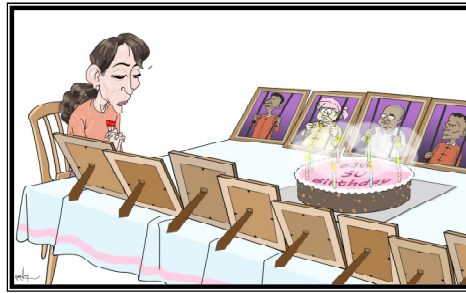


Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is celebrating her 66th birthday alone



Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the democratic opposition in Burma will celebrate her 66th birthday on June 19. We, the undersigned NGOs, are greatly delighted that, unlike in most of the past twenty years, Suu Kyi will celebrate this birthday freely, without being under house-arrest.

The fact that Aung San Suu Kyi has been freed from her house confinement does not, unfortunately, mean an improvement in the situation of democracy and human rights in Burma. She was released after having served the full term of her unjust punishment and was set free by the military rulers at the strategic moment when her release served to divert attention from last year's sham elections. These elections were condemned as not free, fair or inclusive by the majority of the international community including the European Union. The newly-established government has not brought any real change towards greater democracy so far. Indeed it has remained faithful to the authoritarian style of governance of the previous military junta. The Burmese army is still misused to oppress the ethnic population of the country and the police continue to persecute political opponents of the government.

We, the undersigned organizations, want to use the opportunity of Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday to draw the attention of both the public and politicians in our countries to the fact that despite the Burmese government's lip-service to democratic change in Burma, there are still more than 2000 political prisoners in Burma's jails. These people were sentenced and have been serving decades of imprisonment merely for expressing their opinions on Burma's political and economical situation. In a truly democratic country such expression belongs to the fundamental rights of every citizen.

We want to urge governments of the world and international institutions, especially the EU and UN, to exert maximum pressure on the new government of Burma to:

- 1. Release all political prisoners in Burma**
- 2. Cease hostilities against ethnic and democracy groups; and,**
- 3. Engage in inclusive dialogue with key stakeholders from democracy groups and ethnic nationalities.**

We would like to wish Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who we consider the true representative of the Burmese aspirations for freedom, happy birthday and assure her of our support for her struggle to achieve democracy in her country. We sincerely hope that next year Daw Aug San Suu Kyi shall not celebrate her birthday alone, but be joined by other fighters for freedom and democracy who have also been released from their unjust imprisonment.

Burma Center Prague, Czech Republic
Eastern Europe Studies Centre, Lithuania
FOND – the Romanian NGDO Platform, Romania
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Poland
Lech Walesa Institute, Poland
Open Estonia Foundation, Estonia
People in Need, Czech Republic
People in Peril, Slovakia
Polish Burma Solidarity, Poland
Romanian Center for European Policies, Romania