

Aung San Suu Kyi urges UN pressure on Govt

BURMESE opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has called on the United Nations to pressure the new Burmese Government to negotiate with pro-democracy protesters.

by Alan Boyd in Rangoon

But she warned in an interview with the *Bangkok Post* that the international community should not intervene directly.

"I hope the United Nations makes a strong protest, but I'm wary of any kind of foreign external intervention in the affairs of the country," she said.

"This is very much an affair of the Burmese people, and I feel that we should be able to resolve it ourselves.

"But I hoped the international community would be a bit stronger about its protests. We would appreciate some moral support from all directions."

Aung San Suu Kyi attacked Western countries that continued supporting the Burmese Government through aid programmes.

"If you take the case of a country like Japan, we would like them to say they won't give aid to such a government, as West Germany has done," she said.

"I wish the international community would make it quite clear that the suppression by the armed forces is no way for a responsible government to behave. They should condemn such be-



AUNG SAN SUU KYI...
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haviour."

The opposition leader discounted fears that cuts in aid from abroad would aggravate food shortages in Burma.

"As a matter of fact, the people have not really had the benefit of the aid in the past 26 years. I don't think the people have benefited much from the aid that has been given to the Government," she said.

"We're going ahead and trying to get and distrib-

ute as much rice as possible. This is one of our main aims: to see that the people have enough to eat.

"In any case, the food position seems to have picked up. There are unconfirmed reports that there has been distribution of rice in some areas of Rangoon, but I don't know to what extent."

Despite Sunday's military coup, Aung San Suu Kyi is still hopeful that talks could be held with the Government.

"On Tuesday night, the state council of the Buddhists made an announcement on the radio asking for negotiations. And obviously this is only done at the behest of the Government," she said.

"But whether this shows they want to cool the people down, or whether they still want to negotiate, we don't know."

She reiterated the refusal of opposition groups to take part in an election campaign if the Government proceeds with its declared intention of holding a multi-party poll within three months.

"Nobody has come up and registered, so no political parties have been formed. They're mostly little groups, they're not political parties."

"It's very difficult to understand exactly what they want to do, as you can't really have free elections if they're shooting people down in the streets. Nobody is going to believe in freedom.

"If you're not free to walk even along the streets and be safe, how can you be free to vote for somebody that the powers-that-be don't want?"

Aung San Suu Kyi admitted that the protest movement had been set back by the military coup, and expressed fears that the next step would be a crackdown on opposition leaders.

"A couple of opposition people were taken away. One was somebody who was helping me in the office and really had nothing to do with all this."

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"Innocent people are being shot down for no reason at all. And it's not as if they are fighting back. I believe in some instances people were shot at from above as they were walking past — by snipers in buildings.

"I really think it's time the Government started thinking about the good of the country and the people, instead of just what they want to do.

"I would like every country in the world to recognise the fact that the people of Burma are being shot down for no reason at all."

Asked whether the opposition was sticking by its call for a non-violent response to brutal military force, Aung San Suu Kyi said the Burmese people must retain the right to self-defence.

"Whatever arms they have, it's a pitiable lot, very little. And if you're shot on, then people pick up guns and shoot back. One would say they were shooting in self-defence.

"It's not enough to say the armed forces are just putting down mob violence, it's just not true. Even if there is a mob, you don't put down a mob carrying catapults by using guns."