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Filmmaker Gets A Year in Prison For Anti-Military Facebook Posts

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Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi described military leaders as a ‘flock of power crazies’



[Khin Moh Moh Lwin](#)
Published on Aug 29, 2019





Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi at Yangon's Insein Court on August 29 (Photo : Kay Zon Nway / Myanmar Now)

Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi at Yangon's Insein Court on August 29 (Photo : Kay Zon Nway / Myanmar Now)

A court in Yangon has sentenced a prominent filmmaker suffering from cancer to a year in prison with labour for his Facebook posts criticising the military.

Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi, 57, who is a founder of the Human Dignity Film Institute, was arrested in April after a Tatmadaw official filed a complaint at Yangon's Insein township court under Article 505a of the Penal Code.

The article bans statements that might induce military officers to "disregard or fail" in their duties and carries a maximum sentence of two years' imprisonment and a fine.

Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi, known for his human rights focussed documentary films, published a series of Facebook posts in February and March denouncing the military's role in politics and describing former dictator Than Shwe as a "thief".

During his final ruling the judge cited posts by the director that referred to military leaders as "a flock of power crazies" and compared senior officials to "bulls" and "dogs".

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Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi said in his earlier court appearances that he wrote the remarks with "good intent to improve the Tatmadaw."

The judge disagreed, and said during the ruling that he deliberately wrote the posts knowing they could cause outrage among members of the military.

Citing the defendant's ailing health, the judge said he would deduct time served since his arrest off the sentence, meaning he will be free by April next year.



Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi's defence team previously submitted their client's medical documents, which show he is suffering from heart and kidney disease and has had half of his liver removed.

"Don't worry, I'll be out again," he told reporters as he left the court. "It's more important to have the constitution amended. I'd like to request you all to not lose track of it by being united behind our leaders."

His lawyer Robert San Aung said they will decide whether to appeal tomorrow.

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Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi has also been hit with defamation charges under section 66d of the Telecommunications Act, which also carries a maximum two-year sentence. He was granted bail for that charge, which relates to the same Facebook posts, and the 66d case has been stalled since then.

His supporters have criticised the military and the judiciary for allowing the same person to be hit with two charges for the same offense.

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Khin Moh Moh Lwin is Reporter with *Myanmar Now*.

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