

**TAKE ACTION: Please cut and paste this letter onto your personal or institutional letterhead calling for the Government of Canada maintain an unequivocal, proactive position on the escalating crisis in Burma (Myanmar).**

September 27, 2007

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper  
Prime Minister of Canada  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, K1A 0A2  
Fax: 613-941-6900

Dear Prime Minister:

As a member of PEN Canada, the Canadian centre of the international writers' organization, I ask that the Government of Canada maintain an unequivocal, proactive position on the escalating crisis in Burma (Myanmar). We are pleased that Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier condemned the regime for assaults on freedom and democracy on September 25<sup>th</sup> and that Canada supports diplomatic intervention by China. But the situation is getting worse.

The concerns of PEN Canada are threefold:

**First, for the safety of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi as the government's response to the peaceful protests escalates.** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been under house arrest for 11 of the past 17 years. Her detention is an unconscionable violation of Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2000 Buddhist monks stood in front of her house chanting, "Long life and health for Aung San Suu Kyi. May she have freedom soon." On September 25<sup>th</sup>, there were unconfirmed reports (Reuters) that she had been removed from her home and taken to Insein, the country's worst prison.

*We call upon you, Mr. Harper, to strongly protest any further assault upon Aung San Suu Kyi and to demand that the State Peace and Development Council of Myanmar order her immediate and unconditional release.*

**Secondly, for the safety of two other Burmese writers who are also honorary members of PEN Canada:** the student activist **Ko Aung Tun**, sentenced for 13 years in 1998 for writing a book about the student movement and also detained at Insein Prison; and the journalist, writer and democracy activist **Win Tin**, at 77 serving consecutive sentences of twenty years for, among other things, "guiding and influencing Aung San Suu Kyi."

**Thirdly, PEN Canada alerts you to other freedom of expression concerns, which will almost certainly result in arrests and deaths being unreported if the regime continues its increasingly violent response to the peaceful protests:**

- The Burmese people are denied the fundamental human right of peaceful assembly
- More than 100 demonstrators, including prominent pro-democracy activists and monks, have been arrested, and there are now reports of at least nine deaths.
- The junta controls all media and information distribution facilities, and imposes prior censorship on all reporting.
- There are rolling blackouts of the Internet, especially news sites and blogs.
- Foreign journalists are not allowed into Burma at all.
- The phones of local journalists, politicians and activists are being cut.
- In August a ten-day embargo on news of the protests was imposed; news reports are allowed now only if they portray demonstrations as a threat to national security.
- Major Tint Swe, director of Press Scrutiny and Registration Division, summoned journalists and editors in Rangoon and warned them against joining the protests.

PEN Canada sees these violations to the freedom of expression and right to information of the Burmese people as extremely serious human rights violations. *We urge you Mr. Harper, on*

*behalf of the people of Canada, to speak out and to take action on behalf of the Burmese people.*

Sincerely,  
[your name and address here]

**COPIES TO:**

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**Please also send copies of your appeal to the following:**

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Sandringham Building  
Ottawa, ON K1N 8J6  
Fax: (613) 232 6f435  
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Permanent Representative of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations  
10 East 77<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York NUY 10021  
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