

NOTE TO EDITORS

@AUNG SAN SUU KYI
PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE, NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER

Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the National League for Democracy in Myanmar, is being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in Norway today (10 December 1991). Now in her second year under house arrest in Myanmar, the award will be accepted by her family.

Amnesty International has considered her a prisoner of conscience since she was placed under house arrest by the ruling military authorities in 1989 -- she has been featured in a major campaign on human rights violations in Myanmar that started last November and her case is highlighted this year during the organization's 30th anniversary.

The following is a brief update on Aung San Suu Kyi's political activities and detention:

Aung San Suu Kyi is detained under the administrative detention provisions of the 1975 State Protection Law, which concerns supposed threats to state security. She has been held under house arrest for two years.

The party which she helped to create, the National League for Democracy (NLD), has reportedly been pressured by the military government into removing her from its leadership. In late March U Lwin and Aung Shwe replaced Aung San Suu Kyi and Tin U, who is serving a three year prison sentence, as General Secretary and Chairman of the NLD respectively.

In recent months Aung San Suu Kyi has been under constant pressure from the authorities to leave the country as a condition of her freedom. She has reportedly agreed to this, provided four conditions are met:

1. All political prisoners are released
2. Power is transferred from the military to the elected civilian government
3. She is allowed 50 minutes' air time on Burmese television and radio
4. She is allowed to walk to the airport

Aung San Suu Kyi returned to Burma in 1988 to look after her dying mother, and soon became involved in the democracy movement. She formed the NLD with retired General Tin U in September 1988; Aung San Suu Kyi once described her party's campaign as "no more violent than is necessary in banging the keys of a typewriter".

She is detained at her home in Yangon (Rangoon) in complete isolation from her family and the outside world. Recently General Saw Maung said that she would never lead Burma because she is married to a foreigner (Dr Michael Aris, a fellow of St. Anthony's College, Oxford University, in the United Kingdom). All family visits are denied, and her two sons have been stripped of their Burmese citizenship.

In August the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) amended the 1975 State Protection Law to extend the time people can be detained without trial from three years to five years. As Aung San Suu Kyi is held under the administrative detention provisions of this law, this means that she can now be detained for five years without trial.

In January Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the European Parliament's human rights award, the Sakharov Prize, and in November last year she was awarded the Rafto Human Rights Prize in Norway. On 6 September, United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar appealed to the SLORC for her release.

An honorary fellow of St Hugh's College, Oxford University, Aung San Suu Kyi is a doctoral candidate in Burmese literature at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Aung San Suu Kyi received a degree in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics from St Hugh's College, Oxford, and she and her family lived in Oxford from 1975 until 1988. She is the author of a biography of her father as well as a book entitled *Burma and India: Some Aspects of Intellectual Life Under Colonialism*.