

ALTSEAN



ALTERNATIVE ASEAN NETWORK ON BURMA
campaigns, advocacy & capacity-building for human rights & democracy

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QUOTABLE DAW SUU

After her release from seven years under house arrest, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has spoken on a wide range of issues concerning the past, present, and future of Burma. What follows is a summary of the statements she made in the 48 hours that followed her 13 November release.

On the 2010 elections

- “We decided not to participate in the elections for certain reasons which are spelled out in our official statements. First of all, because we did not [think] it was a free and fair election, secondly because we did not think that it is right to just write off the 1990 elections [...] and thirdly because we did not think it was right to sacrifice our comrades for the sake of the party.”¹
- “We did not participate in the elections so we have no reason to protest against the results. But as I said earlier, a report will be prepared on the results of the election in respect to the rule of law and equality of justice.”²
- “From what I have heard there are many many questions about the fairness of the election and there are many many allegations of vote rigging and so on.”³
- “Elections should be held in the correct way, and unfair elections do not bring about democracy.”⁴

On the NLD

- “I would define it [the NLD] to be in the hearts and minds of the people. [...] This organization will continue to exist.”⁵
- “The NLD is not an NGO. This is a political party. We have never said that we will become an NGO. We said that we will work in humanitarian affairs. Humanitarian affairs cannot be separated from politics. At this time, our people are in need, they are poor, in trouble, in need of help. We will help them in this respect, but this is nothing new, since 1995, we have been involved in humanitarian affairs.”⁶
- “I don’t believe in one person dominating the whole party. That’s not democracy. How can we bring democracy to this country, if we don’t try to practice as much as possible in my own party? So you mustn’t say when I am going to take control of this party. I hope – never!”⁷
- “This party [the NLD] is not illegal according to the law. The case is going to be heard in court on the 18th. The fact that the court has agreed to hear the case means that there is a question as to the legality of the case.”⁸
- “On the 18th there will be court hearing as to whether it is legal to dissolve the NLD. We will know then. But this will [be] the ruling of the court. As to whether the NLD shall continue to exist, the answer lies in the hearts of the people.”⁹

¹ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

² UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

³ AFP (14 Nov 10) Suu Kyi appeals for unity in address to thousands; BBC (14 Nov 10) Suu Kyi 'ready for talks' to resolve Burma's problems

⁴ VOA (14 Nov 10) Rangoon Diary: Democracy First on Suu Kyi's Agenda for Burma

⁵ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

⁶ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

⁷ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

⁸ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

⁹ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

On cooperation with other pro-democracy forces

- “Our door is always open to all those who wish to work for democracy. This has always been our principle and remains so.”¹⁰
- “[...] I will not only work with the NLD. I will work with all democratic entities and I would like the people to encompass us. We will tell the people, explain to them what our decisions are. There may be things that we decide which the people may not like. But this is natural. Not everyone can be of the same opinion. Accepting that there can be a difference of opinion is a democratic principle.”¹¹
- “I am willing to work hand in hand with other democratic forces in the country.”¹²
- “We shall proceed in consultation with democratic entities and the NLD shall not go it alone but hand in hand with majority.”¹³

On ethnic issues

- “We need a Panglong Conference that is in line with the 21st Century. [...] I would like this to be a conference that reflects the feelings of the ethnic groups in the 21st Century.”¹⁴
- “The clashes with the ethnic groups are a matter of concern and is saddening. This should not be happening. But we believe in resolving differences through peaceful means so it very saddening that conflicts have to be addressed through battles.”¹⁵
- “These problems [conflicts in ethnic areas] are not going to be resolve[d] overnight. We’ve all go to learn the meaning of reconciliation. We don’t want conflicts to be resolved through armed battles. It has always been our policy. We want them to be resolved through dialogue and reconciliation and I am very very saddened that our country is still at a point where conflicts are to be resolved through force of power.”¹⁶

