. Aung San Suu Kyi
State Counsellor
Ministry of the State Counsellor
Office
Office No. 20, Nay Pyi Taw
Republic of the Union of Myanmar