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for Peace and Human Rights

President

The Honorable Kjell Magne
Bondevik

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The Most Reverend
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UNTIL WEDNESDAY

DECEMBER 3, 2008 AT 12:01 AM EST (5:01 AM GMT)

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**LETTER FROM 112 FORMER PRESIDENTS AND PRIME
MINISTERS SENT TO UN SECRETARY-GENERAL URGING
HIM TO PRESS FOR RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL
PRISONERS IN BURMA BY THE END OF 2008**

New York and Washington, D.C. – Today, Freedom Now and the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights released a letter from 112 former Presidents and Prime Ministers from more than 50 nations to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urging him to personally travel to Burma before the end of the year to secure the release of the military junta's 2,100 political prisoners. Last month, more than 215 activists, National League for Democracy party members, Cylone Nargis relief workers, journalists, monks, and even some of their lawyers were each given draconian sentences of up to 68-years in prison.

This initiative has been led by the Honorable Kjell Magne Bondevik, former Prime Minister of Norway and President of the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights. "This is a historic outpouring of global support for the people of Burma, and I am pleased that so many have joined me in spotlighting this important issue," he said. "Today we unite to call on the United Nations to take action. The first step towards achieving national reconciliation in Burma is creating a firm deadline for the release of all political prisoners."

Joining Mr. Bondevik on the letter are such luminaries as Corazon Aquino, Tony Blair, George H.W. Bush, Jimmy Carter, Joaquim Chissano, Jacques Delors, Abdou Diouf, Elbegdorj Tsakhiagiin, Kim Dae-jung, Vicente Fox, Árpád Göncz, Mikhail Gorbachev, Václav Havel, John Howard, Lionel Jospin, Junichiro Koizumi, Chandrika Kumaratunga, John Major, Benjamin Mkapa, Brian Mulroney, Romano Prodi, José Ramos-Horta, Margaret Thatcher, Alejandro Toledo, Mary Robinson, and Lech Wałęsa.

The letter recalls that on October 11, 2007, the UN Security Council issued a presidential statement urging the early release of all political prisoners in Burma. Further, the UN set the release of all political prisoners as one of its benchmark goals for 2008. However, in direct defiance of these calls, the junta has instead increased the number of political prisoners from 1,200 in June 2007 to over 2,100 today.

"The Burmese people are counting on the United Nations to take the required action to achieve the breakthrough they desperately need to both restore democracy to their country and address the serious humanitarian and human rights challenges that they face," the letter reads. It further urges Ban Ki-moon to encourage the Security Council to take "concrete action" to implement its October 11, 2007 statement if these efforts are not successful by the end of December 2008.

**Interviews with Mr. Bondevik can be arranged through Hans Petter Bergli at
+47-913-55-314 or hans-petter.bergli@oslocenter.no**

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December 3, 2008

Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General
United Nations
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

We write this letter to applaud your public consideration of traveling to Burma, also known as Myanmar, before the end of the year. We encourage this trip because it would illustrate for the world whether or not the Burmese military regime is serious about making changes called for by the United Nations Security Council and your good offices.

As you are aware, on October 11, 2007, the United Nations Security Council issued a presidential statement calling on the Burmese military junta to release all political prisoners in Burma, including the world's only imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi.

We are heartened that you have taken up this issue and reiterated in your budget request for your Special Envoy's office to the UN General Assembly that a key benchmark to measure progress in Burma is whether all political prisoners in Burma, including Aung San Suu Kyi, are released by December 31, 2008. To date, in direct defiance of the United Nations Security Council and your good offices, the Burmese military junta has instead continued a major crackdown, increasing the number of political prisoners from 1,200 to over 2,100 since June 2007.

We urge you to make it clear that all political prisoners in Burma must be released by the end of this year, regardless of whether you travel to Burma. If the Burmese junta continues to defy the United Nations by refusing to make these releases by the end of the year, we urge you to encourage the Security Council to take further concrete action to implement its call for the release of all political prisoners. The Burmese people are counting on the United Nations to take the required action to achieve the breakthrough they desperately need to both restore democracy to their country and address the serious humanitarian and human rights challenges that they face.

Sincerely,

1. The Honorable Giuliano Amato
Former Prime Minister of Italy (1992–1993, 2000-2001)
2. The Honorable Halldór Ásgrímsson
Former Prime Minister of Iceland (2004-2006)
3. The Honorable Corazon C. Aquino
Former President of the Philippines (1986-1992)
4. The Honorable Patricio Aylwin Azócar
Former President of Chile (1990-1994)
5. The Honorable Hrant Bagratyan
Former Prime Minister of Armenia (1991, 1993-1996)

