

11 August 2009

World Writers' Association outraged by the sentencing of Aung San Suu Kyi, writer, Nobel Peace laureate and leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD).

International PEN is outraged by the 18 month sentence handed down to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the NLD, writer and Nobel Peace laureate, on 11 August 2009. She was returned to her home after the trial, and will serve the sentence under house arrest. Aung San Suu Kyi was taken from her home in Yangon, where she has spent much of the past nineteen years under house arrest, to the notorious Insein prison on 14 May 2009. She was charged under Section 22 of the State Protection Law for "subversion" for allegedly breaching the conditions of her house arrest.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of Burma's independence leader General Aung San, became leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD) in September 1988, and in 1991 led the NLD to a landslide election victory which has never been recognised by the military government. Aung San Suu Kyi has spent a large part of the past nineteen years in detention in Yangon, much of it in solitary confinement. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in October 1991. She is the author of many books, including *Freedom From Fear* (1991), *Letters from Burma* (1997), *The Voice of Hope* (1997).

'Fearlessness may be a gift but perhaps more precious is the courage acquired through endeavour, courage that comes from cultivating the habit of refusing to let fear dictate one's actions, courage that could be described as 'grace under pressure' - grace which is renewed repeatedly in the face of harsh, unremitting pressure.' Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, *Freedom From Fear*, 1990.

Aung San Suu Kyi has become an international symbol of courageous and peaceful resistance in the face of oppression. The Burmese authorities cannot justify her continued detention, and that of many other prisoners of conscience currently detained in Burma. International PEN calls upon writers worldwide to call for the release of all Burmese prisoners of conscience.

On behalf of the Board of International PEN

Jiří Gruša - International President

Eugene Schougin - International Secretary

Karin Clark – Writers in Prison Committee Chair

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Joanne Leedom-Ackerman

Mario Vargas Llosa

Per Wästberg

Send your appeals:

Demanding the immediate and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi, and of all those currently detained in Myanmar in violation of Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, protecting the right to freedom of expression.

Appeals to:

Senior General Than Shwe
Chairman, State Peace and Development Council
c/o Ministry of Defence, Naypyitaw, Union of Myanmar
Salutation: Dear General

Copies of appeal to the following:**Ye Gyaw Mra**

First Secretary
Embassy of the Union of Myanmar
85 Range Road, Suite 902 - 903
Sandringham Building ☐
Ottawa, ON K1N 8J6

U Than Swe

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary ☐
Permanent Representative of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations ☐
10 East 77th Street ☐New York, N.Y. 10075 ☐USA

Letters to the press:

PEN members are encouraged to write letters to their national newspapers expressing alarm at events in Burma, and highlighting Aung San Suu Kyi's case to illustrate the many years of repression in the country.