



Society of Environmental Journalists

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The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW Washington, D.C., 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

The Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ) urges the State Department to take all available steps to secure the immediate and unconditional release of two American journalists working in Myanmar who have been imprisoned there since a military junta seized power in February.

Danny Fenster, a U.S. citizen and the managing editor of *Frontier Myanmar*, an independent news outlet, was detained May 24 at Yangon International Airport as he prepared to board a flight to return to the United States for a family visit, according to a statement on social media by his employer. He was taken to Insein Prison in Yangon, a military-run prison notorious for locking up and torturing journalists and political prisoners.

Another American working in Myanmar, Nathan Maung, editor-in-chief of the local news outlet Kamayut Media, was seized in March and is also reportedly being held at Insein Prison.

They are among a large number of journalists working in Myanmar who have been jailed since the military took control of the government there. As the world's largest professional organization dedicated to supporting environmental journalism, with more than 1,400 members in 46 countries, SEJ demands that journalists be free to report the news in Myanmar without fear of arbitrary detention. The widespread arrests of journalists and closing of news outlets in that country in recent months represents a grave threat to press freedom.

We share the concerns expressed by the Committee to Protect Journalists and other journalism and human rights groups over the imprisonment of Fenster and Maung. We join them in calling on you to work strenuously for their immediate release. As Danny Fenster's older brother was quoted saying, "Journalism is not a crime."

Sincerely,

Sadie Babits

President, Society of Environmental Journalists Board of Directors