

Journalists' conviction in Myanmar a message that press 'cannot operate fearlessly' – UN rights chief

Stressing that the legal process that led to the conviction of two Reuters journalists in Myanmar “clearly breached” international standards, the United Nations top human rights official called for their immediate and unconditional release.

In a statement on Monday, Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said that the convictions “send a message to all journalists in Myanmar that they cannot operate fearlessly, but [must rather make a choice to either self-censor or risk prosecution.](#)”

Earlier in the day, Kyaw Soe Oo (also known as Moe Aung) and Thet Oo Maung (also known as Wa Lone) were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment on charges of violating, according to the High Commissioner's Office ([OHCHR](#)), the “ill-defined” Official Secrets Act.

Their coverage of the Inn Din massacre by the military [...] was clearly in the public interest as it may otherwise never have come to light – *UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet*

In the [statement](#), Ms. Bachelet also said that the two journalists' coverage of the Inn Din massacre by the military – for which the military subsequently admitted responsibility – “was clearly in the public interest as it may otherwise never have come to light.”

“I call for their conviction to be quashed and for them to be released, along with all other journalists currently in detention for their legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of expression,” underscored the UN human rights chief.

Ms. Bachelet [assumed](#) her functions as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on 1 September. She succeeds Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, who held the position since September 2014.