

NLD Statement 89/2000:

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

Statement 89 (6/00) (translation)

1. The Kya-khaung East Field 118-119 in Kyone-ta-ne Administration unit, Danubyu Township, Aye-ya-waddy Division was forestland prior to 1961. Farmers cleared the land for cultivating their crops and registered their claim as first settlers with the Land Records Department. They have been farming the land until the present military dictators government.
2. This area consists of about 126 acres and there were 13 first comers. Our information is that they have fulfilled their obligations with regard to payment of taxes and supply of "duty paddy" to the government.
3. However, in 1991-1992, U Htun Aye, the Danubyu township authority chairman, illegally appropriated the land for himself and carried on the cultivation. The farmers did nothing because they were very afraid.
4. When U Htun Aye ceased cultivating the land himself in 1999, one of the original first comers went to U Maung Win (Kyone-ta-ne village administration chairman) and asked that the original first comers be granted permission to cultivate the land as tenant -farmers. The response was "Do you want to be arrested? Do you want to be confined in "stocks"?"
5. However, the original owners who had paid their dues commenced preparations for cultivating the land in the beginning of the rainy season this year (2000), , they were forcefully prevented under instructions of the Divisional Authority by U Maung Win (Village administration chairman), U Chit Hla (Township Land Records superintendent), U Po Hla (member of the village administration authority committee).
6. The original first-comers were thus prevented but the power holders (anapaings) have surreptitiously given the land for cultivation to their cohorts for Kyats 1000/- per acre.
7. This action was objected to by the 13 first comers who filed a written petition on 20 May 2000 giving documentary proof of their claim with receipts for taxes paid and details of the allotments and the permits issued to them. The authorities (anapaings) have completely disregarded the appeals of the cultivators and are doing just what they like for their own benefit with no regard for equity or justice.
8. The farmers and cultivators are being exploited at every level by the authorities (anapaings). Their pleas for redress to higher anapaings are futile because the higher-ups and the lower-downs are hand-in-glove working in unison against the poor farmer. The life of a village farmer is one hell-of-an-existence, severely persecuted with no escape. We entreat earnestly and repeatedly that these conditions be changed and we condemn the illegal and unjust treatment that they have been given.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
16 June 2000