1. On the 27 May 1998, the National League for Democracy held a convention and commemorated the 8th anniversary of the multiparty general elections. Because eight years had passed and the People's Parliament had not been convened, all the branches of the League passed a unanimous resolution for the Central Executive Committee to set a date for the convening of the People's Parliament. Therefore, the Central Executive Committee asked the authorities to convene the People's Parliament before the 21 August 1998.

2. In Chapter 2, Section 3 of the "Pyithu Hluttaw (People's Parliament) Election Law" which was decreed by the authorities states that "the Hluttaw (Parliament) must comprise the representatives elected in accordance with the provision of the law". Chapter 1, Section 2 states that "Hluttaw (Parliament) refers to the Pyithu Hluttaw (People's Parliament). Therefore it is this People's Parliament that is responsible for the enactment of laws for the functioning of the legislative, administrative and judicial bodies of the state and not a constituent assembly formed under a constitution.

3. Because there is nothing in Section 3 of this law specifying who is responsible for the convening of the parliament it can be interpreted to mean that either the authorities, or the candidates elected by the people at the elections or the political party winning the majority of seats can call a parliament.

4. The National League for Democracy having won the elections and being aware of its responsibilities and obligations call on the authorities to convene parliament which they have unjustifiably failed to do. Hence, the league has proclaimed that it will convene parliament. This is legitimate because according to convention parliament must be convened at the request of 34% of parliamentarians. Here, the request is by more than 50%.

5. Because of the critical situation that exists in the country today, the people will wholeheartedly welcome the convening of parliament. Moreover, the people firmly believed that a parliament would have been formed immediately after the general elections. For this reason they cast their votes for their representatives. There is no meaning otherwise. The people would not have gone to the polls to cast their vote for a parliament that would not come into existence.

6. When a People's Parliament is created, democracy and human rights can exist side by side and will flourish. This was what the people were
desperately looking forward to. But eight years have passed and it has not materialised. If this is obliterated and effaced there will be great dissatisfaction. Failure to convene parliament amounts to ignoring and flouting the genuine wishes of the people. The people will rejoice when parliament is convened otherwise, there will be no satisfaction of their desire and adversity will be the consequences.

7. After the National League for Democracy had acted responsibly and published its intention to fulfil its duties to the citizens of the Union for the benefit of the country, the authorities did not take the opportunity to find a peaceful solution that could have been acceptable to the people and the political parties. Instead they immediately proceeded to illegally arrest, imprison, threaten and coerce all NLD parliamentarians-elect, members of organising committees from the State, Division, Township, Villages and wards and ordinary members. In reality, political parties act as a bridge between the people and the authorities. The authorities completely fail to understand this point. Inappropriate criminal provisions of law, meant for the worst offences are being resorted to. This reflects badly on the enforcing authorities. There is no offence whatsoever in political and/or activities for the good of the country motivated and arising out of one's own free will and convictions. These are virtuous acts free from any defilement. There is absolutely no foundation to the charges by the authorities that these political activities offend the law.

8. It is patently clear that the authorities are lying and are aware of their dishonesty because they claim that these NLD parliamentarians-elect, other parliamentarians NLD(States, Division, Townships, Villages, Wards) organising committee members and ordinary members are being housed in state guest houses for consultations. No essential details have been given.

9. It is a blatant lie that these individuals have been taken in for consultations. The real reason behind these unlawful arrests is to facilitate the illegal pressure processes by which the authorities hope to influence them. In our Statement No 70 (9/98) dated 23 September 1998, we have expounded on this matter. Instead of providing these arrested persons with their daily food, the authorities have illegally taken the food from the private food stalls by threats and intimidation. We have expounded on this matter in our Statement No 89 (10/98) dated 15 October 1998.

10. Details and reference to the relevant provisions of law have been set out about these unlawful acts of restraint, criminal intimidation and physical and mental torture that have been exercised on these individuals in our Statement No 82(10/98) dated 3 October, 1998 and our Statement No 87 (10/98) dated 15 October 1998.
11. Information received is that through processes of such mental and physical torture exercised on these individuals and their families they are making
(a) parliamentarians sign letters of resignation despite their unwillingness to do so. (note- resignation is only possible with the permission of the chairman of the parliament),
(b) members from organising committees sign letters of resignation from the position they are holding and from the party despite their unwillingness to do so;
(c) ordinary members sign letters of resignation despite their unwillingness to do so.

12. Among those arrested as aforesaid, there are some NLD members who for various reasons have been out of touch with the party. The authorities have taken advantage of such situations and twisted the facts to make it appear that these individuals are defectors and that they are in full agreement with the authorities. These persons have been released. We strongly denounce such action.

13. Those NLD parliamentarians and other members who are standing firm because of their political convictions on democracy and human rights and will not cave in to the illegal pressures applied to them by the authorities are being dispatched to the prisons. The practice adopted by the authorities is to frequently apply for remand for flimsy reasons, eventually charge them under inappropriate sections and obtain sentences of imprisonment against them. This procedure of punishing innocent politicians performing duties for the good of the country is a blemish in the history of Burma.

14. The above actions of the authorities contradicts the "rule of law" which they allege they are observing. It amounts to illegal pressure through restraint, beatings, persecutions and torture. The true fact is that the authorities are committing criminal acts in their excessive and illegal use of power. The word "authorities" includes all those giving the orders, all those receiving the orders and all those executing those orders. Using processes that contravene the law to obtain resignations from the party is unacceptable to the NLD. In legal terms it must be deemed to be ab initio void. We vehemently denounce it.

The Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
21 October 1998