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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 30/94

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**PLEASE NOTE:** For any press queries on the detention of 10 Christians in China please refer to UA 47/94, AI INDEX: ASA 17/07/94 for background details, although since the UA was put out the 7 of the 10 all of whom are foreign nationals have been released and are now in Hong Kong. We have heard no further news about the 3 remaining Chinese detainees.

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Kuwait - 24 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 170

Women - 8 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 161/26

## TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

European Parliament & Political killings/"disapps" Handbook - 23 Feb  
SEE NEWS SERVICE 22/94

Turkey - 10 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 26

## FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Saudi Arabia - 31 March more details to follow

Colombia - 16 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 123 + UAs AMR 23/56-57/93

South Africa - 23 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 05/94

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15 February 1994

**MYANMAR: NOBEL LAUREATE AND PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE AUNG SAN SUU KYI SPEAKS OUT**

Aung San Suu Kyi, the winner of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize who is a prisoner of conscience under house arrest in Myanmar (Burma), was allowed her first visit from other than close relatives in four and half years on Monday 14 February. Apart from occasional family visits from her British husband and two sons, who live in England, Ms Aung San Suu Kyi has been kept in complete isolation by the military government of Myanmar, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), since her arrest in July 1989. US Congressman William Richardson, Jehan Raheem, the Yangon (Rangoon) representative of the United Nations Development Program, a reporter and a member of the US Embassy staff in Yangon were allowed to meet Ms Aung San Suu Kyi for three hours on Monday. The meeting took place in her home where she has spent the entire period of her detention. According to reports, Ms Aung San Suu Kyi is healthy and determined to stay in her country. The SLORC have often offered to release her if she agrees to go into exile. Ms Aung San Suu Kyi reportedly told her visitors that her message to other members of the National League for Democracy, (NLD), the political party she founded in 1988, was "Don't be scared".

Amnesty International has adopted Aung San Suu Kyi as a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful expression of her political views, and continues to call on the SLORC to release her immediately and unconditionally. Ms Aung San Suu Kyi is detained under the provisions of the 1975 State Protection Law. This law gives the SLORC the power to imprison a person without trial for five years, which for Ms Aung San Suu Kyi expires in July. However, the SLORC recently announced that her detention could be extended under the terms of the existing law for a further year.

The NLD won a landslide victory in elections held in 1990, but the SLORC, which took power following the violent repression of a nationwide pro-democracy movement in 1988, has never allowed the Parliament to convene. Many prominent NLD politicians remain in prison in Myanmar, most of them sentenced after blatantly unfair trials.

The SLORC has been strongly criticised by the United Nations for its poor human rights record, and the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Myanmar, Professor Yojo Yokota, is due to report to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva next week. It is expected that his report will criticize the Myanmar authorities for the continuing human rights violations in the country. Amnesty International believes that the SLORC have allowed Ms Aung San Suu Kyi to receive visitors because they are anxious to improve their international image prior to the publication of Professor Yokota's report next week.

Amnesty International knows of hundreds of political prisoners still imprisoned in Myanmar, of whom at least 70 are prisoners of conscience, including three sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment as recently as October 1993. Dr Aung Khin Sint, an NLD member of parliament-elect, and his assistant, Than Min, were convicted of sending allegedly threatening letters to members of the National Convention, a meeting convened by the SLORC to draw up a new constitution in Myanmar. Dr Ma Thida (f), a medical doctor and well-known writer of short stories, was convicted of associating with Burmese opposition groups operating outside Myanmar.

Amnesty International welcomes the SLORC's decision to allow Ms Aung San Suu Kyi to receive visitors. However, the organization believes that this small gesture by the SLORC is inadequate and that Ms Aung San Suu Kyi should be released immediately and unconditionally, along with all other prisoners of conscience held in Myanmar.

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