



**ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MYANMAR CAUCUS**

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The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC) is outraged by the election laws recently announced by the military government of Myanmar. Repeated calls for assurances that the upcoming elections will be free and inclusive have gone unheeded as the new laws make clear the regime's absolute lack of commitment to democratic principles to ensure free, fair and inclusive elections.

Under the new election laws all political prisoners, including Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, are excluded from forming or participating in political parties and from contesting seats in the national and state assemblies. Certain provisions of the new laws appear to specifically target Aung San Suu Kyi, forcing her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD) which overwhelmingly won in the previous 1990 elections, to expel her should it wish to register with the new Election Commission and contest the upcoming elections.

By virtue of registering, the NLD and all other political parties agree to uphold the country's Constitution, a document enacted in 2008 that is fundamentally flawed and does not comply with principles of representative democracy.

Given these grave shortcomings, the election results cannot be accepted as anything other than a formal entrenchment of the military's iron grip on power in the country.

AIPMC is appalled at the regime's blatant disregard for the principles of genuine multi-party democracy, principles that it claims in these very same laws that are so inimical to the development of a flourishing democracy.

AIPMC calls on ASEAN and its member states to immediately take decisive actions with regard to Myanmar, in line with the approach of other concerned countries, such as strict and targeted economic sanctions against Myanmar, thus cutting off the financial lifelines of the brutal and self-serving despots who have so far driven its citizens into terminal poverty.

Additionally, ASEAN should immediately suspend Myanmar's membership in the regional grouping, as Myanmar has categorically failed to uphold the principles to which it subscribed by virtue of agreeing to the Charter. ASEAN must thereafter earnestly consider expelling Myanmar should no tangible progress be achieved.

The United Nations must also use all tools at its disposal to compel progress from the regime. The UN, whose goodwill towards Myanmar has thus far not been appreciated by the regime, should enact a global arms embargo and establish a commission to investigate accusations of crimes against humanity, as recommended by the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, Tomas Ojea Quintana

The military government of Myanmar has shown no interest in moving the country forward through national reconciliation or the establishment of a democratic government. Engaging them and placid persuasion has done nothing to change this fact. If the people of Myanmar are to ever be free and allowed to prosper, dramatic actions in their defense must be taken immediately.

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