6. The Honorable Jan Krzysztof Bielecki
Former Prime Minister of Poland (1991)
7. The Honorable Valdis Birkavs
Former Prime Minister of Latvia (1993-1994)
8. The Right Honourable Tony Blair
Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
(1997-2007)
9. The Honorable Kjell Magne Bondevik
Former Prime Minister of Norway (1997-2000, 2001-2005)
10. The Honorable George H.W. Bush
Former President of the United States of America (1989-1993)
11. The Right Honourable Kim Campbell
Former Prime Minister of Canada (1993)
12. The Honorable Ján Čarnogurský
Former Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic (1991-1992)
13. The Honorable Fernando Henrique Cardoso
Former President of Brazil (1995-2003)
14. The Honorable Ingvar Carlsson
Former Prime Minister of Sweden (1986-1991, 1994-1996)
15. The Honorable Jimmy Carter
Former President of the United States of America (1977-1981)
16. The Honorable Joaquim Chissano (1986-2005)
Former President of Mozambique
17. The Honorable Carlo Azelio Ciampi
Former President of Italy (1999-2006)
Former Prime Minister of Italy (1993-1994)
Senator for Life (2006-Present)
18. The Honorable Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz
Former Prime Minister of Poland (1996-1997)
19. The Honorable Emil Constantinescu
Former President of Romania (1996-2000)

20. The Honorable Roberto Dañino
Former Prime Minister of Peru (2001-2002)
21. The Honorable Joseph Deiss
Former President of Switzerland (1994)
22. The Honorable Philip Dimitrov
Former Prime Minister of Bulgaria (1991-1992)
23. The Honorable Abdou Diouf
Former President of Senegal (1981-2000)
24. The Honorable Jacques Delors
Former President of the European Commission (1985-1995)
25. The Honorable Mikuláš Dzurinda
Former Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic (1998-2006)
26. The Honorable Elbegdorj Tsakhiagiin
Former Prime Minister of Mongolia (1998, 2004-2006)
27. The Honorable José María Figueres
Former President of Costa Rica (1994-1998)
28. The Honorable Vigdís Finnbogadóttir
Former President of Iceland (1980-1996)
29. The Honorable Vicente Fox
Former President of Mexico (2000-2006)
30. The Honorable César Gaviria
Former President of Colombia (1990-1994)
31. The Honorable Eugenijus Gentvilas
Former Prime Minister of Lithuania (2001)
32. The Honorable Árpád Göncz
Former President of Hungary (1990-2000)
33. The Honorable Mikhail Gorbachev
Former President of the Soviet Union (1990-1991)
34. The Honorable Inder Kumar Gujral
Former Prime Minister of India (1997-1998)

35. The Honorable Václav Havel
Former President of the Czech Republic (1990-2003)
36. The Right Honourable John Howard AC
Former Prime Minister of Australia (1996-2007)
37. The Honorable Anneli Jäätteenmäki
Former Prime Minister of Finland (2003)
38. The Honorable Thorbjørn Jagland
Former Prime Minister of Norway (1996-1997)
39. The Honorable Lionel Jospin
Former Prime Minister of France (1997-2002)
40. The Honorable Kim Dae-jung
Former President of South Korea (1998-2003)
41. The Honorable Ricardo Froilán Lagos Escobar
Former President of Chile (2000-2006)
42. The Right Honourable Malcolm Fraser AC CH
Former Prime Minister of Australia (1975-1983)
43. The Honorable Osvaldo Hurtado
Former President of Ecuador (1981-1984)
44. The Honorable Jarosław Kaczyński
Former Prime Minister of Poland (2006-2007)
45. The Honorable Girija Prasad Koirala
Former Prime Minister of Nepal (1991-1994, 1998-1999, 2000-2001, 2006-2008)
46. The Honorable Junichiro Koizumi
Former Prime Minister of Japan (2001-2006)
47. The Honorable Wim Kok
Prime Minister of the Netherlands (1994-2002)
48. The Honorable Ivan Kostov
Former Prime Minister of Bulgaria (1997-2001)
49. The Honorable Milan Kucan
Former President of Slovenia (1990-2002)

50. The Honorable Vytautas Landsbergis
Former President of Lithuania (1990-1992)
51. The Honorable Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga
Former President of Sri Lanka (1994-2005)
Former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka (1994)
52. The Honorable Aleksander Kwaśniewski
Former President of Poland (1995-2005)
53. The Honorable Mart Laar
Former Prime Minister of Estonia (1992-1994, 1999-2002)
54. The Honorable Zlatko Lagumdžija
Former Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2001-2002)
55. The Honorable Lee Hae Chan
Former Prime Minister of South Korea (2004-2006)
56. The Honorable Lee Hong-Koo
Former Prime Minister of South Korea (1994-1995)
57. The Honorable Ruud Lubbers
Former Prime Minister of The Netherlands (1982-1994)
58. The Honorable Ferenc Mádl
Former President of Hungary (2000-2005)
59. The Right Honourable Paul Martin
Former Prime Minister of Canada (2003-2006)
60. The Honorable Pandeli Majko
Former Prime Minister of Albania (1998-1999, 2002)
61. The Right Honourable Sir John Major, KG CH PC
Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
(1990-1997)
62. The Honorable Tadeusz Mazowiecki
Former Prime Minister of Poland (1989-1991)
63. The Honorable Péter Medgyessy
Former Prime Minister of Hungary (2002-2004)
64. The Honorable Rexhep Meidani
Former President of Albania (1997-2002)

