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European MPs Reject Sham Elections and Pledge Support for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

The European Parliamentary Caucus on Burma has written an open letter to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, detained leader of Burma's democracy movement, on the occasion of her 65th birthday. The European Parliamentary Caucus on Burma represents MPs from sixteen countries.

The MPs pledged to continue to work for genuine democracy and human rights in Burma, rejecting sham elections due later this year. The MPs are calling on the European governments and European Union to reject the elections and instead focus on pressuring the dictatorship to enter into dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi and genuine ethnic representatives.

"The elections planned for Burma will not be free, and the Parliament will not be free. The whole process is designed to keep the political and business elite in control so that they can continue to steal the countries resources," said Raul Romeva MEP.

The MPs also pledged to continue to work for the release of all political prisoners including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and for a global arms embargo against Burma.

"The fact that twelve of our fellow MPs remain jailed in Burma, along with almost 2,200 other political prisoners, shows that Burma's generals are not interested in change. European MPs are not fooled by the lies of the dictatorship. Their actions show the truth of their intentions," said Silver Meiker MP from Estonia.

Full text of the letter follows:

We, members of European Parliamentary Caucus on Burma, are writing to you to express our congratulations and great respect for you on your 65th birthday.

We cannot congratulate to you personally because you are celebrating your birthday under house arrest. We admire your strength and the stand you have taken against the military regime. You give hope and inspiration to millions of Burmese citizens, and also you are a great idol for millions of your supporters around the world.

EPCB'S SECRETARIAT
www.EPCB.eu

PEOPLE IN NEED
Sokolska 18, 120 00 Prague 2, Czech Republic
Phone: +420 226 200 455, Fax: +420 226 200 401
barma@peopleinneed.cz, www.peopleinneed.cz

BURMA CAMPAIGN UK
28 Charles Square, London N1 6HT, United Kingdom
Phone: +44 20 7324 4710, Fax: +44 20 7324 4717
info@burmacampaign.org.uk, www.burmacampaign.org.uk

In 1990 the last democratic elections were held in Burma in which your party – National League for Democracy – won a landslide victory. However the results of these elections were never recognized by the governing junta, the elected parliament never held a session and most of the winning party members and even elected MPs have been persecuted since that time and many of them even imprisoned.

We, the members of the European Parliamentary Caucus on Burma, do not believe this year's elections will be genuinely democratic. The new constitution released by the junta in 2008 and new election laws released in March 2010 show the intention of the dictatorship is not reform and democracy, but rather to use every tool at their disposal to maintain their political and economic control over Burma, while trying to fool the international community into thinking change has happened, or that change is on the way.

We recall that constitutional change in 1974 did not bring change, and that elections in 1990 did not bring change. We do not believe that the elections due in 2010, and the new constitution that comes into force after those elections, will bring genuine change either.

The acts of the junta on the ground, the banning of your political party, the National League for Democracy, the continued imprisonment of almost 2,200 political prisoners, the ongoing attacks against ethnic minorities which have been described as war crimes and crimes against humanity, increasing media censorship, continued restrictions on humanitarian aid, are all evidence that the true intentions of the dictatorship are not change and democratisation.

We will not falter or be fooled by the deceit of the dictatorship.

You have repeatedly stated that the way forward is dialogue, and the United Nations Security Council, General Assembly, Human Rights Council and the Secretary General himself have all agreed that this is what is needed. We pledge to continue to work toward this goal, and not be fooled by decoys and lies the dictatorship use to diverted attention from this goal.

On the occasion of your 65th birthday we pledge our continued support for your struggle for democracy and human rights in Burma.

About EPCB: *The European Parliamentary Caucus on Burma was founded in June 2008 to raise awareness on Burma in Europe and promote human rights and democracy in Burma. It represents 16 European countries with more than 160 MPs.*

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For more information contact:

UK: Zoya Phan at +44 (0) 773 863 0139, zoya.phan@burmacampaign.org.uk

CR: Kristina Prunerova at +420 226 200 455, kristina.prunerova@peopleinneed.cz