Statement 121 (12/98)

1. The National League for Democracy is a legally constituted political party performing legal duties in the national interest and as such, all its branches at state, division, township and village levels, all its organising committees and all other working groups automatically have the same legal status as the central body. This organisation was duly registered in conformity with the law promulgated by the authorities that had assumed state power in 1988.

2. (a) In breach of the provisions contained in the Political Parties Registration Law; in breach of the principles of the rule of law; in breach of its own laws (laws made by them); the authorities are now deceitfully announcing that NLD township branches have been voluntarily dissolved when the truth of the matter is that by the use of power and authority and intimidation, these branches and organising committees are now being decapitated by them. These activities by the authorities are illegal and unjust and do not have the force of law. In the same way they have forces the resignations of our members. This is illegal and abuse of power to the extreme.

(b) We declare that the above activities are totally unacceptable and strongly denounce such reprehensible conduct.

3. Illegal methods used by the Military Intelligence and specific instances of forced closures of branches and resignations of members are cited below:-

(a) In some townships while most of the members of the organising committees were arrested, the remaining one or two members were threatened and made to close down. The office signboards, seals, documents and other paraphernalia were forcefully removed and taken by the authorities to the respective election commission offices. There was no entrustment by the members.

(b) One outstanding instance relates to the branch in Monywa township of Sagaing Division where the chairman of the local State Peace and Development Council issued a summons (similar to the procedure adopted in a criminal matter) to the organising committee for their attendance at his office without fail on the 3 November 1998. This is what was said by him:
"xxxxx The news about resignations of NLD members must be known to you. All township organising committee members have also resigned. The organising committee members of ChaungOo township (Sagaing division) have also resigned, Therefore, all members of Monywa township organising
committee will resign failing which my duty is to take appropriate action. Resignations can be made individually also. xxxxx"
(Note: Evidence of the limitless use of authority)

(c) The members of the township organising committee rejected the orders to resign.

(d) (1) The resolution taken by the ChaungOo township of Sagaing Division was as follows:-
"The Township Executive Committee will not be dissolved and the members have no intention whatsoever of resigning."

(2) Regarding the allegation that 12 members from this township had resigned the fact is that those twelve members had lose touch with the party for a long period of time and had not participated in the activities of the organisation. In order to swell their figures, the authorities have deceitfully included them in their list of resignations.

(3) The NLD signboard was illegally and forcefully removed by the authorities on 27 November 1998 at 10:30 a.m without the knowledge or approval of the members. Again, the display of boundless authority.

(e) On the 26 November 1998, a summons was sent by the local office of the Elections Commissioner of Chauk township, Magwe Division to the members of the NLD organising committee "inviting" them to "attend without fail" for "discussions". "Discussions" and "without fail" are contradictory terms and indicates boundless authority. The chairman of this Commission skillfully told thus
"xxxxx Our premises is open for discussion of party matters with individuals or in groups at all times. xxxxx" and that as far as the committee was concerned, they (individually or as a group) had no questions to ask.

(f) (1) In Myaung township of Sagaing Division. members of the local SPDC and members of the USDA who have nothing to do with the issue went to the villages and threatened the grass roots of the organisaions by saying:
"xxxxx Your representatives in parliament, your organising committee members have all resigned and if you all do not resign you will be in big trouble. When the party is declared an illegal party, action will be taken against you so you had better resign now and we will help you. xxxxx"

(2) In addition, the information we have received is that illegal pressure is being applied and the people are being enticed with promises of advantages if they will "speak out and organise themselves to cause disenchantment against the General Secretary Daw Aung San Suu Kyi".

(g) Some members of the NLD have been threatened with action under Section 5(j) of the 1950 Emergency Provisions Law if they do not resign.
(h) The most loathsome of all their actions is by the military intelligence who have obtained signatures of resignations from persons pretending to be members of the NLD-this is the information that we have received and is happening especially in the Irrawaddy Division.

4. We urge the higher authorities to direct their subordinates to stop and refrain from these evil, unscrupulous and scurrilous practices.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

14 December 1998