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ARTICLE 19

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Burma: UN Opines Detention of Aung San Suu Kyi Illegal

ARTICLE 19 today welcomes the opinion of the expert body of the UN announcing the irrefutable illegality of imprisoning democratically-elected Aung San Suu Kyi, and calling on the Burmese military regime to release her.

The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) has issued an opinion that the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi is illegal under international law. Crucially the WGAD has also rejected the regime's domestic justification by stating that the detention is even illegal under Burma's own repressive legislation.

"Let the words of the decision be spread loud and clear, particularly in China, India and within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean)" said Dr Agnes Callamard, ARTICLE 19 Executive Director. *"It is more than time that they end their protection of the Burmese authorities' illegal practices."*

Aung San Suu Kyi was elected prime minister in 1990 but was arrested immediately by the military for representing a threat to the *"security of the State or public peace and tranquillity"*. She has spent 13 of the past 19 years living in detention without access to the outside world.

Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

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- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.