Statement 119 (12/98)

Contents of two letters dated 7/12/98 from the Chairman of the National League for Democracy to the Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council are reproduced and distributed for information.

BEGIN

"Subject: The charitable act of rice donation to the destitute and poor of Rangoon Division by the General Secretary, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

1. With a pure and upright spirit, the General Secretary of the National League for Democracy performed the charitable act of donating rice to the poor and destitute to relieve them from hunger to a certain extent.

2. The circumstances were
   (a) The poor and destitute recipients of the charitable act came individually and as they approached the appointed place (Number 97/b West Shwegondine Road, Bahan) to receive the rice, the numbers grew. This was an unavoidable situation.
   (b) The recipients of this charity came peacefully to receive the gift which would be an enabling factor for the donor to gain merit.
   (c) There was no disturbance of the peace in the locality and after receiving the rice it was witnessed that they departed peacefully.
   (d) There wasn't the slightest infringement of the laws, rules and notifications prescribed by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (now the State Peace and Development Council)
   (e) Present in the vicinity where the rice was distributed were persons in authority from the township, police and military intelligence personnel also. They saw that the proceedings went smoothly and peacefully. We so not believe that they would be pretending not to see or not to hear what was happening.
   (f) If one is unable to perform such charities, the occasion should be one for rejoicing and giving praise.

3. Despite the fact that everything went smoothly and peacefully, the chairman and some members of the Peace and Development Council of the area summoned the owner( a widow) of the premises where the distribution was done and some of her friends and unjustly, illegally and without any justification whatsoever threatened them in a manner unbecoming of a public servant. They refused to accept her explanation that she was in no way involved with the charity and that it was entirely the doing of the National League for Democracy. They said that she was responsible for the accumulation of the large number of people assembled on the road. She is not the owner of the road. This is something that should never have been said or done by the authorities. As stated in the
subject matter above, only the General Secretary of the National League for Democracy, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was the donor. The owner of the premises had no say in this matter.

4. The abuse of authority by the chairman and members of the local Peace and Development Council against the innocent owner of the premises is unwarranted and illegal and is strongly objected to. It is necessary that the persons concerned should be reminded to refrain from acting inappropriately and to be courteous and polite in their dealings with the public for a smooth and peaceful outcome. We would like that they be directed to stop their churlish behaviour. We repeat that the donation and distribution of rice had nothing to do with the individual."

END

BEGIN
"Subject: The charitable act of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, General Secretary of the National League for Democracy towards the poor and destitute citizens living in the Rangoon Division

Reference: NLD letter Number 104/SEE(CHAN)/98 continuation

1. It has come to our knowledge that the chairman of the SPDC of the area forced the pitiable owner (widow), who was entirely unrelated to the donating and distribution of rice to sign (without any legal authority) a declaration that "rice must not be distributed". Her explanations of the circumstances were completely ignored. It is a flagrant example of injustice. Now it appears that any pronouncement by the authorities has the force of law.

2. The distribution of rice had absolutely nothing to do with the owner of the premises. It was entirely the business of the National League for Democracy and the donor was the general secretary, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The abuse of power by the authorities is outrageous. Actions that have not been sanctioned by law should not be resorted to.

3. The actions of the National League for Democracy are in the national interest for democracy and human rights. The owner of the premises was not involved in any way, neither is she involved with the NLD.

4. I wish to repeat that the donation and distribution of rice was entirely the general secretary Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's personal decision.

5. The meritorious action of donating and distributing rice will relieve the donor from hunger and thirst in his/her next lifetime is a concept
which is contained in the Buddhist Scriptures.

6. Therefore the owner of the premises who had absolutely nothing to do with the matter should never have been intimidated and persecuted. This is most unjust and bullying behaviour. We again strongly urge that directives be given to the Bahan authorities to cease and refrain from acting outside the law in future."

It is hereby publicly declared that we will continue with charitable acts for merit that can be gained and shared. Blessings will be showered on all.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

8 December 1998