

UN officials welcome release of Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi



Aung San Suu Kyi

13 November 2010 – **Secretary-General** Ban Ki-moon and the United Nations human rights chief welcomed the freeing on Saturday of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and urged the authorities in Myanmar to release all remaining political prisoners.

Ms. Suu Kyi, the head of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, had been under house arrest for much of the past two decades. Her release comes one week after the South-east Asian nation held its first elections in 20 years.

"Her dignity and courage in the face of injustice have been an inspiration to many people around the world, including the Secretary-General, who has long advocated her freedom," Mr. Ban's spokesperson said in a **statement**.

"The Secretary-General expects that no further restrictions will be placed on her, and he urges the Myanmar authorities to build on today's action by releasing all remaining political prisoners."

The statement also noted that it was "deeply regrettable" that Ms. Suu Kyi was effectively excluded from participating in the recent elections.

"Democracy and national reconciliation require that all citizens of Myanmar are free to participate as they wish in the political life of their country."

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay called Ms. Suu Kyi's release a "positive signal" that the Myanmar authorities are willing to move forward with the serious challenge of democratic transition.

"Clearly, Aung San Suu Kyi can make a major contribution to this process," Ms. Pillay stated, adding that she remained "extremely disappointed" that the pro-democracy leader was not released before the elections.

The High Commissioner urged the authorities to now release the other 2,200 political prisoners as "a clear sign that the new Government intends to respect human rights and forge a new future for the country."

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