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ICJ Condemns Continued Detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) condemns the Yangon North District Court's decision to convict Aung San Suu Kyi for violating the order of her house arrest under Article 22 of State Protection Law 1975 (also known as the Law to Safeguard the State Against the Dangers of Those Desiring to Cause Subversive Acts).

The court sentenced the Nobel Peace Prize laureate to three years imprisonment with hard labour, commuted to 18 months house arrest by Senior General Than Shwe, Chair of Myanmar's State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

Her alleged offense was based on an incident in which an American intruder evaded a security cordon imposed by the SPDC around her Inya Lake home, where she has spent more than 13 years under house arrest since 1988.

"It is evident to the whole world that this was a show trial conducted by the military regime to keep Aung San Suu Kyi locked up under house arrest during the elections planned for 2010," said Roger Normand, ICJ's Asia-Pacific Director. "It is not only an unlawful deprivation of her liberty, but a blow to the democratic rights of the entire nation."

The trial failed to meet basic, internationally recognized standards for fair trials. Aung San Suu Kyi was not given sufficient access to meet and consult with her lawyers to prepare for her defence. Most of the trial was conducted in closed session with limited access to journalists and observers. The defence was only allowed to call two of its five witnesses to give testimony whilst the prosecution was permitted 14 witnesses.

"Legal and judicial processes have been manipulated to lend a façade of legitimacy to an unlawful military regime," said Mr. Normand. "To restore the rule of law, the handful of generals who control the country must recognize the fundamental rights of all citizens to free speech and association, to form political parties, and to participate in determining their own political future."

The ICJ notes that the United Nation's Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has found Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest to be in violation of both international and domestic laws. She is the most prominent of an estimated 2,100 persons, currently imprisoned for political reasons by the SPDC.

For further information, please contact:

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The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

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