

Legacies of Detention in Myanmar

November 21st 2016, Summit Parkview,
Yangon, Myanmar

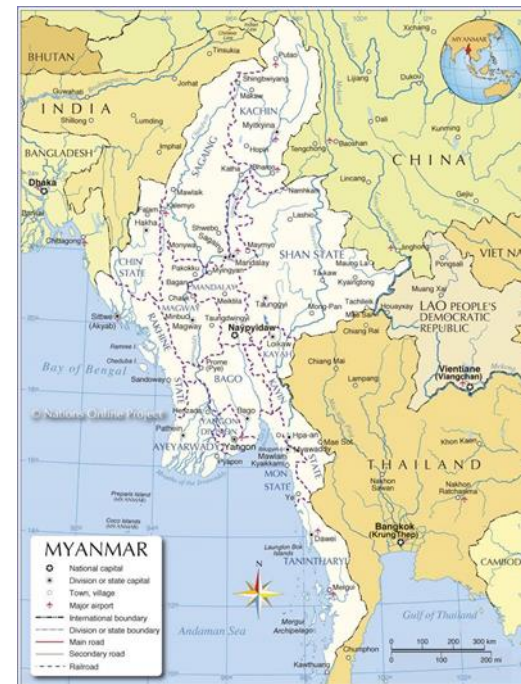
- Legacies of Detention is a research and capacity building project (supported with funding from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
- Partnering with Justice for All (JFA) and Yangon University Law Department
- It is a project about PRISONS IN CONTEXT
 - in historical context
 - in the context of Myanmar today

The project expects to:

- develop new knowledge
- build capacity of Myanmar based lawyers to generate knowledge
- build capacity of law students to generate knowledge and think freely
- encourage knowledge-led policy-making in the area of prison and justice sector reform

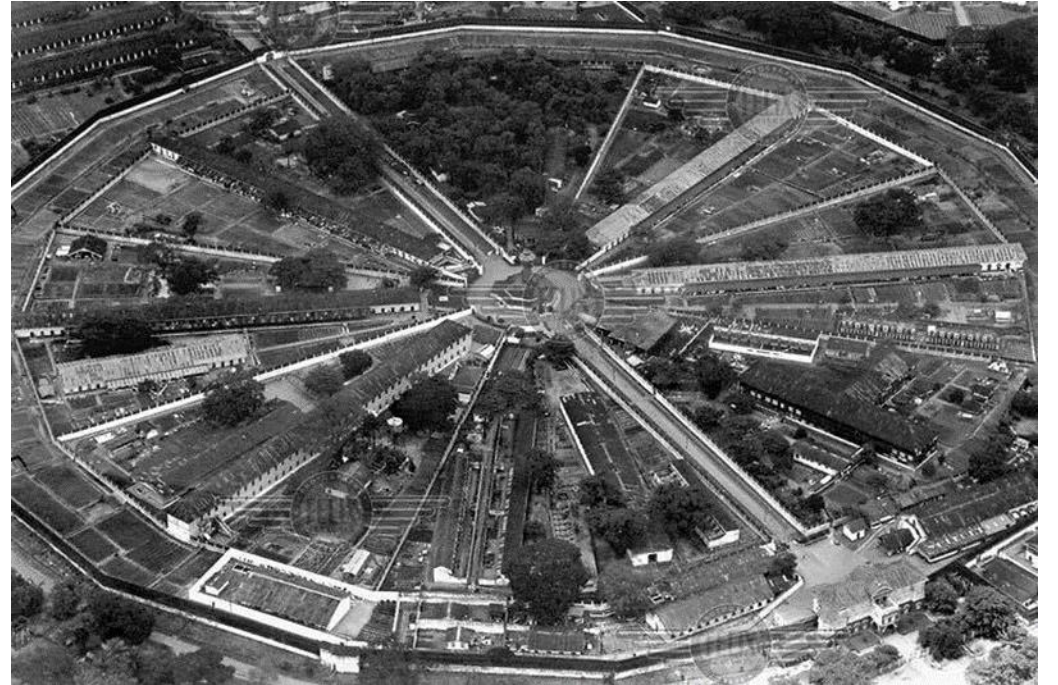
DIGNITY

- a Danish organization working for human rights in poor countries through development projects and research



Programme

- Who are we and what do we bring to this project?
- Why prisons?
- What is special about our approach?
- How will we collaborate?
- What activities will we be organizing?
- What will we contribute?
- Q&A / Dialogue



Who are we and what do we bring to this project?

