



Suu Kyi says she is seeking: A Non-Violent Revolution

AGNCIES, Rangoon

In an interview with the BBC, Burma's newly freed opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi said she sought 'a non-violent revolution' and offered some reassuring words for the military. 'I don't want to see the military falling. I want to see the military rising to dignified heights of professionalism and true patriotism,' she said.

The British-educated Suu Kyi also said she did not fear being detained again. "I'm not scared," she said. "I know that there is always a possibility, of course. They've done it back in the past, they might do it again."

Her lawyer said yesterday, Suu Kyi is "ready to fight" for the existence of her political party, which was disbanded ahead of controversial elections. On her third day of freedom after seven years of house arrest, Suu Kyi signed papers at Rangoon's Supreme Court- the latest step of a lawsuit against the junta on behalf of her National League for Democracy (NLD).

"She is ready to fight for the existence of the NLD. She will continue the legal process," her lawyer and NLD spokesman Nyan Win said. "She went to the Supreme Court to sign an affidavit because she could not do it before."

Suu Kyi was released over from detention over the weekend. On Sunday, she told thousands of wildly cheering supporters at the NLD headquarters that she would continue to fight for human rights and the rule of law in the military-controlled nation.



The 65-year-old Nobel Peace laureate must balance the expectations of the country's pro-democracy movement with the realities of freedom that could be withdrawn anytime by the regime. Although her party is officially dissolved, it has continued operating with the same structure. But without official recognition, it is in legal limbo, leaving it – and her – vulnerable to government crack-downs.

The junta recently staged the country's first elections in 20 years, and in a step that will blunt some of the long-standing international criticism of its conduct, released Suu Kyi a week later. Having made those ostensible moves toward democratization after five decades of military rule, it is unlikely to make more concessions – like restoring the NLD's legal status – without getting something back from Suu Kyi and her party, such as dropping its support for Western sanctions.

Suu Kyi, who has been detained for 15 of the past 21 years, has indicated she would continue with her political activity but not whether she would challenge the military with mass rallies and other activities. She has been noncommittal on sanctions, saying that she would support lifting them if the people of Burma provided strong justification for doing so.

Nyan Win said Suu Kyi met with her lawyers on Monday and also party officials from areas outside Rangoon who have been keeping her political network alive during years of repression. He said the High Court will tomorrow hold a hearing to decide whether to accept a case from Suu Kyi arguing that her party's dissolution "is not in accordance with the law". The party was disbanded earlier this year under a new law because it failed to reregister for the November 7 elections, complaining conditions set by the junta were unfair and undemocratic.

Suu Kyi's side says the new Election Commission has no right to deregister parties that were registered under a different Election Commission in 1990. The party also contends that the court is legally bound to hear their case. Full results from this month's elections have yet to be released, but figures so far give a military-backed party a solid majority in both houses of parliament.



In London, British Prime Minister David Cameron told the House of Commons he talked to Suu Kyi by telephone on Monday. “Her tenacity and courage in the face of injustice has been truly inspiring. I spoke to her this morning to pass on the congratulations of everyone in the country on her release and her remarkable stand on democracy and human rights,” Cameron told lawmakers. “We must now work to ensure that her release is followed by freedom for more than 2,000 other political prisoners.”

US State Department spokesman P J Crowley said the Obama administration will ask the regime about its plans for other political prisoners and ethnic minorities. “You could see over the weekend in the public response to the release of Aung San Suu Kyi that the Burmese people yearn for a different kind of society, an opportunity to participate in the future of their country,” he said.

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