

National League for Democracy
No: (97/B), West Shwegonedine Road
Bahan Township, Rangoon

Statement 21 (2/00) (translation)

1. Our information is that U Than Chaun of No 3 Saing-kone quarters, Shwe-goo township, Kachin State is the proprietor of a coffee shop.
2. On the morning of the 18 December 1999, the Shwe-goo Police arrested him and seized the radio in the coffee shop which was then tuned in to Voice of America (VOA) (Burmese Section).
3. On 19 January 2000, he was charged and sentenced to suffer two years rigorous imprisonment under Section 505 (b) of the Penal Code. The sentence is considerably harsh for the offence and is an indication of abuse of authority.
4. While in prison, his distraught wife who suffered from heart ailment and high blood pressure passed away. U Than Chaun who is 70 years old suffers from medical problems and we have been informed that his life is in danger.
5. No other country in the world metes out such a harsh penalty for listening to news broadcast by VOA as has happened to U Than Chaun. Only in Burma, citizen's basic human rights such as the right to listen to any kind of news is totally denied.
6. In this day and age (The Information Age), the fact that rulers of Burma can so arbitrarily and harshly punish their citizens for listening to news broadcasts exposes the backwardness, the immaturity and mindset of the rulers in their one driving force which is to subjugate the people.
7. It should be remembered that "Freedom of Information" is a landmark of civilized countries today.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
21 February 2000