- Andrew M. Jefferson
- Tomas Max Martin
- Liv S. Gaborit



- Prisons in transitional contexts
 - Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tunisia
- Focus on prison staff and everyday life
- Content and methods (access, building trust)
- Prisons AND prison reform



- ANTHROPOLOGIST AND PRISON RESEARCHER
- INDIA, UGANDA AND MYANMAR
- HUMAN RIGHTS AND PRISON REFORM, STAFF, PRISON DISCIPLINE
- TECHNOLOGY, ARCHITECTURE AND SANITATION



'Opposing Human Rights in India'



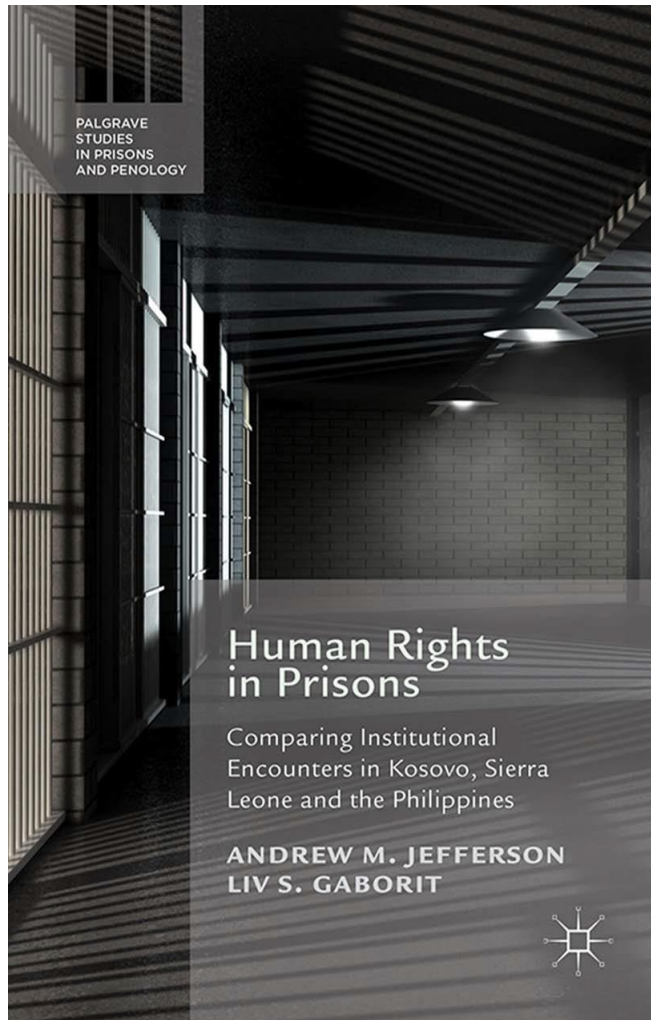
‘Embracing Human Rights in Uganda’



Liv S. Gaborit

- Phd student, prison researcher and psychologist
- Philippines, Sierra Leone, Lebanon and Myanmar
- Focus: Experiences, coping and survival





Understanding Prison Reform

- Action research, working closely with local NGO's
- Studying prisons as they are in three very different contexts
- Understanding different approaches and strategies to prison reform

Why prisons?

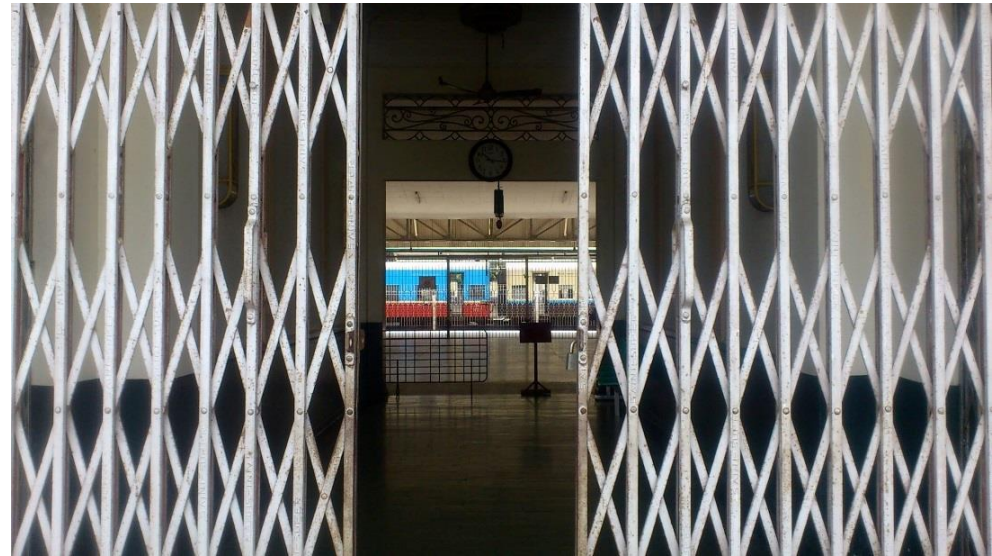
- “It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails” Nelson Mandela
- Prisons can be places of intense human suffering and misery
- Very little academic research done on prisons in Africa and Asia

