

NLD Statement 121/2000:

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

Statement 121 (8/00) (translation)

1. From early February 2000, a new road from Monywa to Kalewa running along the Chindwin water course and a bridge crossing the Myittha river in the Sagaing division are being constructed. The entire area is full of cliffs, ridges, chaungs and rivulets across which tree trunks have to be laid for crossing.

2. Residents from the townships of Monywa and Ka-ne (Monywa District), Min-kin township (Kale District), Kalewa township are summoned in writing to give forced labor and money by a method of apportionment.

3. Approximately 1000 people from each township is required to bring Kyats 200/- each and provide force labor. The money is to be used as and when necessary while working on the road. Kyats 500/- to 1000/- has to be paid for inability to give forced labor. Villagers in the vicinity and their cows and buffaloes too are commandeered for use on the road. Though these animals are required for the cultivation of crops on their farms, they are not spared. The people of the region are extremely hard pressed for their livelihood.

4. These workers are abused and driven like slaves by those in command. The area is infested with sand flies having the capability of killing elephants and malaria injecting mosquitoes and other insects and microbes that are harmful to humans.

5. Most of these forced laborers suffer from malaria and there are times when many lose consciousness while on the job. No medical aid whatsoever is provided by the authorities. Medicines have to be bought from outside by the patients themselves. No compensation is given for injuries or even death as a result of accidents at the workplace.

6. We strongly condemn this lack of sympathy and consideration for the country's people. Treating them as if they are not human beings and forcing them to do arduous work like slaves to accomplish the task given by those holding power is denounced by us.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
3 August 2000