

NLD Statement 44/2000:

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

Statement 44 (4/00) (translation)

1. We have heard about the hardship that cultivators are experiencing in the Kungyan-gone township Rangoon Division because of the low price fixed for the "duty paddy" which has to be supplied to the authorities. Because cost of basic needs are so exorbitant, they are unable to supply the quota demanded. Cultivators who really and truly cannot comply are threatened with imprisonment, penalties and revocation of cultivation permits. Some of them have been abused and taken away to the police stations where they are made to sign documents and even held there for certain periods.

2. To avoid such action being taken against them some have sold their lands, plantations, houses, buffaloes, cows at whatever price they get it is reported. There are those who have taken advantage of the plight of these cultivators and have bought up the buffaloes and cows at cut-price rates for profit in the black market. Information to hand is that at about 10:00 p.m. on the 20 February 2000, 10 cows were loaded on a motor boat at Thayet-taw village in Kau-hmu region and another batch of 12 cows was loaded at Kun-chan-gone township, Zigonetaw (Thoung-khone village) Swe-daw creek and taken to Mon State, Than-byu-zayat township, Kha-loke-pe village. Then they were taken across the border..

3. Another batch of buffaloes and cows was similarly dispatched on 30 February 2000 and our information is that this is happening continuously till this day. U Hla Khine, Chairman of Taw-ka-laik village PDC, and the chairman of Thauung-khone village PDC are the ones engineering this racket and U Than Aye of Baw-sa-kaing area in Kan-ba-la village is the connecting link with purchasers in Than-byu-zayat. We have also heard that Kyats three lakhs for one motor boat has to be paid to PDC chairman U Maung Myint Kyaw and U Soe Myint Hlaing, Deputy office manager

4. We have also been informed that the Chairmen of PDCs in the villages have been pressured by U Maung Myint Kyaw, (Township PDC chairman) and U Thet U (Secretary) and U Soe Myint Hlaing (Deputy Office manager) to take back by force the land from those who fail to complete the quota. U Thet U, the Secretary, summoned the chairmen of eight villages viz. Ye-tain, In-ga-lone, Dae-da-naw, Taw-loo (east), Taw-loo (west), Kha-lauk-ta-ya, Taung-gone, Taw-kha-yan (east) and demanded that land from 6 villagers in every village must be taken. He gave them to understand that they had the authority to do so and that he would be entirely responsible for any consequences. We have been informed that these instructions are being followed in those eight villages.

5. Our information is that U Kyaw Maung (Village PDC Chairman of Ye-tain village) and Ma Thin Thin, (Secretary of Taw-lan village PDC) summoned U Win Kyi and 5 other cultivators and asked them to put their signatures to papers prepared by U Soe Myint Hlaing (Deputy Office Manager) of the Township PDC on the 28 February 2000. The cultivators refused because written on those papers were words indicating a

voluntary return to the government of their lands because of their inability to effectively cultivate.

6. As a result, notices of termination permits was served followed by eviction using force. The cultivators who have been effected are:-

Daw Nyunt Way (Taw-koo east village)
U Myint Aye (Ye-tain village)
U Win Kyaing (Ye-tain village)
U Ba Kaung (In-ga-lone village)
U Htoon Kyi (In-ga-lone village)
Daw Khin Ma San (Taw-koo east village)
U Aung Win (Taw-koo west village)

7. We have been informed that U Maung Myint Kyaw (Township PDC chairman) went to Taung-gone village on the 29th February 2000 and told U Khin Win (leader of the village Union Solidarity and Development Association) and Secretary Ma Hla Than that he wanted the resignations of 12 NLD members. If they resigned they would not have to supply the government with "duty-paddy", that their paddy lands would not be confiscated, that they would not suffer arrest and imprisonment. In very strong and abusive language he instructed them to persecute the NLD members and destroy the organising committee. A motor vehicle was sent to the village on 30 February in which members and non members of NLD were taken to the Township PDC where they were forced to resign.

8. All this indicates the lawless state of affairs in which township authorities can do just what they like in violation of laws and justice besides exploiting the poor cultivators to benefit themselves. This can only result in administrative instability. While strongly denouncing these illegal activities we urge that action to rectify this situation be taken and appropriate legal measures be introduced.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
4 April 2000.