

MEDIA RELEASE

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Former political prisoners call for Aung San Suu Kyi's release

Kim Dae-jung: *"Aung San Suu Kyi's continued detention shames Asia."*

Anwar Ibrahim: *"ASEAN cannot continue its policy of non-intervention. It's time to work together for regional stability and prosperity."*

Shirin Ebadi: *"Aung San Suu Kyi is an inspiration to us all. We want to let her know that she is not alone during her trial and continuing detention."*

Shao Jiang: *"As a survivor of Tiananmen Square, I know the true value of democracy and freedom, and the need to release all political prisoners in Burma."*

Just a few days before Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday (on 19 June), over 100 former political prisoners from around the world have added their names to a statement calling for her release and for the United Nations Security Council to establish a global arms embargo on Burma/Myanmar.

Aung San Suu Kyi is currently being prosecuted by the authorities in Burma/Myanmar for violating the terms of her house arrest, after an American man swam across a lake to visit her house in early May. For this, she faces up to five years imprisonment.

The former political prisoners calling for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners in Burma come from over 20 countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe. They have all signed a special 64 word message to Aung San Suu Kyi to mark her 64th birthday (her 14th in detention). The former prisoners also call on the UNSC to step up the pressure on the government of Burma/Myanmar:

"The continued denial of your freedom unacceptably attacks the human rights of all 2,156 political prisoners in Myanmar. As those also incarcerated for our political beliefs, we share the world's outrage. We call on the United Nations Security Council to press the Myanmar Government to immediately release all political prisoners, and to restrict the weapons that strengthen its hand through a global arms embargo."

Several of the signatories are themselves under house arrest in China, including Yuan Weijing and Zeng Jinyan. Others who have added their names include Anwar Ibrahim, former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia; Ingrid Betancourt, former senator and Nobel Peace Prize nominee kidnapped by the Colombian FARDC; Dr Kim Dae-jung, former president of the Republic of Korea and Nobel Peace Prize laureate; Lech Walesa, former

president of Poland and Nobel Peace Prize laureate; the Nelson Mandela Foundation; Shirin Ebadi, lawyer and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate; Shao Jiang, a Tiananmen survivor; Terry Waite, the British humanitarian and author; Vaclav Havel, writer and former President of the Czech Republic; and Yuri Feodorovich Orlov, nuclear physicist and former Soviet dissident.

Former Korean president Kim Dae-jung said: *“Aung San Suu Kyi’s continued detention shames Asia. Burma’s authoritarian rulers have suppressed the people for too long. Political reform and the peaceful transition to democracy in Burma must be seen as a priority by the international community and the region.”*

Former Malaysian deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim said: *“ASEAN’s policy of non intervention is not helping to serve regional interests. We need to work together in ASEAN for regional stability and prosperity. Political progress in Burma is an integral part of this, including the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners.”*

Iranian human rights campaigner and Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi said: *“Aung San Suu Kyi is an inspiration to us all. As former political prisoners, we want to let her know that she is not alone during her trial and continuing detention. She has a network of friends and supporters around the world.”*

Tiananmen Square survivor, Shao Jiang: *“As a survivor of Tiananmen Square, I know the true value of democracy and freedom. The international community, including the United Nations Security Council, needs to take strong action to ensure the immediate release of all political prisoners in Burma. Citizens around the world, let’s unite and bring down the dictators!”*

Political prisoners have signed the statement as part of the www.64forSuu.org campaign, which is supported by

Altsean-Burma
Amnesty International
Article 19
Austrian Burma Center
Avaaz
Burma Action Ireland
Burma Campaign Australia
Burma Campaign UK
Burma Info Japan
Christian Solidarity Worldwide
English Pen
Free Burma Campaign (South Africa)
Human Rights Watch

Info Birmanie (France)
International Peace Bureau
Not On Our Watch
Norwegian Burma Committee
Open Society Institute
Trade Union Congress
People in Need (Czech Republic)
People in Peril (Slovakia)
US Campaign for Burma

ENDS

Editors notes:

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Full list of signatories:

Cambodia

1. **Cheam Channy**, opposition parliamentarian; imprisoned in 2005 by a military court for his political views (released by a Royal Pardon in February 2006).
2. **Kem Sokha**, former head of the Cambodian Center for Human Rights; detained on charges of criminal defamation over a banner used at an International Human Rights Day rally in 2005.

