

NLD Statement 86/2000

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

1. U Soe Han, Advocate of the Chief Court, Member of the NLD Rangoon Division Organizing Committee and Chairman of the NLD Legal Advisory Body is the victim of a trumped up case by the authorities.
2. On the 26 May, 2000, he went to spend the night at his mother's house in Insein and reported this "overnight" visit to the ward PDC as required. But at 2300 hours that night, on the pretext of checking the visitor's list, a group of about 25 persons headed by the military intelligence and members of the ward PDC entered the house and arrested him and three others.
3. On the 27 May, 2000 at 12:30 they were charged under the Town Administration Law, Section 3 for failing to report the overnight visit. His wife Daw Khin Aye Myint, his lawyer U Myint Thoung went to the Insein District court where they were informed that the case would be heard by the Special Court which sits within the precincts of Insein Jail. Though family members and lawyers are entitled to visit and defend an accused person under the law made by SLORC/SPDC [the military junta that rules Burma], this was denied to them. The offence is bailable, but this was also refused. The Special Court found them guilty and they were sentenced to pay a penalty of 50 Kyats (US\$15) each.
4. However, U Soe Han was not released. Fully aware of the fact that he is an advocate of the chief court and to deliberately disgrace him he was falsely charged under Section 180/54 of the Penal Code (suspected theft). He is also facing a charge under Section 186 (impeding a public servant in the course of his duties) for defending himself and asserting that he had reported the overnight visit. The trial was held in camera in the special court in the Jail where right of counsel and right of defense is totally denied. The verdict and sentence is passed under instructions of the military intelligence.
5. He has now been sentenced to three months imprisonment. This is a blatant abuse of power to suppress and annihilate the National League for Democracy and all its members who are actively working in it. Every means, every method, no matter how base, how false, how cruel, how detestable is being employed by the authorities to punish their political opponents.
6. We vehemently denounce those authorities who are responsible and demand that justice be restored.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
June 8, 2000