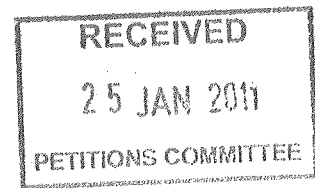




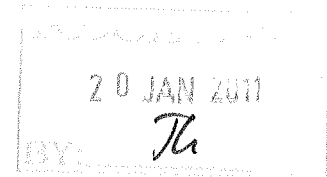
THE HON KEVIN RUDD MP


MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
CANBERRA



The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
PARLIAMENT HOUSE ACT 2600

- 5 JAN 2011



Dear Mr Murphy 

Thank you for your letter of 22 November 2010 about the Standing Committee on Petitions' consideration of a petition regarding Burma's 7 November 2010 elections.

The Australian Government has noted our deep concerns about the fundamentally flawed election process and patently unfair election laws. It is clear that Burma's elections fell well short of democratic norms. We remain particularly concerned by reports that the extensive use of coerced or fraudulent advanced votes fundamentally changed the election results. We respect the decision of those democrats in Burma who chose to contest the elections under these unfair conditions, as we do the decision of those who chose not to participate, including the National League for Democracy.

Australia warmly welcomed the 13 November release, without conditions, of Aung San Suu Kyi. On 14 November, Prime Minister Gillard and I issued a joint statement welcoming her release and conveying Australia's deep admiration for her and her struggle. The Australian Government urges the Burmese authorities to take this opportunity to involve Aung San Suu Kyi and all of Burma's ethnic and political groups in a genuine process of dialogue and national reconciliation. We continue to call on the authorities to allow freedom of speech, assembly and association and to release all remaining political prisoners.

The Australian Government will be watching very closely what emerges from the Burmese political process, and will be engaging with Aung San Suu Kyi and the international community to determine the next steps to support reform and democracy in Burma. We stand ready to provide any support necessary to help the Burmese people in their struggle for democracy.

Thank you for bringing the petition to the attention of the Government.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Rudd