China

3. **Gao Yu**, Chinese journalist; winner of Laureate of the UNESCO / Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize 1997; former deputy chief editor of Economics Weekly. She has been labelled an “enemy of the people” and imprisoned multiple times for publishing controversial articles.
4. **Rebiya Kadeer**, Uighur democracy leader; sentenced by the Chinese government to eight years’ imprisonment in 2000 on charges relating to endangering national security; she is now living in exile in the USA.
5. **Shao Jiang** - Tiananmen survivor and one of the organisers of the 1989 pro-democracy protests; imprisoned for 18 months after the crackdown and suffered ongoing persecution; he fled to the UK in 1997.
6. **Tsering Woesser**, Tibetan poet and essayist born in Lhasa; persecuted by the authorities for her writing; put under house arrest with her husband during the 2008 unrest in Tibet.
7. **Yuan Weijing**, activist currently under residential surveillance/ house arrest; wife of imprisoned activist Chen Guangcheng. She became the victim of retaliation by local

authorities after helping her husband to reveal the use of violence in the local birth control campaign and publicly opposing the illegal imprisonment of her husband.

8. **Zeng Jinyan**, Chinese blogger and human rights activist; currently under house arrest with her one-and-a-half year baby girl; wife of imprisoned AIDS and environmental activist Hu Jia; one of TIME Magazine's 100 People Who Shape Our World 2007.
9. **Zhang Zhuhua**, political critic of China; currently under surveillance / house arrest after launching Charter 08, a public statement calling for political and legal reform.

Colombia / France

10. **Ingrid Betancourt**, former senator; Nobel Peace Prize nominee; kidnapped by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia in 2002 and held for over six years.

Cuba

11. **José Gabriel Ramón Castillo**, sentenced to 20 years in prison in 2003; now living in exile.
12. **Alejandro González Raga**, sentenced to 14 years in prison in 2003; now living in exile.
13. **Pedro Fuentes-Cid, Esq.**, served 16 years in Castro's prisons; co-founder of the Ex-Club and Consejo Presidio Politico Cubano.

Czech Republic

14. **Vaclav Havel**, writer and former President of the Czech Republic.

Ethiopia

15. **Daniel Bekele**, imprisoned in November 2005, following demonstrations against disputed election results for provoking "outrages against the Constitution"; sentenced to 30 months' imprisonment. After signing a letter "acknowledging mistakes" committed in relation to the elections, he received a presidential pardon in March 2008 and is currently studying at St. Hugh's college, Oxford.
16. **Netsanet Demissie**, also imprisoned in 2005 following demonstrations against disputed election results for provoking "outrages against the Constitution".

India

17. **Dr Binayak Sen**, pioneer of health care to marginalized and indigenous communities in Chhattisgarh (where there is an active Maoist insurgency); was imprisoned for 2 years.

Indonesia

18. **Dita Indah Sari**, Indonesian trade union and social activist; was imprisoned for sedition in 1996 on charges of sedition under Suharto. In 2002 she refused a \$50000 human rights award from Reebok in protest against the company's poor record on workers' rights.
19. **Ignatius Mahendra**, sentenced in 2003 to 3 years' imprisonment for insulting the President and Vice President in Indonesia.

Iran

20. **Emadeddin Baghi**, journalist; faces further court cases in relation to his human rights work; 2009 recipient of the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders.
21. **Shirin Ebadi**, lawyer; human rights activist; Nobel Peace Prize laureate 2003.

Malaysia

22. **Anwar Ibrahim** (official title: Dato' Seri Anwar), former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia; current de facto leader of Keadilan, the People's Justice Party. Following mass protests calling for political reform in 1997, he was sentenced to six years in prison for corruption and to another nine years for sodomy in 2009. He reportedly endured six years in solitary confinement. In 2004 his conviction was reversed and he was released. In July 2008, the government brought new charges against him, the trial date has been set for 1 July 2009.
23. **Dr Chandra Muzaffar**, President, International Movement for a Just World (JUST)
24. **Irene Fernandez**, director and founder of Tenaganita, a migrants rights organisation in Malaysia; arrested in 1996 and charged with 'maliciously publishing false news' following the reports of ill-treatment of undocumented migrant workers in detention centres. She underwent the longest running trial in Malaysia's legal history and was imprisoned for several years before being released on bail and finally acquitted in November 2008.
25. **Lim Kit Siang**, has been detained numerous times under the Internal Security Act.
26. **M Manoharan**, former HINDRAF detainee from December 2007-April 2009
27. **Dr. Mohd Nasir Hashim**, Malaysia, member of the State Assembly
28. **Teresa Kok**, Secretary, AIPMC (The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus); Malaysian opposition leader and Member of the Parliament since 1999, arrested under Malaysia's Internal Security Act in September 2008, on the grounds of being a threat to security. She was later released without being charged.
29. **Uthayakumar**, lawyer, Hindu Rights Action Force (HINDRAF)

