



# Burma Centre Delhi (BCD)

*To Restore Peace, Justice, Democracy & Human Rights in Burma*

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To

2 October 2010

**Smt. Sonia Gandhi**

President

All India Congress Committee (AICC)

24 Akbar Road, New Delhi

**Subject: Appeal for your kind support to bring about genuine democratic change in Burma**

*Respected Madam,*

On this auspicious day, which marks the 141<sup>st</sup> birthday of Mahatma Gandhi and also recognized as International Non-Violence Day, we, Burma Centre Delhi (BCD) together with other Burmese organizations in India would like to seek your kind attention on the struggle for restoration of peace, human rights and democracy in Burma by non-violence means.

It is unfortunate that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, a living symbol of Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha and Nobel Peace Laureate and recipient of Jawaharlal Nehru's Award for International Understanding, has been under house arrest for 15 of the past 20 years and is being barred from participating in this year's elections.

Today, we are honored to quote Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's speech that clearly reflects her deep commitment to Gandhi's non-violence method – **“if we consider a country like India which was very much influenced by Gandhiji's non-violence philosophy you can see how clear the military has kept away from politics. India has had many political upheavals and it has faced many problems and it probably will have many problems to face in the future. But I think the seed of non-violence that was planted before independence has helped them a great deal in resolving the problems in a democratic way as is possible under the circumstances. So we want to keep to the non-violent approach”**.



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The upcoming election in Burma on 7 November 2010, which was proposed by the military regime as an attempt to entrench and legitimize military rule, is being condemned by people around the world. The elections will enact the 2008 Constitution, which not only contains many undemocratic measures including giving the military effective veto power over decisions made by the new parliament and government, but also depriving people of their basic human rights by stipulating “exception clauses,” and preserving draconian laws that explicitly prohibit freedom of speech, association, and assembly. Thus, this constitution is designed to keep the dictatorship in power and will not bring any new freedom to the people of Burma.

Furthermore, the election cannot be free or fair under the present situation. Democracy activists in Burma have been imprisoned, intimidated, tortured and put to death for demanding justice, peace, human rights and a democratic government. Presently, there are nearly 2,200 political prisoners in Burma. According to NGO reports, in the last 14 years, the Burmese army has destroyed 3,500 villages in eastern Burma alone.

Burmese democratic organizations and activists have continuously called on the military regime to meet three benchmarks to bring about peace and stability in Burma:

1. All political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Khun Htun Oo and Min Ko Naing, must be released before the elections.
2. Inclusive dialogue with key stakeholders from democracy groups and ethnic nationalities, including a comprehensive review of the 2008 Constitution must be convened.
3. Systematic human rights abuses and criminal hostilities against ethnic groups, political activists, journalists and civil society must be stopped.

Though we were deeply upset with the Government of India for accepting Senior General Than Shwe as a state guest during his recent visit, our hope and expectation is that India will live up to its position as the world’s largest democracy and a country that has continually believed in the virtue of ethics, democracy, equality and human rights.



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We believe that India can play a crucial role in the process of national reconciliation and restoration of democracy in Burma. We therefore strongly recommend the Government of India not to endorse Burma's military regime's sham constitution and elections, as it will only lead to entrenchment of military rule in the country.

We earnestly urge the Government of India and All India Congress Committee (AICC) to join with the UN and the international community in taking concrete action to secure the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and ensure genuine democratic change in Burma.

We reaffirm our appreciation to the Government of India, especially to the late Prime Minister Shri. Rajiv Gandhi, and the people of India who stand with the Burmese people in their struggle for peace, justice, human rights and democracy in Burma.

Sincerely,

Burma Centre Delhi (BCD)

(On behalf of all Burmese democratic organizations in India)

Copy to-

Shri Rahul Gandhi – General Secretary, All India Congress Committee (AICC)



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## **ENDORSED BY:**

1. All Burma Democratic Lusei Women Organization
2. All Burma Student Democratic Front – WR (ABSDF-India)
3. All Burma Monks' Representative Committee (ABMRC)
4. All Kachin Students and Youth Union (AKSYU)
5. Arakan League for Democracy – Exile (ALD- India)
6. Arakan Liberation Party (ALP)
7. Bether Assembly of God
8. Burma Information & Technology (BIT)
9. Burmese Christian Association (BCA)
10. Burmese Community Resource Center (BCRC)
11. Burmese Women Union (BWU)
12. Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO)
13. Chin Literature and Culture Committee (CLCC)
14. Chin National League for Democracy -India (CNLD-India)
15. Chin Refugee Committee (CRC)
16. Chin Student & Youth Federation (CSYF)
17. Chin Student Union (CSU)
18. Cho Ethnic Association (CEA)
19. Delhi Chin Community Fellowship
20. Delhi Hakha Community
21. Delhi Zomi Church
22. Federation of Trade Union of Burma- India (FTUB-India)
23. Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB-India)
24. Kachin National Organization- Delhi (KNO-Delhi)
25. Kachin Women Organization, Delhi
26. Mara People's Party (MPP/LA)



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27. Matu Youth Organization (MYO)
28. Naga National League for Democracy (NNLD)
29. Naga Youth Organization of Burma (NYOB)
30. National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma- India (NCGUB-India)
31. National Council of the Union of Burma – India (NCUB-India)
32. National League for Democracy Liberated Area (NLD/LA)
33. Shwe Gas Campaign – India (SGCI)
34. United Nationalities League for Democracy (UNLD/LA)
35. Women League of Burma – India (WLB- India)
36. Women Rights and Welfare Association of Burma (WRWAB)
37. Zanniat Christian Fellowship
38. Zanniat Youth Organization
39. Zomi Christian Fellowship
40. Zomi community Committee (ZCC)
41. Zomi Information Centre (ZIC)
42. Zomi National Congress Party, Delhi branch (ZNC)
43. Zomi Student and Youth Organisation
44. Zomi Women Union

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New Delhi

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