- We do not come to judge prisons but to make sense of prisons. We come to describe them and understand them from the perspectives of the people who have been in them, who work in them, who manage them, and who try to change them
- We study prisons because we think they offer unique insight into the relationship between a state and its citizens

What is special about our approach?

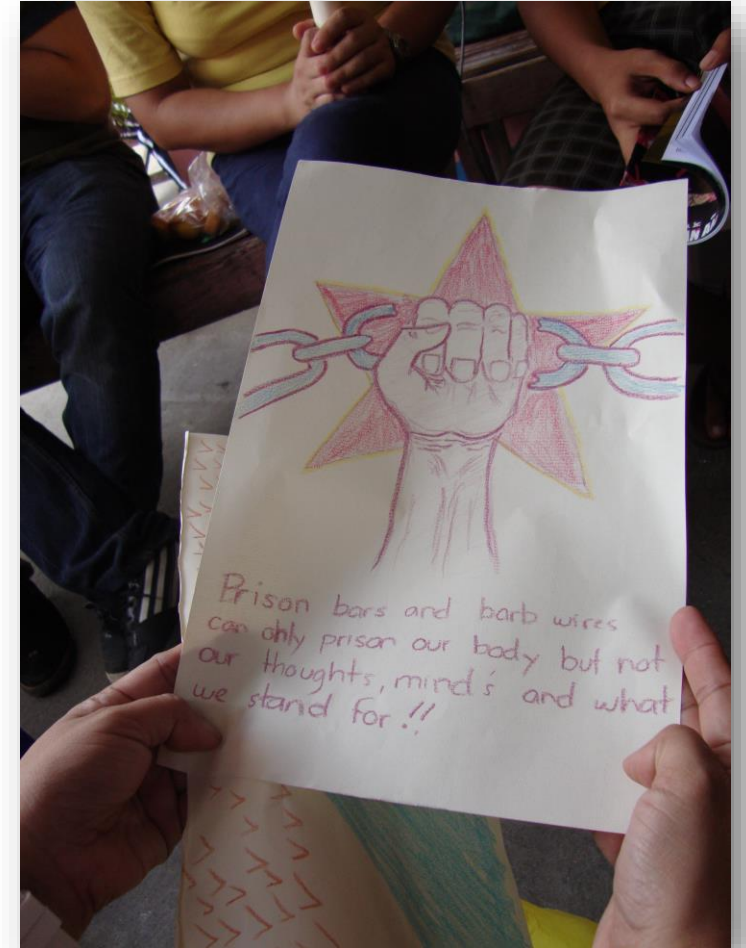
- Ethnography
 - long-term
 - in-depth
 - people and institution-oriented
- interested in
 - facts AND meaning
 - learning what people think about their own situations
 - the ways people speak about themselves, their situations, their circumstances, their lives

- We believe it is necessary to carefully describe and understand the world if we want to change the world
- Three entry points:
 - Experiences
 - Technologies
 - Politics



Experiencing legacies of detention

- *What* do people experience inside prison?
 - How does it, for example, differ across time, from prison to prison?
- *How* do people experience prisons?
 - Do people make sense of experiences of imprisonment in different way depending on: group, ethnicity, religion?



Detention Technologies



How will we collaborate?

- By working with and through our partners, for example JFA
- Developing joint ideas
- Identifying cases together
- Collecting data together / Conducting field work together
- Analysing and generating knowledge together

What does the project support?

- *With Justice For All*
 - 2 researchers (part-time)
 - 2 research assistants (part-time)
 - design and implementation of collaborative studies
 - training on field research
 - access to international networks of experts in the field
 - writing and publication of reports and working papers
- *At the University*
 - research via phd scholarships and staff research grants
 - development of new course modules
 - development of the law library

What activities will we be organizing?

