

**Freed Suu Kyi calls for 'non-violent revolution'**  
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Newly freed democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi called on Monday for a "non-violent revolution" in Burma as she knuckled down to the task of rebuilding her weakened opposition movement.

Speaking at her party headquarters in Yangon, where she met with senior regional members for the first time in years, she told the BBC she was sure democracy would eventually come to her country, although she did not know when.

"I think we also have to try to make this thing happen... Velvet revolution sounds a little strange in the context of the military, but a non-violent revolution. Let's put it that way," the 65-year-old said.

Suu Kyi was freed from house arrest on Saturday, less than a week after a controversial election that cemented the junta's decades-long grip on power but was widely criticised by democracy activists and Western leaders as a sham.

The Nobel Peace Prize winner, who has been locked up by Myanmar's regime for 15 of the past 21 years, gave her first political speech in seven years on Sunday, appealing to thousands of her jubilant supporters for unity.

She said in her latest interview, published on the BBC website, that she would take any opportunity for talks with the ruling military junta, which she wanted to change rather than fall.

"I don't want to see the military falling. I want to see the military rising to dignified heights of professionalism and true patriotism," she said.

"I think it's quite obvious what the people want; the people just want better lives based on security and on freedom."

Telephone line to be restored 'soon'

When asked whether a letter would be sent to Than Shwe to request a meeting, Nyan Win, a spokesman for her National League for Democracy (NLD) said: "I don't know."

"We have asked since the beginning for dialogue. She is always ready for dialogue," he told AFP on Monday.

After having only limited contact with the outside world for most of the past two decades, Suu Kyi's telephone line at her crumbling lakeside mansion will be restored "soon", an unnamed Myanmar official told AFP.

Nyan Win said the mother-of-two is also hoping that her youngest son Kim Aris will be able travel to Yangon and join her on a visit to Shwedagon Pagoda, the site of Suu Kyi's first political speech in 1988.

Kim Aris, who lives in Britain, travelled to the Thai capital ahead of his mother's release but it remained unclear whether he had received a visa that would grant him entrance to

Burma.

On the political front, attention is now focused on whether Suu Kyi can unite the country's deeply divided opposition and bring change to the impoverished nation.

"I want to work with all democratic forces," she told her supporters on Sunday, saying she wanted to "hear the voice of the people" before deciding her course of action.

Avoid a direct confrontation

The daughter of the nation's assassinated independence hero Aung San carries a weight of expectation among her followers for a better future after almost half a century of military dictatorship.

aung san suu kyi released crowd There was a new air of optimism on the streets of Yangon but some observers have warned that the dissident is no "miracle worker".

"She has always voluntarily tested the military authorities, has always wanted to push the red line drawn by the regime," said Renaud Egretreau, a Burma expert at the University of Hong Kong.

But with a powerful junta watching her every move, the situation "might make her avoid a direct confrontation for the time being", he added.

Suu Kyi's party boycotted the November 7 vote, a decision that deeply split the opposition. Some former members of her party left to stand in the poll, prompting accusations of betrayal from some of her closest associates.

The opposition leader swept the NLD to victory in a 1990 election, but it was never allowed to take power.

Her struggle for her country has come at a high personal cost: her British husband died in 1999, and in the final stages of his battle with cancer the junta refused him a visa to see his wife. She has never met her grandchildren.

Australia was the latest country to offer support to Suu Kyi on Monday, with Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd saying he had spoken with her and promised that his country would continue to be her "reliable friend" in the future.

- AFP

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