On dialogue and national reconciliation

- “I am a fervent believer in national reconciliation. I believe that this is the path we should take.”¹⁷
- “I am for national reconciliation. I am for dialogue. And whatever authority I have I would like to use towards that end.”¹⁸
- “I will continue to work for national reconciliation among the people, among all of us. There is no one that I cannot work or talk with. If there is a will to work together, it can be done. If there is a will to talk to one another, it can be done.”¹⁹
- “[...] Reconciliation means that you recognize that there are differences. If there weren’t any differences there would be no need for reconciliation. So because there are differences, we are very well aware of the necessity for reconciliation.”²⁰
- “We have got to be able to talk to each other. [...] I think, firstly, we have to start talking affably - real genuine talks, not just have some more tea or this or that.”²¹
- “I think we will have to sort out our differences across the table, talking to each other, agreeing to disagree, or finding out why we disagree and trying to remove the sources of our disagreement.”²²

¹⁰ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

¹¹ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

¹² Reuters (14 Nov 10) Suu Kyi: willing to work with other democratic forces

¹³ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

¹⁴ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

¹⁵ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

¹⁶ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

¹⁷ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

¹⁸ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

¹⁹ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

²⁰ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

²¹ Washington Post (15 Nov 10) Democracy leader Suu Kyi urges 'real genuine talks' in Burma

²² BBC (14 Nov 10) Suu Kyi 'ready for talks' to resolve Burma's problems; Bloomberg (15 Nov 10) Myanmar's Suu Kyi Reaches Out in First Speech Since Release

On talks with SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe

- “We [Than Shwe and I] can talk about anything so let’s just talk.”²³
- “My message is: let’s speak directly. Everything starts with dialogue and exchange.”²⁴

On 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.”²⁵
- “Let me openly tell the people here that I have no grudge against the people who kept me under restriction. [...] I don’t harbor hatred of anyone. I have no time for this. I have too much to do to harbor any hatred.”²⁶
- “I hope that they [the military] don’t feel so threatened by me. [...] Popularity is something that comes and goes. I don’t think anybody feels threatened by it.”²⁷

On people’s participation

- “We have repeatedly said that we depend on the might of the people and we cannot succeed without the might of the people.”²⁸
- “I want to listen to the people. [...] I have encouraged people to write to us, to tell us what they feel, what they think ought to be done. [...] I think we must listen, I must listen, well I’ve listened to the radio for six years. I think I’d like to listen to human voices.”²⁹
- “I want to ask the people, to tell us what’s on your mind. You can deliver the letter here. [...]. I want to know what’s on your mind. What has been in your mind over the past six years, what has changed.”³⁰
- “We will decide how to proceed after listening to the voices of the people.”³¹
- “The people are my strength – so they must remain strong. I can’t go it alone. I have just said democracy cannot be achieved alone. [...] If it is done alone, it is not democracy. If the people want democracy and want Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to attain it for them, they are not going to attain it. There will only be Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the dictator. Everyone has to have a hand in it.”³²
- “I ask you to support us with the might of the people. Whatever we decide, we will let the people know.”³³
- “[...] The majority must be encompassed by the people. We cannot do it without the people and we ask for their assistance.”³⁴
- “I cannot do it alone. I don’t want to do it alone. Doing it alone is not democracy. I have no intention to do it alone. I will do it with the majority, with the people of this country, and with the global community that have shown us goodwill and support. We will do it with everybody. We have to keep this firmly in mind.”³⁵
- “Because nothing can be accomplished without the people’s participation, we would like to create a democracy network across the world, of the people and by the people.”³⁶

²³ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

²⁴ Independent (15 Nov 10) ‘You must eat rice to give you strength for the struggle ahead’

²⁵ AFP (15 Nov 10) Call for peaceful revolution

²⁶ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

²⁷ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

²⁸ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

²⁹ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

³⁰ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

³¹ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

³² UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

³³ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

³⁴ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

³⁵ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

³⁶ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

- “We would like to have a democracy network throughout the country, throughout the world, by the people – for the people. From the beginning, we have not worked for the perpetuation of this party alone. But to attain democracy and to uplift the morale and qualities of the people.”³⁷
- “I think we all have to work together. We all have to try to find a way of helping each other. There are times for all of us when we need help, and this is a time for Burma where we need help. And we need help to go forward and we want everybody to help us in this venture. Western nations, Eastern nations, Northern nations and Southern Nations, the whole world.”³⁸
- “The youth will be our successors. So we have to nurture them.”³⁹
- “There should be more participation of women [in politics]. Not only in this country but across the world [...]”⁴⁰
- “I see camera-phones all over the place. [...] This development must be used for the good of the majority. Communication brings understanding. Please use communication to foster mutual understanding and unity.”⁴¹