65. The Honorable Aleksandër Gabriel Meksi
Former Prime Minister of Albania (1992-1997)
66. The Honorable Ilir Meta
Former Prime Minister of Albania (1999-2002)
67. The Honorable Konstantinos Mitsotakis
Former Prime Minister of Greece (1990-1993)
68. The Honorable Benjamin Mkapa
Former President of Tanzania (1995-2005)
69. The Honorable Alfred Spiro Moisiu
Former President of Albania (2002-2007)
70. The Honorable António Manuel Mascarenhas Monteiro
Former President of Cape Verde (1991-2001)
71. The Honorable Mike Moore
Former Prime Minister of New Zealand (1990)
72. The Right Honourable Brian Mulroney
Former Prime Minister of Canada (1984-1993)
73. The Honorable Fatos Thanas Nano
Former Prime Minister of Albania (1991, 1997-1998, 2002-2005)
74. The Honorable Odvar Nordli
Former Prime Minister of Norway (1976-1981)
75. The Honorable Davíð Oddsson
Former Prime Minister of Iceland (1991-2004)
76. The Honorable Karl Auguste Offmann
Former President of Mauritius (2002-2003)
77. The Honorable Viktor Orbán
Former Prime Minister of Hungary (1998-2002)
78. The Honorable Andres Pastrana
Former President of Colombia (1998-2002)
79. The Honorable Göran Persson
Former Prime Minister of Sweden (1996-2006)

80. The Honorable Lojze Peterle
Former Prime Minister of Slovenia (1990-1992)
81. The Honorable Petr Pithart
Former Prime Minister of the Czech Republic (1990-1992)
82. The Honorable Romano Prodi
Former Prime Minister of Italy (1996-1998, 2006-2008)
Former President of the European Commission (1999-2004)
83. The Honorable Fidel V. Ramos
Former President of the Philippines (1992-1998)
84. The Honorable Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle
Former President of Chile (1994-2000)
Senator for Life (2000-Present)
85. The Honorable Konstantinos Simitis
Former Prime Minister of Greece (1996-2004)
86. The Honorable Konstantinos Stephanopoulos
Former President of Greece (1995-2005)
87. The Honorable José Ramos-Horta
Former Prime Minister of Timor-Leste (2006-2007)
President of Timor-Leste (2008-Present)
88. The Honorable Poul Nyrup Rasmussen
Former Prime Minister of Denmark (1993-2001)
89. The Honorable Mary Robinson
Former President of Ireland (1990-1997)
90. The Honorable Roh Moo-Hyun
Former President of South Korea (2003-2008)
91. The Honorable Arnold Rüütel
Former President of Estonia (2001-2006)
92. The Honorable Michel Rocard
Former Prime Minister of France (1988-1991)
93. The Honorable Eduardo Rodríguez Veltzé
Former President of the Republic of Bolivia (2005-2006)

94. The Honorable Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada
Former President of Bolivia (1993-1997, 2002-2003)
95. The Honorable Amos Claudius Sawyer
Former President of Liberia (1990-1994)
96. The Honorable Jennifer Shipley
Former Prime Minister of New Zealand (1997-1999)
97. The Honorable Vladimír Špidla
Former Prime Minister of the Czech Republic (2002-2004)
98. The Honorable Levon Ter-Petrossian
Former President of Armenia (1991-1998)
99. The Honorable Malam Bacai Sanhá
Former President of Guinea-Bissau (1999-2000)
100. The Honorable Petar Stoyanov
Former President of Bulgaria (1997-2002)
101. The Honorable Andres Tarand
Former Prime Minister of Estonia (1994-1995)
102. The Right Honourable Baroness Thatcher of Kesteven
Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
(1979-1990)
103. The Honorable Alejandro Toledo
Former President of Peru (2001-2006)
104. The Honorable Ung Huot
Former Prime Minister of Cambodia (1997-1998)
105. The Honorable Cassam Uteem
Former President of Mauritius (1992-2002)
106. The Honorable Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga
Former President of Latvia (1999-2007)
107. The Honorable Richard von Weizsäcker
Former President of the Federal Republic of Germany (1984-1990)
Former President of Germany (1990-1994)
108. The Honorable Abdurrahman Wahid
Former President of Indonesia (1991-2001)

109. The Honorable Lech Wałęsa
Former President of Poland (1990-1995)
110. The Honorable Kåre Willoch
Former Prime Minister of Norway (1981-1986)
111. The Honorable Albert Zafy
Former President of Madagascar (1993-1996)
112. The Honorable Ernesto Zedillo
Former President of Mexico (1994-2000)