

NLD Statement 68/2000:

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

Statement 68(5/00) (translation)

1. We have been informed that 1. U Than Lwin (NLD Member of Parliament for Constituency 2, Madaya township, Mandalay Division and Chairman of Township Organising Committee), 2. U Kyaw Swe (Secretary), 3. U Nyein Maung (Treasurer), and 4. U Tin Aung (Youth Wing leader) were all illegally captured and taken away by the Military Intelligence.

2. U Than Lwin, MP, had been illegally held in the custody of the Military Intelligence from 26 June 1998 to 31 January 2000 on the excuse that he was involved in the call for convening of parliament. Pressure was put on him to get his resignation from the party and his elected position as MP.

3. However, he resisted their bribes and threats because of his firm conviction in human rights and democracy. He remained firm and his loyalty to the party could not be shaken.

4. On 30 January 2000, when he obtained his freedom from 18 months of illegal confinement by the military intelligence, he resumed his duties as Chairman of the township organising committee, met with the grass root members in the villages, discussed and explained party business, organized the formation of Youth Wing groups and did everything to give support and encouragement for the development the party.

5. These legal activities of U Than Lwin was a source of irritation to the authorities and the military intelligence so they planned to stage a "no confidence" demonstration against him.

6. The USDA and the township authorities held a meeting at the USDA office on the 21 February 2000 and resolved to obtain by one way or another signatures of all residents (8 years and above) of No 2 constituency by the 19 March 2000. The reason for obtaining signatures was not to be disclosed and the household lists was to be the source from which to necessary particulars were to be obtained. Accordingly, instructions were issued.

7. The following were the lies and threats that the authorities gave:-

- For peace and happiness.
- For a change in the administration of the villages.
- To destroy the underground and aboveground subversive elements.
- To defame the Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Khamauk party.

Those who refused to sign were told that their names would be listed and submitted to higher authorities. If they did not want to rebel against the SPDC, they were obliged to sign.

8. The USDA (an organisation that should have nothing to do politics) members were sent to the villages where residents refused to sign and again threatened them. Eventually they resorted to criminal acts of forgery. At least one member from household was forced to attend the demonstration which was held on the 29 March 2000.

9. This use of force, threats, and criminal activity staged for the purpose of denouncing a person is unjust and in violation of the law. It only demonstrates the deceitful, abominable depravity of the authorities that orchestrated it. This is no indication of the real wishes of the electorate. The genuine wishes of the people can be obtained by permitting them the opportunity to express themselves freely and not by foul, dishonest and disgraceful methods of intimidation and bullying which have now been employed. The activities of the those holding power is not compatible with the laws in force but are in direct contravention of its provisions. U Thn Lwin has sent letter in very strong terms objecting to this demonstration against him to the Madaya administrative authorities, the Elections Commission, the USDA and the NLD.

10. Now, the arrest of U Than Lwyn and three others of the NLD organising committee by the military intelligence clearly exposes the lawless state of affairs that exists. We vehemently condemn the "do-what-you-like" actions of the authorities concerned and demand that the persons who have been so arrested be immediately released.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
10 May 2000