STATEMENT 89 (7/99) (translation)

1. Information to hand is that villagers in Kyi-bin-su and its vicinity (Moulmeingyun township, Ayeyawaddy division) are being recruited for forced labour. The Infantry Division (534) has stipulated that one person per household be assigned for labour and in cases where labour cannot be given, Kyats 6000/- to 7000/- per village tract be collected for the alleged task of cultivation of paddy. The area for such cultivation is over 100 acres of muddy swamps where buffaloes and cows graze. The forced labour is actually for the building of an embankment (5' high and 20' wide). In spots where manual labour is not possible the people are forced to pay for the cost of mechanical devices.

2. The people have to make their own travel arrangements to the workplace at their own expense. Having no money there is no other option but to ask for loans and/or advancement payments from the landowners for whatever work they are required to do in the fields. This has caused much anguish and distress for them. Their work schedule at the commencement of the rainy season is disrupted because of the "forced labour" requirements.

3. Though the higher authorities have given instructions to stop "forced labour", the practice continues. We ask that proper supervision be made to stop the deplorable behaviour and activity of the lower echelons in power.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
5 July 1999