A letter dated 2 November 1998 from the Chairman of the National League for Democracy to the Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council relating to the forced labour on virgin and unoccupied land expropriated by the Military in the Htantabin township of Rangoon division is herewith reproduced for information.

(f) " Subject- Forced labour

1. Information received is that about 100 areas of land has been expropriated by the Military in the Htantabin township, Rangoon Division. This unoccupied land is marshland with bogs and covered with reeds.

2. Our information is that about 500 people from Htantabin township are daily forced to clear the area.

3. Our information is that the labourers are forced to work continuously in rain and sun without any rest and that this operation is supervised by Maj Lwin Soe from a military unit based at Anyasu which is on the Rangoon-Nyaungdon road.

4. One of these forced labourers by the name of U Myo Myint from Nyaungyoe village of Htantabin township was bitten by a poisonous snake on 29 October and first sent to the Rangoon General Hospital for treatment but later transferred to the new hospital (New Japanese Hospital). Our information is that he was still in a coma on 30 October 1998.

5. The people are compelled to supply one person per household for the cultivation of land for the army and those households that do not comply are threatened by the authorities in the villages that "the army will get you. It is your responsibility". This is outright injustice. It is proper that cordial and agreeable relations exits between the army and the people.

6. The powers that he have been proclaiming to the world that there is no forced labour in Burma. The above events reveal the truth of the matter.

7. We ask that steps be taken to stop the conscription of people and forcing them to supply labour as shown above. We strongly denounce the commission of acts that are not appropriate " (END)
Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

2 November 1998