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

STATEMENT 73 (6/99) (translation)

1. Letter dated 8 June 1999 from Chairman NLD to Chairman SPDC is reproduced below for information.

(Start) "Subject - Alleged suicide of NLD member U Hla Khin in Insein jail.

1. It was only by reading an announcement in the newspaper that the League came to know about the suicide and death on 31st May, 1999 at 03:30 hours of member U Hla Khin. He had been arrested and imprisoned in Insein jail under 1975 Law to protect the disruption of the state by harmful persons. The fact that he was a member of the NLD was mentioned in the newspaper.

2. (a) As far as the League is concerned, U Hla Khin had committed no offence. He is a man of good repute who earned a living by honest means. He was an amiable person who performed his social obligations with credit.

2. (b) Therefore the League feels that action under the 1975 law to protect the disruption of the state by harmful persons was not warranted. It was an abuse of power.

3. Between 12 August and 24 August of 1998, NLD General Secretary Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and chairman of the Irrawaddy division organising committee were illegally blockaded by the authorities at Htan-ta-bin township near A-nya-su village on their journey to Pathein. They were travelling peacefully on a public highway and on a customary mission to give succor and support to families of 2 leaders of the party who had been illegally arrested and incarcerated.

4. (a) On that occasion, U Hla Khin and three companions, out of concern and regard traveled on the public highway to where their leaders were marooned to witness the situation. There was no prohibition against such a visit and they caused no disturbance either so there was no cause of action against him under the law that was quoted.

4. (b) Action was only taken against U Hla Khin and 8 others (not his 3 companions on that occasion) amongst the many others who visited the scene then. Two others were released.

5. The authorities in announcing his death alleged that he indulged in alcohol which resulted in brain damage and suicide. This is questionable. He had been imprisoned for nine months. How was it possible for him to have access to liquor? If he had that affliction,
did the authorities take any remedial steps? It is not impossible for this disease to be cured.

6. His family members are in great shock and were not able to give any explanation whatsoever to the members of the League when inquiries were made. It is very likely that they had been threatened and intimidated by some person or organisation. No response was obtained to questions about whether the family was given permission to view the corpse or to bury it. However on the 7th day after his death, in accordance with Buddhist beliefs and custom, the League offered prayers and food to Buddhist monks on his behalf.

7. The entire responsibility for U Hla Khin's death lies with the Insein prison authorities. This is because a prisoner's health and well-being during the period of imprisonment rests with the person under whose charge he is held. This is imperative. The League demands that a full public inquiry be held into the death and circumstances surrounding his death.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
8 June 1999