

U.S. CAMPAIGN
FOR BURMA

BIOGRAPHY OF AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Aung San Suu Kyi (pronounced Aung Saan Sue Chee) is one of the world's most renowned freedom fighters and advocates of non-violence, having served as the figurehead for Burma's struggle for democracy since 1988.

Aung San Suu Kyi was born on June 19th, 1945 to Burma's independence hero, Aung San, who was assassinated when she was just two years old. Aung San Suu Kyi was educated in Burma, India, and the United Kingdom. In 1988, while living in London, she returned to Burma to nurse her dying mother, and was plunged into the country's nationwide uprising that had just begun. Heavily influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence, Aung San Suu Kyi entered politics to work for democratization and helped found the National League for Democracy (NLD). The military regime responded to the peaceful democracy uprising with brute force, killing up to 10,000 demonstrators - student, women, children, and others - in a matter of months. Unable to maintain its grip on power, the regime was forced to call for a general election in 1990. As Suu Kyi began to campaign for the NLD, she and many others were detained by the regime. She was put under house arrest on July 20th, 1989, then offered freedom if she would leave the country, but she refused. Despite Suu Kyi and many other leaders being held under house arrest, the NLD won a staggering 82% of the seats in parliament during that election, making Suu Kyi the democratically elected leader of Burma. However, the regime never recognized the results of this election.

Suu Kyi has been in and out of arrest ever since. She was held from 1989-1995, and again from 2000-2002. When her husband, Michael Aris, a British citizen, was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 1997, the Burmese government denied him an entry visa. Aung San Suu Kyi remained in Burma, and never again saw her husband, who died in March 1999. She remains separated from their children, who live in the United Kingdom. She was again arrested and placed behind bars in May 2003 after the Depayin Massacre, when up to 100 of her supporters were beaten to death by the regime's cronies during an assassination attempt against Suu Kyi. She was moved from prison back into house arrest in late 2003 and has been held there ever since.

Suu Kyi has won numerous international awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize, Sakharov Prize from the European Parliament, United States Presidential Medal of Freedom, and Jawaharlal Nehru Award from India. She has called on people around the world to join the struggle for freedom in Burma, saying, "Please use your liberty to promote ours."



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