

INTERNATIONAL

Myanmar Opposes Recently Enacted Election Laws

Mariamawit Tadesse, Staff Writer

The Union of Myanmar, also known as Burma, is ruled by a military junta whose mismanagement of the economy, oppression of political freedom, and violation of numerous human rights has occurred for decades. The military junta rejected their defeat in the 1990 elections and recently announced that it has passed new election laws.

Myanmar's military junta has kept non-violent resister Aung San Suu Kyi under detention for 14 years. Suu Kyi is the daughter of the country's independence hero, General Aung San, who was assassinated when she was only two years old. She grew up with her mother, who has served as Burma's ambassador to India. Suu Kyi attended Oxford University, where she studied philosophy, politics, and economics. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to bring democracy to Burma. The Chairman of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee called her "an outstanding example of the power of the powerless". Suu Kyi says that Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela are her greatest inspirations.

According to Al-Jazeera News, one of the new election laws "prohibits anyone convicted of a crime from being a member of a political party and instructs parties to expel convicted members or face de-registration." This law will also prevent more than 2,000 other opposition members from running for office. Suu Kyi, the leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD), was convicted last year for violating her house arrest. Nyan Win, her lawyer, told BBC News that the NLD should never consider condoning these unjust laws.

The article from Al-Jazeera News also reports that the approval of these new laws had caused uproar not only from Myanmar, but also from the international community, including the United Nations and the Philippines. The United States and European Union have responded by "put[ting] sanctions on Myan-



Photo courtesy of The Online Citizen

mar due to its continuous refusal to recognize the 1990 elections and the prolonged detention of Aung San Suu Kyi."

News at a Glance

gathered by Mengjie Zhang

- North Carolina Housing Finance Agency will be one of five states to receive \$159 million out of \$600 million package from the federal government to fight for foreclosures.
- At least 39 people were killed and 60 were wounded by Moscow subway suicide bomb happened on Monday, March 29th.
- Rights group Amnesty International's annual reports about use of death penalty showed that 714 people were executed in 18 countries during 2009. However, Amnesty believed that the true figure could be much higher, as at least one thousand people executed in China, 366 people in Iran, 120 in Iraq and 52 in the US.
- More than 250 underprivileged children gathered on Saturday, March 27th, at a popular shopping center in Johannesburg, South Africa to eat the largest chocolate bunny in the world.

Eating Dog and Cat Meat to be Banned

Krishna Chagarlamudi, Staff Writer

In an attempt to reach a "new level of civilization," China is considering a ban on eating dogs and cats, says Emily Chang from CNN. In certain parts of China, Korea, Vietnam, and South America, dogs and cats often appear on the dinner table and restaurant menus. This action on the part of the Chinese government comes in the wake of stricter laws working on the behalf of animal welfare. Restaurants that specialize in dog and cat entrées will soon have to find different specialties to list on their menus as China moves to make it illegal to eat dogs and cats.

According to the Sydney Morning Herald, eating cat and dog

meat is a centuries-old tradition in China. It is believed that this meat promotes "bodily warmth." While dog meat, often referred to as "fragrant meat," is popular throughout China, cat meat is a favorite in southern parts of the country. While the legislation is still in the process of becoming a law, it nonetheless signals a dramatic change not only in the eating habits of certain Chinese but also in the way is foreshadows cultural and moral changes in China. This also signals an end to an era of animal abuse.

Even as the legislation moves towards being passed, there are those in China who argue both sides of the case. CNN reports

an interview with a butcher who thought people should refrain from eating pets, but they should be able to eat "the kind raised for eating." There are also those, like Professor Chang Jiwen of the Chinese Academy of the Social Sciences, who think cats and dogs should not be eaten because they are "loyal friends to humans." However, there are many who are waiting to make any permanent changes until the legislation is finalized and the law is passed.

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