1. Information has been received about the forced labour in Irrawaddy Division in townships of Bo-ga-lay, Nga-thaing-chaung, and Mou-la-myai-gyun.

2. The township and village authorities forced and intimidated villagers to provide labor for the Pae-chaung to Ka-done-ka-ne road construction in Bogalay township. Ko Tet Tun and Ko Aye Myint of Thazin-gnu village were summoned to appear at Bo-ga-lay police station on 1 May 1999 for failing to do so. When they explained that they had to harvest the paddy and were not free, they were told to pay money which they couldn't. As a result, on the 12 May, Kyaw Soe Moe, Deputy Superintendent of Police charged them under the 1908 Village Act 12 and had to suffer imprisonment for 15 days.

3. Forced labour was required of villagers in Nga-thain-chaung township to build up the Nga-wun embankment. A sum of Kyats 500/- had to be paid by every household that could not supply the required labor. Those who could not make the said payment were required to go to Ma-u-gon village for earth-piling. Orders to take action those who disobeyed were given. At the time that these orders were given, Daw San Kyi of Ywa-thit-kyi village said that the government had announced that forced labor did not prevail in Burma, so she refused to work or to pay as ordered for which she was handcuffed, arrested and taken to Ye-kyi Police station and imprisoned for 15 days. The persons involved in this process were village authority head clerk and member U Maung Myint and U Pho Khin, Police superintendent Maung Htwe and sergeant Hla Kyi. She has now been released on bond and has to report at the Kone-pyin police station every fifteen days.

4. Information received is that farmers from eleven villages including the villages of Kyaik-pe, Htee-pale, Thoung-dan, Tha-lun-sa, Bamaw, Sa-noun-paik were forced to cultivate the land that was confiscated for the military unit 534 in Moulamyain-kyun or pay kyats five hundred per head.

5. We have heard also that U Khin Maung U (village chairman) and Sergeant Tun Hlaing (Infantry Unit 534) collected Kyats 600/- from every household in Ma-bay village tract on 3 May 1999 and again Kyats 500/- on 2 May 1999. There are 761 households in this village tract. This
collection is allegedly for the cultivation of fields confiscated for the army.

6. Most of the people in the country are living not only in a state of fear but are tightening their belts and suffering almost unbearable economic hardships. Instead of showing compassion for the village people and the cultivators at a time like this forcing them to give their labour and demanding money from them is very reprehensible and we strongly condemn these actions. They should be halted immediately.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
10 June 1999.

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

STATEMENT 65 (5/99) (translation)

1. Information received is that every individual of every household in Bogalay is required to give forced labor for the construction of a road linking Paechaung and Kadone-kane villages in Bogalay township.

2. The car road that is to be 32 miles long and 600 feet wide will have to cross six river tributaries, five chaungs (big creeks0 with a span of approximately 200 feet, and ten small streams. This road is to be imposing and massively built.

3. The residents of the town, villages and wards have been given notice that they will have to give personal or substitute labor.

4. Substitute labor will cost a household between five to ten thousand kyats. the road will cut across jungles and forests and mangrove swamps. Water under the surface is salty and drinking water is difficult to obtain.

5. Our information is that this road has not been planned by the central or divisional PDC but has been initiated by Sayadaw U Kawlatha assisted by the army and the township authorities. The reason given is to facilitate pilgrims to reach the site where the sayadaw has constructed
one thousand pagodas under gangaw trees. This car road is not really needed because it is a day's journey by waterway to and from Bogalay town to Kadone-kane village.

6. U Aung Khin Bo and U Aung Myint (Chairman and member of the township organising committee) who reported these circumstances to us have been illegally arrested and sentenced to 2 years imprisonment by those who hold power. This action is downright unjustifiable. They were only performing their duty as required by the rules and regulations of a legally constituted political party. This is a travesty and miscarriage of justice.

7. We vehemently denounce such unfair inequitable practices.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
11 May 1999