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*To friends and supporters of Mae Tao Clinic and to supporters of human rights,  
democracy and peace throughout the world,*

I am writing to call on the international community and organizations to stand by the people of Burma, by condemning the recent arrest and trial of Aung San Suu Kyi, yet another example of the regimes utter disrespect for human rights and democracy.

The accusations against Aung San Suu Kyi are ugly and damaging not only to the people of Burma but to the reputation of governance in Asia. At the same time the reaction of the international community to the regime, is of utmost importance to the 50 million people of Burma whose lives are constantly in the throes of uncertainty, trauma and confusion. It is the responsibility of all individuals, organizations and governments to protect those who are only abused by their leaders.

The Burmese regime has made some effort to present a positive face to the international community by establishing elections in 2010. Yet, in preparing for these sham elections, they have increased their oppression of their people, and the arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi is another example of how they will stop at nothing to ensure that the elections have only one outcome, that is the election of the current regime.

We need to join our voices with the brave people who continue to risk their lives for the sake of freedom, those such as Min Ko Naing and U Win Tin. We need to demand the release of all political prisoners and for free and fair participation in developing and holding election processes.

The violence in the border areas of Burma continues, as the regime tries to coerce the ethnic ceasefire groups into policing the border areas. This is resulting in instability, and increased fighting causing more people spilling into neighbouring countries. The continued oppression of the ethnic groups within Burma guarantees that any election will be unjust and biased as large sections of society will be unable to participate.

Aung San Suu Kyi has said that it is never too late and therefore it is never too late for Burma to have a chance for true reconciliation and for all parties, including the National League For Democracy and the ethnic groups to join together.

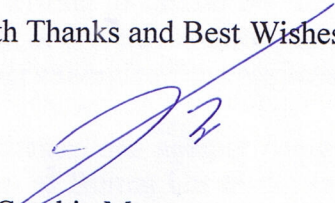
Some of the international community has been calling for engagement with the regime, but those who choose to engage with the regime must be clear about who they stand for and engage only in a way that is with and for the people of Burma. There

must be a thorough collaboration with all sectors of society including those at the grassroots level.

For the sake of the future of Burma and therefore for the sake of the future of Asia it is imperative that the current oppression of the citizens of Burma stops. The environmental destruction, deprivation, lack of the most basic health and education services are a humanitarian crisis. Displacement, loss of identity and lack of citizenship are creating a crisis for the next generation of Burmese. The damage to the future is already evident.

I am writing to ask that, we as human rights defenders, show our support and solidarity with the courageous people of Burma who continue to speak out against the atrocities and crimes of a government. It is our job to prevent these and to promote peace, human rights and democracy.

With Thanks and Best Wishes



Dr Cynthia Maung  
*Director, Mae Tao Clinic*