



DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI (BORN 1945)

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been a major voice for human rights and freedom in Burma (Myanmar), a country dominated by a military government since 1962. Born in Rangoon and studying at Oxford University, she became politically active in 1988 when the Burmese junta violently suppressed a mass uprising, killing thousands of civilians. Suu Kyi wrote an open letter to the government asking for the formation of an independent committee to hold democratic elections. Defying a government ban on political gatherings of more than four persons, Suu Kyi spoke to large audiences throughout Burma as Secretary-General of the newly formed National League for Democracy (NLD). In 1989 she was placed under house arrest. Despite her detention, the NLD won the election with 82 percent of the parliamentary seats, but the military dictatorship refused to recognize the results. Suu Kyi has remained in prison almost continuously since that time, rejecting the government's offer of freedom as it would require her to leave Burma. In 2003, she was moved from prison and again placed under house arrest, which has been repeatedly and illegally extended by the junta. She remains a living expression of her people's determination to gain political and economic freedoms. Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991, Suu Kyi has called on citizens around the world to "use your liberty to promote ours."



"I think by now I have made it fairly clear that I am not very happy with the word 'hope.' I don't believe in people just hoping. We work for what we want."

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