

Statement issued on the 21st anniversary of the 8-8-88 Democracy Movement

August 8, 2009

Today is the 21st anniversary of the historic 8-8-88 [August 8, 1988] Democracy Movement in Burma—a date that marked the personal sacrifice of the clergy, public, and students in their nonviolent struggle to end the rule of single-party tyranny and to secure Democracy and human rights. The military regime [of the country], however, resorted to the use of force to suppress the movement and reestablished its rule.

The emergence of additional political parties [in Burma], including the National League for Democracy; the outcome of the 1990 election and the victory of these [new] political parties; [the birth of] the committee representing Pyi-thu Hluttaw (National Congress)—we owe these developments to the historic 8-8-88 Democracy Movement. However, the military regime has not only invalidated the results of the 1990 election but, for the past 21 years, worked to diminish the legacy of the 8-8-88 movement in every possible way. The ruling regime's atrocity and depravity reached new heights when it imprisoned and killed Buddhist monks following the September 2007 Saffron Revolution and caused the death of hundreds of thousands of people in the [aftermath of] Cyclone Nargis in May 2008.

[We must] challenge the constitution drafted [by the military regime of Burma] without our [the Burmese citizens'] consent or participation and unequivocally oppose the 2010 election aimed at legitimizing this constitution. Under the judicial system of the very same regime with a disregard for justice, student leader Min Ko Naing, tribal leader U Khun Tun Oo, and other political activists have endured long prison sentences. Presently, the regime is attempting to send Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to prison.

Because of the military regime's brutality, the U.S. Government saw fit to extend the economic and political sanctions imposed on the country under the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 for three more years. The United Nations' (UN) efforts to initiate national reconciliation [between the current regime and its opposition] have failed. In addition, the UN has produced no tangible resolutions concerning Burma.

The UN and the international community must strive to bring true democracy to the Burmese public. Therefore, we, the Democratic Alliance, strongly urge that:

1. The UN Security Council swiftly delivers binding resolutions to include arms embargo in addition to economic sanction in its disciplinary measures against the military regime that has violated human rights and both domestic and international laws.
2. The U.S. administration wholeheartedly protects and aids Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other activists who have been elected to represent the Burmese public, and systematically blocks the flow of funds to and from the military regime.
3. National leaders, elected members of the parliament, 8-8-88-generation student leaders, and political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who have been imprisoned for their political beliefs, be released unconditionally.

The Democratic Alliance pledges to realize the goals of the 8-8-88 activists as it continues its collective activism to secure Democracy and human rights for the Burmese people.

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[Translated from Burmese by Kenneth Wong]