On her detention

- “They [the military] haven’t been treating me, personally, brutally at all. In fact, I have to be honest to say that throughout these years of detention, they have treated me well on a personal basis.”⁴²
- “During the time of my detention I had a lot of interaction with the people who were in charge of my security. They have been good to me. I have to say what the truth is. Since one must show appreciation to those who are deserving, I say with sincerity that I am grateful to those who were in charge of my security. I want the people to be able to have mutual understanding and gratitude.”⁴³
- “The people in charge of keeping me under restriction were good to me. This is the truth and I value this and I am grateful.”⁴⁴
- [...] I know that there's always the possibility that I might be re-arrested. It's not something that I particularly wish for, because if you're placed under arrest you can't work as much as you can when you're not under arrest.”⁴⁵
- “[...] I believe that to this day that my detention and the detention of those many prisoners of conscience, are not in accordance with the norms of justice.”⁴⁶

On political prisoners

- “I am always with them [Min Ko Naing and all other political prisoners]. They are always in our hearts and minds.”⁴⁷
- “So I take this opportunity to honor those of our colleagues and comrades who have given their lives to the cause for democracy; to honor our colleagues and comrades who are still in prison. Let us pray that they will be released as soon as possible.”⁴⁸

³⁷ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

³⁸ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

³⁹ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

⁴⁰ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

⁴¹ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

⁴² UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

⁴³ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

⁴⁴ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

⁴⁵ BBC (14 Nov 10) Suu Kyi 'ready for talks' to resolve Burma's problems

⁴⁶ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

⁴⁷ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

⁴⁸ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

On democracy, rule of law, and human rights

- “What is important in a democracy is that the people at the back must be able to keep those who are working in the front, under control. This is democracy. The people, who are the majority, must have the right to keep the rulers, who are the minority, under control. This is democracy.”⁴⁹
- “I don’t believe in one party or one person dominating the government. That is not democracy.”⁵⁰
- “This is the basis of democracy - that of freedom of speech.”⁵¹
- “[...] I don’t think that any country can survive as a prosperous and dignified nation unless there is rule of law. The people cannot have security unless there is rule of law. So for that I shall always struggle.”⁵²
- “A human being must have all its manifestations and live in human dignity. [...] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights begins by saying that everyone is born with inherent dignity. This dignity must be upheld. [...] There are also things that the people must do. Everyone must know his or her responsibility and be able to fulfill them. Only then will our country develop. [...] [R]ather than blaming who is at fault for this lack of development, I would only like to ask for the opportunities for us to work together hand in hand.”⁵³

On politics

- “Please don’t have the attitude that politics do not concern you. [...] Everything is politics. Politics is not just coming here and supporting us. The housewife, who is cooking at home, also has something to do with politics because she is struggling to feed her family with the money she has. Struggling to send children to school is politics. Everything is politics. No one is free of politics. So saying that politics does not concern you and that you do not wish to be involved in politics is a lack of awareness of politics.”⁵⁴

On economic sanctions

- “I have not discussed with the CEC [regarding economic sanctions] and therefore there is no change.”⁵⁵
- “If the people should provide concrete justification for the lifting of the sanctions, I will do so, but they must be concrete justifications.”⁵⁶

On the management of Burma’s natural resources

- “[...] I think that there [are] many of our resources that should not have been sold unadvisedly. There should have been more restraint and more care in [managing] our resources.”⁵⁷

On China

- “[...] I do not look upon China as an enemy and I think we must not think of China as an enemy of those who want democracy in Burma because China and Burma are neighbors and will always be neighbors as long as this world stands. As to be good neighbors, one has to work hard.”⁵⁸

⁴⁹ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

⁵⁰ Mizzima News (14 Nov 10) Suu Kyi salutes thousands, meets press, at NLD office

⁵¹ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

⁵² UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.

⁵³ UNDP (14 Nov 10) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s public address, NLD Headquarters - Unofficial translated transcript

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⁵⁸ UNDP Rangoon (14 Nov 10) Transcript Press Briefing: Aung San Suu Kyi.