

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

Statement 128 (8/00) (translation)

1. Information received about the construction of the Kaung-bo road in the township of Pin-da-ya, Taungyi district, Shan State is that forced labor was required of male and female residents of the following villages :- Shwe-pa-hto, Thein-kone, Ohn-ai, Pha-nan, North Patho, Inn-nge and Kaung-bo. In addition to having to provide their own food and water at the workplace, each household had to contribute Kyats 300 and 2 kyins of rock (kyin is a unit of measurement for a hundred cubic foot of rocks). Penalties were imposed for inability to supply the forced labor. No medical aid was supplied.
  2. It was the commencement of the rainy season when peasants cultivate their crops. This had to be left unattended while forced labor had to be given for the road construction. The people are demoralized because of the great strain on their lives.
  3. Forced labour was used to convert a 28 mile long stretch of road into a tarmac road from Bamauk to Indaw in Bamauk township (Sagaing division). Every household in the Bamauk township was responsible for filling up two and a half kyins (each kyin measuring 25'x10' and one foot high) with small stones which they had to first pound into pieces measuring 2 to 4 inches. People from villages that were not accessible to the big rocks had to go to the hills where rocks had been dynamited and transport them to the site. Kyats 2500/- per household was the fine for inability to do the rock pounding and Kyats 300/- for not collecting the rocks.
- In addition to this, those who lived in the vicinity were forced to provide labor and building materials such as planks, wooden posts, bamboo and money as apportioned by the village PDC for the construction of the Ma-Htone police station in Bamauk township.
4. On the 19 June 2000, the chairman of Ye-da-she village in the Myauk-chaung-village tract of Kaw-hmu township, Yangon division made five persons from every ten households clear the forest behind the village and remove the branches and trees to the road at the front of the village.
  5. Some of these villagers are so poor they live from hand to mouth. They are not in a position to give their labor free because they are absolutely dependent on their daily wages for their daily food. When they protested, U Mya Thein, the one hundred house headman and U San Maung, Chairman of the village authority responded with these words " This is compulsory. We will show you what a dragon's arm looks like."
  6. From the 4th July, 2000 to date the work of breaking and carrying stones for the road that links Ye-baw-thoung and Taw-la-ti villages in Taik-gyi township (Rangoon division) is being done with forced labor in rotation by villagers from the village tracts of Taw-la-ti, Baw-la-kwet, and Min-hla-wa. No wage is paid. Penalty for failure is Kyats 500/- per day.
  7. Prisoners from Ba-wa-thit prison in Sin-kyan village tract, (Taik-kyi township) are also made to work on the road construction. Villages from the vicinity have to supply rice packets daily for them.

8. The villagers and farmers here are experiencing great hardship because they need to be ploughing their fields at the beginning of the rainy season to prepare for cultivation of their crops instead of which they are forced to work on the road. Failure to give forced labour means a penalty of Kyats 500/-. Their tempers are rising and it is getting unbearable for them.

9. Recently the International Labor Organization gave notice to the military dictators in Burma to improve their record on forced labor but the authorities in the regions continue with the practice. Being a member of the United Nations and the International Labor Organisation, Burma should not indulge in practices that are not acceptable to the rest of the world and be disgraced. We urge those responsible to halt this practice of forced labor.

Central Executive Committee  
National League for Democracy

Rangoon  
11 August. 2000