Reporters Without Borders

Asia - Burma

New charge
Jailed video journalist faces additional charge
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Reporters Without Borders condemns the new charge that was brought on 10 August against **Sithu Zeya**, a *Democratic Voice of Burma* video journalist who has been detained since April 2010 and who is already serving an eight-year sentence for filming the damage caused by a grenade explosion in Rangoon.

Aged 21, Sithu Zeya could now receive an additional sentence of 7 to 15 years in prison on a charge of circulating material online "*that can damage tranquillity and unity in the government*" under the Electronic Act.

"*They gave him the [first] sentence based on the confession he gave to the police under torture,*" his mother told Democratic Voice of Burma. "*They will use the same confession to sentence him this time. [The judicial system] now is no different from the previous one.*"

Reporters Without Borders fears that any changes to the Burmese judicial system since the end of military rule are no more than window dressing and urges the international community to step up pressure on Burma for a real political opening, one that guarantees basic freedoms for its citizens including media freedom.

Reporters Without Borders also hopes that the pro-democracy opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi raises the case of imprisoned journalists and bloggers when she has a second round of talks with the government today.

An Oslo-based exile radio and TV station, *Democratic Voice of Burma* launched a campaign in May for the release of its 17 video reporters who are currently imprisoned in Burma. As well as Sithu Seya, they include his father, **Maung Maung Zeya**, who is serving a 13-year jail sentence.

More than 15 journalists and three netizens are detained in Burma, which is on the Reporters Without Borders list of Enemies of the Internet and is ranked 174th out of 178 countries in the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index.