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Burma: ITUC condemns Aung San Suu Kyi Sham Trial

Brussels, 20 May 2009 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC strongly condemns the trial of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the world's only incarcerated Nobel Prize winner, which went into its third day today. The only purpose of this mockery of a trial seems to be to make sure she plays no part whatsoever in the upcoming "elections" of 2010.

Since 1989, Aung San Suu Kyi has spent more than 13 years under house arrest, which in itself has already been qualified by the UN as being in breach of international and even Burma's very own legal system. Earlier this month, after a legal incident concerning an American citizen swimming to her house, only to be arrested upon leaving it three days later, she herself was arrested and transferred to the notorious Insein prison, where she now stands trial for violating the Burmese legislation on house arrest. In spite of rising concerns over her health, her doctor and two nurses were also arrested, and she is not allowed to see them.

Yesterday, on the second day of her trial inside the prison, five of the prosecutor's 22 witnesses were heard. The trial is being held under tightened security provisions, with riot police blocking off roads and keeping about 700 of Aung San Suu Kyi's sympathisers at a distance. In September 2007, a significant nonviolent movement of monks, nuns and democracy activists demonstrated against the military regime in what is now known as the Saffron Revolution. The demonstrations continued for 11 days before the military opened fire on large crowds and started arresting and killing demonstrators. Less than a year later, the regime capitalised on a devastating cyclone to arrest even more activists and ratify a new constitution through a fraudulent referendum, held just a few days mere days the storm.

Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest was scheduled to end on 27 May; therefore, she had no reason at all to break any of its provisions. The Burmese regime is clearly intent on finding any pretext, no matter how questionable, to extend her unlawful detention. The only thing she is guilty of, however, is standing up for the rights of the Burmese people in the face of appalling repression. The ITUC therefore demands that she be released, and that the other more than 2,100 political prisoners who are currently detained in Burma also be released.

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 312 affiliated national organisations from 157 countries. <http://www.ituc-csi.org>
<http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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