

The Canadian Government had welcomed the Union of Myanmar's public and repeated commitment to hold free and fair elections, leading to the transfer of power to a new government. The interim government's actions subsequent to Myanmar's May elections are in defiance of a clear expression of public will.

We implore the State Law and Order Restoration Council to demonstrate its oft-stated interest in building democratic institutions and protect the human rights of its people.

The human rights situation in China continues to be of concern to Canada. In particular, we have been troubled by the recent trials of dissidents associated with the events of 1989 and the plight of those activists who remain in detention. Many Canadians have followed the progress of the trials very closely, and have raised important questions regarding the conduct of the judicial process. We are also concerned that the grounds on which most of the dissidents were arrested and charged would not be considered criminal by generally-recognized international standards; standards which are established in such international human rights instruments as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which all Member States, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, are called upon to respect.

One of the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the right of the individual to a fair and public hearing. The recent prosecutions were conducted hastily, with limited opportunity for the preparation of a defense and with controlled access, prohibiting the presence of foreign observers. The sentences which have been given to the prominent dissidents, while in many cases less severe than had been widely expected, are nonetheless troubling to Canadians.

We do acknowledge the release of a large number of detainees in the last year, some of whom were released in recent weeks. We are encouraged by these releases, and are hopeful that the Chinese authorities will strive to find a means by which to deal sympathetically and positively with the question of those persons remaining in detention since June 1989.

The question of respect for the human rights of the population of Tibet remains of concern to Canada. We encourage China's leaders to give careful attention to the means by which the human rights situation in Tibet can be improved.

Once again, we regret the passing of another year during which a peaceful settlement of the Cambodian conflict has eluded us. Cambodians on both sides of the battle lines, whether in camps in the border territories or within Cambodia, continue to be denied their fundamental human rights, including some of the most basic: the right to life and the right of self-determination.

Only through a comprehensive political settlement is there hope that human rights in this embattled region can be restored. To this end, Canada repledges its commitment to the ongoing peace process under the leadership of the co-chairmen of the Paris International Conference on Cambodia, in the hope that 20 tragic years of turmoil can be brought to an end.

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PAGE 4 OF 1233