

Pope asks for jailed leader Suu Kyi to be freed

Myanmar POPE Francis has called for the liberation of Myanmar's detained former leader and Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and offered the Vatican as a safe haven, the pontiff said in a recent conversation with Jesuits in Asia.

"I asked for the Ms Aung San Suu Kyi's release and received her in Rome. I offered the Vatican to receive her in our territory," he said in a private conversation during a recent 12-day tour across South-East Asia.

The 87-year old pontiff visited Myanmar in December 2017.

Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* published the comments yesterday in an article by Father Antonio Spadaro, a Rome-based Jesuit priest who attends the meetings and writes about them afterwards with the pope's permission.

Myanmar's military government has ramped up killings and arrests in an apparent bid to silence opponents and recruit soldiers in an escalating conflict, a UN report said last week.

Suu Kyi, 78, has been detained by the military since it seized power in a 2021 coup.

She faces 27 years in prison for crimes ranging from treason to bribery, charges she denies. In April she was moved from prison to house arrest. — Reuters