

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
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Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is Amnesty International's "Ambassador of Conscience"

(Dublin) -- Amnesty International today announced that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is being awarded its most prestigious honour – the "Ambassador of Conscience" Award for 2009.

This year's award will be announced in Dublin by Amnesty International and the Irish rock band U2, previous recipients of the award and long-time supporters of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

"This month marks the twentieth anniversary of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's arrest and twenty years since Amnesty International declared her a prisoner of conscience. In those long and often dark years Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has remained a symbol of hope, courage and the undying defense of human rights, not only to the people of Myanmar but to people around the world," said Irene Khan, Amnesty International's Secretary General.

Vaclav Havel, who received the inaugural "Ambassador of Conscience Award" in 2003, joined in the congratulations:

"I know from my own experience that international attention can, to a certain extent, protect the unjustly persecuted from punishments that would otherwise be imposed. That is why, shortly after I was elected President, I nominated Mrs Suu Kyi for the Nobel Peace Prize, which she did subsequently receive. Goodness knows what would have happened if her fate had not been highlighted as it is again today. I welcome Amnesty's decision and am delighted at the solidarity, that U2 and all of you are showing towards this courageous woman – the Ambassador of Conscience of each one of us."

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the Myanmar opposition party the National League for Democracy, and has been detained for over 13 of the past 20 years, mostly under house arrest. Her house detention order was set to expire on 27 May 2009, but she was arrested and placed on trial on 18 May. Over 2,100 other people are currently imprisoned in Myanmar for their political beliefs and should be freed.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's trial for violating the terms and conditions of her house arrest resumed on 24 July. If convicted Daw Aung San Suu Kyi could face up to five years in jail.

Background

The Ambassador of Conscience Award, now in its sixth year, recognises exceptional leadership and witness in the fight to protect and promote human rights. Past winners of the award include Peter Gabriel, Nelson Mandela and Mary Robinson.

The Award -- inspired by a poem written for Amnesty International by Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney --

aims to promote the work of the organization by association with the life, work and example of its 'Ambassadors', who have done much to inspire the world through their work and personal example.

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Notes to editors

To request an interview with Amnesty International spokespeople please contact Tom Mackey on +44 207 413 5810

Images are available on request. For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566 or email: press@amnesty.org

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