National League for Democracy  
No. (97/B), West Shwegondine Road  
Bahan Township, Bahan

STATEMENT 64 (5/99) (translation)

1. It has been reported to us that in Sagaing Division, Wuntho township, because of the practice of forced labour and illegal demands for money the people are overburdened and are deeply distressed.

2. U Than Tun, the previous Chairman of the Peace and Development Council of Wuntho township demanded Kyats 300/- from about ten thousand households collecting a total sum of thirty lakhs allegedly to purchase a fire engine which was never bought nor has there been any accounting for the money.

3. U Khin Maung Swe, the present incumbent claims that the thirty lakhs that the people was forced to pay is missing and no signs of a fire engine exists. No evidence exists relating to the collection of the money either.

4. He now is demanding each household to pay Kyats 100/- each to repair an old fire engine which was a donation from the Katha township. The residents had been previously informed that the surplus money of four lakhs (money collected for the TV tower) would be appropriated to meet the cost of repairs of that old engine.

5. Right now, every household is being asked to pay Kyats three hundred for the erection of a pagoda (162 ' high) in Magyibin village tract, Nankhan sub-township, Wuntho township. In lieu of payment, five days of labour on the site is required. This is a second demand because in 1998 a similar demand for payment of Kyats three hundred and forced labour for the erection of a pagoda in Magyibin village tract was made.

6. These demands for money under present circumstances where people are facing difficulties to survive because of the high inflationary cost of everything, to make people put aside their own business, and force them to work without wages is just too heavy a burden to bear. Their poverty is both physical and mental.

7. We urge those who are causing such distress and placing such unbearable burdens on the people to stop this practice. This utter lack of consideration for the physical and mental well being of the people cannot be condoned under any circumstances.

Central Executive Committee  
National League for Democracy

7 May 1999