Mongolia

30. **G. Jamyan**, journalist
31. **L. Sanjaasuren**, lawyer

32. General Baatar, former head of Mongolia's Central Intelligence Agency

Morocco

33. Ali Lmrabet, journalist; sentenced by a court in 2003 to four years' imprisonment on charges of insulting King Mohamed VI, "undermining the monarchy" and "threatening the integrity of the national territory".

Philippines

- 34. Aida Santos**, poet, detained 1976-77, Chairperson of Women's Education, Development, Productivity and Research Organization.
- 35. Alex Arellano**, detained from 1974-78; former Amnesty International case
- 36. Dr Aurora Corazon Parong**, current AI Philippines Section Director; detained for 18 months in 1982; former Executive Director of Task force Detainees of the Philippines.
- 37. Esperanza Santos &**
- 38. Luzviminda Santos**, sisters, both detained in 1987, both lead the Philippine Global Exchange.
- 39. George Parong**, detained in the early 70s
- 40. Jun Paas**, detained from 1989-1994; one of the last political prisoners in Camp Crame (national headquarters of the Philippine National Police)
- 41. Loretta 'Etta' Ann Rosales**, detained in 1972 and 1976, former Member of the Philippine House of Representatives.
- 42. Max De Mesa**, detained in 1972 and 1971, current Chairperson and spokesperson of the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Activists.
- 43. Dr Nymia Simbulan**, detained 1973-74; Executive Director of the Philippine Human Rights Information Center.
- 44. Pepito Frias**, detained 1972, 1973-74 and 1976; works for the Philippine Human Rights Information Center.
- 45. Ramon Perdon**, detained 1998-2000, currently Amnesty International IT consultant.
- 46. Rep. Satur Ocampo**, Congressman; political prisoner under the Marcos dictatorship
- 47. Sixto Carlos Jr**, detained from 1979 – 1983; currently heads the International Committee of the AKBAYAN Citizens' Action Partylist.

Poland

48. Lach Walesa, former president of Poland (1990 to 1995) and Nobel Peace Prize laureate 1983; arrested and detained in 1981 for 11 months following trade union activism.

Russia

49. **Ludmilla Alexeeva**, author; former Soviet dissident; Chair of the Moscow Helsinki Group and the doyenne of Russia's human rights community.
50. **Yuri Feodorovich Orlov**, nuclear physicist; former Soviet dissident; arrested in 1977 and detained in the Siberian Gulag for almost ten years; freed in 1986 and deported to the U.S., now a Professor of Physics and Government at Cornell University.

Singapore

51. **Dr. Chee Soon Juan**, the Secretary-General of the Singapore Democratic Party has been imprisoned in 1999, 2002 and in 2006. He has also been bankrupted for voicing his opinion. Although released, as a bankrupt, he has been barred from seeking parliamentary seats or leaving the country without permission.

South Africa

52. **Nelson Mandela Foundation**, through the Centre of Memory and Dialogue, the Nelson Mandela Foundation contributes to the making of a just society by promoting the values, vision and work of Nelson Mandela.

South Korea

53. **Bang Yang-Kyun**, imprisoned for 7 years in 1990 on charges relating to endangering national security; former secretary of an opposition MP.
54. **Cho Kuk**, imprisoned in 1994 under the National Security Law as a Professor at Seoul National University.
55. **Han Seung Hun**, human rights lawyer.
56. **Hwang Sok-Yong**, writer; sentenced to 8 years imprisonment in 1994 under the National Security Law.
57. **Kang Young Ju**, sentenced to life imprisonment under the National Security Law as a medical school student; released under amnesty after 14 years.
58. **Dr Kim Dae-jung**, former president of the Republic of Korea and 2000 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate.
59. **Kim Hak-Min**, imprisoned in 1974 under the National Security Law.
60. **Kim Seong Man**, sentenced to death as a university student in 1986 under the National Security Law, reduced to life imprisonment, was given amnesty after 13 years.
61. **Kwon Young Ghil**, Labour Party MP.
62. **Lee Si Woo**, photographer and anti-mining activist; imprisoned on charges under National Security Law in 2006; released in 2007.
63. **MINKAHYUP HR Group**, organisation for families of prisoners of conscience.
64. **Park Lae Goon**, imprisoned following a peaceful demonstration for farmers against eviction.

