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AAPP and FPPS launch report entitled “After Release I had to restart my life from the beginning”: The Experience of Ex-political Prisoners in Burma and Challenges to Reintegration’

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (“AAPP”) and the Former Political Prisoners Society (“FPPS”) has today – 25 May 2016 – published a report entitled, “After release I had to restart my life from the beginning”: The Experiences of Ex-political Prisoners in Burma and Challenges to Reintegration’. The report is available for download on AAPP’s website in English and Burmese.

The report is the outcome of data collected by AAPP and FPPS from January 2014 to July 2015 on the experiences of ex-political prisoners across Burma and along the Thai-Burma border. The surveys of 1,621 ex-political prisoners inform the report. The report seeks to reveal the widespread mistreatment of, and systematic use of torture against political prisoners in Burma, and makes a case for reparations for ex-political prisoners as part of transitional justice.

The report reveals deaths of political prisoners inside interrogation centers, prisons and labor camps due to severe torture and mistreatment, including insufficient food and water, and lack of health care. It also reveals political prisoners forced to work as porters in battle areas and, in the worst cases, disappearances of political prisoners where no records were left behind.

The report depicts the grim reality political prisoners are forced to live in post-release and their barriers to reintegration including their mental and physical struggles; social stigmatization; travel restrictions; denial of education and employment opportunities; financial hardships; social exclusion; family tensions and ongoing health issues.

Finally, the report makes a number of key policy recommendations to the new Burma Government in terms of providing reparations to ex-political prisoners and their families as part of transitional justice.

AAPP and FPPS hope that this report will raise awareness and build understanding of the plight of political prisoners. We urge the Burma Government to implement the report’s recommendations by providing recognition, restitution, and rehabilitation for ex-political prisoners and to establish truth-seeking measures to work towards national reconciliation. In addition, we reiterate calls for the government to review, revoke and redraft repressive legislation used to detain activists to ensure an end to the cycle of repression. AAPP and FPPS urge political parties, civil society groups and the international community to stand with us in our efforts to ensure the Burma Government heed to these calls.

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