- Annual stakeholder seminars: a forum for knowledge-sharing and dialogue between civil society, the University, policy-makers, state officials, lawyers etc.
- A regional conference
- An international conference

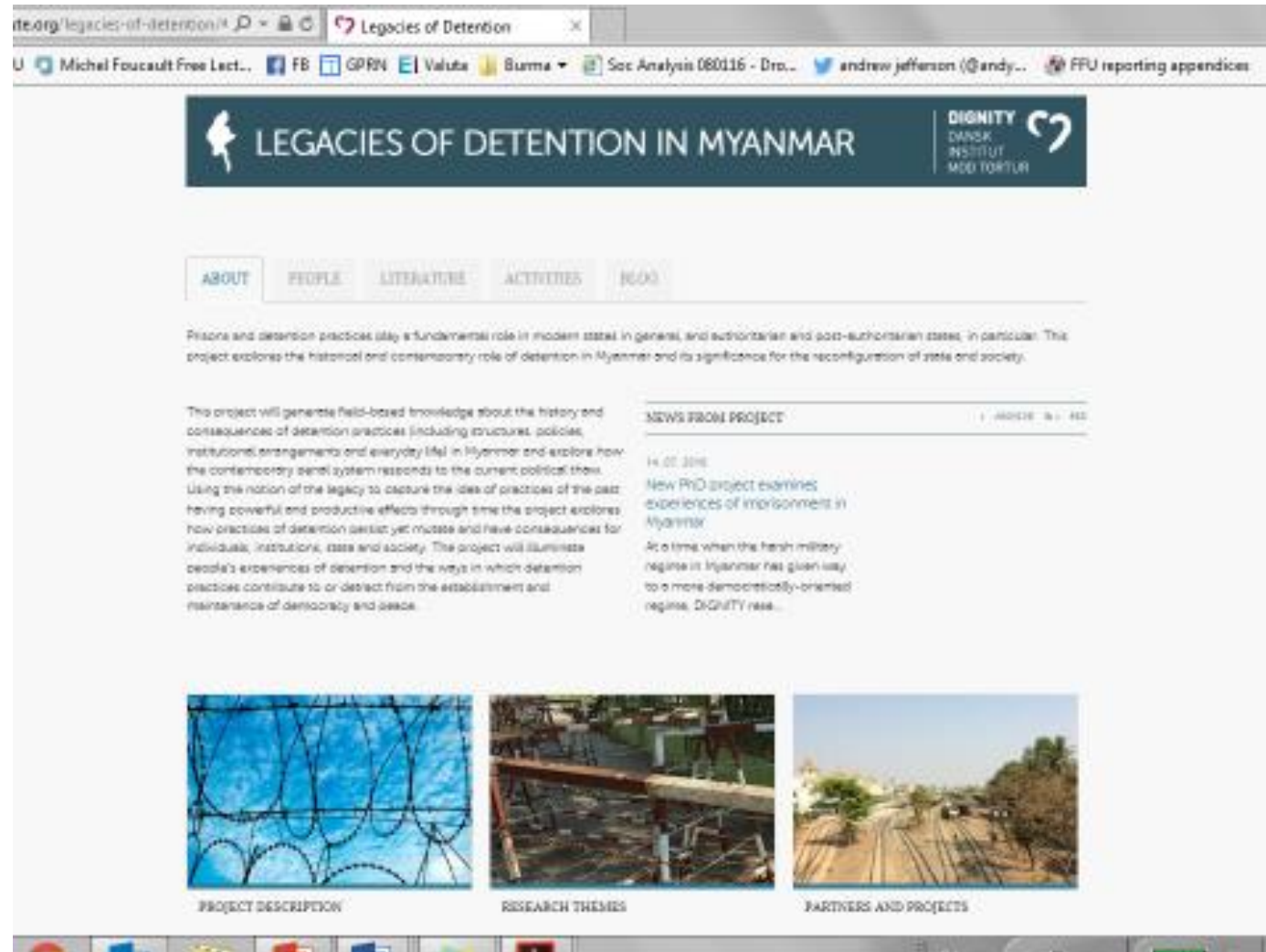
What will we contribute?

- Skills and other capacities
- Expertise – our own and our network's (research methods; legal, medical, organisational development)
- Access to knowledge and to scientific and technical literature
- Mentoring and supervision

What will come out of it?

- People with new skills
- New knowledge based on data and theory
- Critical case analyses, working papers, reports, conference presentations, academic articles
- Enhanced ability to conduct research and engage internationally
- Increased openness of prisons department: more transparency; more dialogue

Q&A



www.dignityinstitute.org/legacies-of-detention