

NLD Statement 32/2000:

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

Statement 32 (3/00) (translation)

1. We have information about the farmers and cultivators of sugarcane in the townships of Bahmo, Shwegu, Moemauk, and Mansi in the Bahmo district, Sagaing division, who are being intimidated and browbeaten in the sale of boiled sugarcane juice and paddy.
2. The authorities have ordered the sugarcane cultivators in Bahmo district to supply two million viss of boiled sugar cane juice to the sugar factory owned and installed by the north military command in the town of Bahmo. Sugar manufactured at this mill is for the annual consumption of the army. Orders have been issued by the military commander through the township authorities that every cultivator of sugarcane must (without fail) supply 4 barrels (holding 100 viss each) of this cooked sugar cane juice.
3. In Shwegu township, the authorities have issued orders that if the full quota of six hundred thousand viss is not fulfilled severe action will be taken by way of example to others. The threat is that unauthorised disposal of boiled sugarcane juice would result in confiscation of the transporting vehicles and the juice. The current price of this product is Kyats 102 per viss but the cultivators will receive much less according to the arbitrary decision of the military authorities and the loss they will suffer is great.
4. For every acre of paddy cultivated land in the year 2000, the cultivator is required to sell 12 baskets to the Agriculture Trade Department, 1 basket to the PDC and 3 baskets to the army. A total of 16 baskets for every acre cultivated is defined as "service paddy". Penalty for failure to fulfil this service will be severe is the threat given by the township authorities. The total acres under cultivation in the township is approximately 40 thousand. Payment for "service paddy" is only Kyats 350/- while the open market price is Kyats 800/-. The cultivator stands to lose Kyats 450/- per basket. In Shwegu township, the "service paddy" totals 40000 x 16 which results in a total loss of about Kyats 288 lakhs.
5. Therefore we urge the authorities to apply the open market price and not to unfairly cause loss to the cultivators.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
16 March 2000