65. **Park No Hae**, poet; arrested in 1991, tortured for 24 days, and sentenced to death under the National Security Law. His sentence was reduced to life imprisonment, received amnesty after 8 years.
66. **Yoo Ihntae**, former student activist; sentenced to death under the National Security Law; imprisoned for 4 years.

Sri Lanka

67. **Prins Gunasekara**, human rights lawyer and journalist; persecuted by authorities for appealing the arbitrary detention of young Leftist members of the JVP (Janata Vimukhti Peramuna).

Taiwan

68. **Aang Bun-kheng**, sentenced to life, serving 16+ years.
69. **C.M. Kao**, Reverend and former general secretary of the Presbyterian Church.
70. **Chang Chang-mei**, served 12 years.
71. **Chang Tse-chou**, served 12 years, professor of National Taiwan University, director of the Panchiao Community University.
72. **Chen Chin**, served 5 years.
73. **Chen Chu**, elected Mayor of Kaohsiung City in 2008.
74. **Chen Chung-shin**, former congressman.
75. **Chen Meng-huo**, served 15 years, painter and photographer.
76. **Chen Ying-tai**, served 12 years.
77. **Hsieh Tsung-min**, former congressman, 2 terms in jail, served 11.5 years.
78. **Hsu Ching-fu**, served 2 terms, 12 years in total.
79. **Hsu Tien-hsien**, Reverend of the Presbyterian Church, arrested from the pulpit during the Christmas service in 1979.
80. **Hsu Tsao-te**, 2 terms in jail, served 12 years in total.
81. **Huang Hua**, 4 terms in jail, served 23 years in total, former councilor to the President.
82. **Hung We-Huo**, sentenced to life, serving 13+ years.
83. **Kao Chin-lang**, served 15 years, navy crew journalist.
84. **Kueh Chin-suun**, sentenced to life, served 22+ years.
85. **Lin Chih-chieh**, served 10 years, professor of literature.
86. **Lin Shu-chih**, served 2 terms, 11 year in total.
87. **Lin Yi-hsiung**, human rights lawyer and former chairman of Democratic Progressive Party.
88. **Lu Hsiu-lien**, women's rights activist, former Vice President of R.O.C.
89. **Mao Fu-cheng**, navy crew, served 5 years.
90. **Nguo Chiong-leng**, served 10 years, high school teacher.
91. **Peng Ming-min**, professor of international law at National Taiwan University, former presidential candidate of R.O.C.
92. **Su You-peng**, served 10 years, medical doctor.

93. **Tai Chen-yao**, former congressman and vice chairman of the Council of Agriculture.
94. **Thuo Ping-lang**, served 10 years, painter.
95. **Tien Ching-you**, army officer, served 11 years.
96. **Tsai Kuan-yu**, served 13 years.
97. **Tsai Kun-lin**, served 10 years, publisher.
98. **Wang Dan**, student leader of the Tiananmen demonstration in 1989, served 2 terms afterwards, will teach in NCCU Taiwan from August 2009.
99. **Wang Tuoh**, novelist and former congressman.
100. **Yang Ching-chu**, novelist and the first chairman of Taiwanese Pen Association.
101. **Yao Chia-wen**, human rights lawyer and former president of the Examination Yuan of R.O.C.

United Kingdom

102. **Terry Waite**, humanitarian, author; held captive for four years from 1987 by the Islamic Jihad Organization in Lebanon following his efforts to secure the release of hostages in Lebanon.

Uzbekistan

103. **Mutabar Tajibaeva**, winner of the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders 2008 and the 2008 US State Department's Award for International Women of Courage.
104. **Tamara Chikunova**, leader of the 'Mothers Against Death Penalty and Torture'; winner of the 'Golden Doves for Peace 2004' award; 'Nurnberg' 2005; 'La Donna ell'Anno' 2004.
105. **Umida Niyazova**, leader of the Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights; winner of the Human Rights Watch Human Rights Defender Award 2008

Vietnam

106. **Professor Doan Viet Hoat**, writer, academic; has spent 20 years in jail - 12 years without charge or trial and eight years for "counter-revolutionary" activities. Released in September 1998 under a presidential amnesty; lives in exile in the USA.
107. **Dr Nguyen Dan Que**, imprisoned three times for a total of 20 years for his non-violent struggle for human rights and democracy; last released from prison in January 2005.