



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NDI CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF AUNG SAN SUU KYI *Chairman Madeleine K. Albright Says International Community Should Take Action to Condemn Burmese Junta*

WASHINGTON – The National Democratic Institute (NDI) today condemned the decision by Burma’s military junta to imprison Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and called for her immediate release.

“This action must not go unanswered by the international community,” said Madeleine K. Albright, chairman of The National Democratic Institute. “The leadership of Burma had an opportunity to show the world that it was ready to move in a different direction. Instead, Burma’s leaders have taken a tragic step backward.

“This action is an affront to the Burmese people and the international community, which should take the economic and diplomatic measures that send a message in the strongest possible terms that this repression must end,” she said.

Daw Suu Kyi, the leader of Burma’s democratic opposition, the National League for Democracy, was sent to Rangoon’s notorious Insein Prison and faces trial May 18 on charges she violated the terms of her house arrest. She has been in custody for 13 of the last 19 years; her current sentence was to expire on May 27.

“These charges, and the Burmese military junta’s continued incarceration of approximately 2,100 political prisoners, are a blatant attempt to silence the people of Burma,” Dr. Albright said.

The charges arose from a reported “intruder’s” penetration of her compound, which is heavily guarded by armed military personnel. If convicted, she faces up to five additional years of imprisonment. The intruder slipped past security by swimming across a nearby lake and stayed inside the compound overnight despite requests for him to leave immediately. The military regime is claiming the incident is a violation of the house arrest conditions, which prohibit Daw Suu Kyi from having visitors in her home.

Aung San Suu Kyi received NDI’s W. Averell Harriman Democracy Award in 1996.

The National Democratic Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide by promoting citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. More information is available at www.ndi.org.