

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

Statement 132 (8/00) (translation)

1. The stench that pervades Thayetmyo jail (Magwe Division) is almost as bad as the foul odor in the atmosphere of Insein jail. The military dictator's jail authorities fail to comply with the requirements of the Prisons Act and deliberately ill-treat, torture and persecute the prisoners. There are over 1000 inmates (criminals and political prisoners) in the Thayetmyo jail.

2. Day in and day out, all but 105 are required to do hard labour,.

They have to draw and carry water without a break. Other tasks are taungya cultivation, carpentry work, chopping and cutting wood, and all kinds of cleaning.

The jail authorities slave drive and make them work relentlessly.

Taungdwingyi township (Magwe division) NLD member U Pa Lay has suffered the harshest treatment. He originally suffered from a back complaint and has been made to draw water continuously which has aggravated his disease.

Though a reasonable quantity of medicines has been donated by the International Red Cross for use in the Thayetmyo jail the prisoners have not been issued with them. There is no adequate medical attention.

There is no jail doctor as such. Though the rule is that prisoners should be medically examined once a month, the practice is for an examination once in 2 months.

To some, the jail authorities fail to issue the full quantity of medicines prescribed by the doctor. When the families of some prisoners offer to buy the required medicines the doctor refuses them a prescription. (These are truly heinous, browbeating and villainous actions.)

Those who were forcefully removed from Insein jail in July, 2000 for no offences on their part and sent to other places, were not allowed visitation by their families for over a month.

Seven NLD members from Taungdwingyi township who were charged under Section 5(j) and sentenced to 7 years imprisonment were not allowed family visitation for over two months.

Transgressors of the penal code convicted of crimes are given better treatment in the jails than political prisoners. Diabolical means are devised to torture and persecute them. (This has created a moral and spiritual quagmire because good people are treated as bad and bad people are treated as good.)

Though religious literature was permitted in the middle of 1999, they have now stopped any kind of books brought by families of the inmates. Also, English literature is completely banned.

3. After a whole day of continuous arduous labour, the prisoners are woken up at 3:30 a.m. and forced to skin pe gji (lablab bean). Each prisoner has to finish one and a half to two pyis (pyi is a unit of grain measure equivalent to 8 condensed milk tins.) Punishment is meted out to those who refuse.
4. A respectable NLD Pyithu Hluttaw representative from Mingun township (Magwe division) who is over 70 years old was punished for not skinning beans. Similarly, the elderly NLD Pyithu Hluttaw representative of Myothit township was forced to skin beans.
5. Our information is that the cost for skinning these beans (ten kyats for one pyi) has been pocketed by the military dictator's Thayetmyo jail authorities from private individuals who are in the business of making fried beans.
6. These compulsory tasks that are forced upon the prisoners reflects the heartlessness of the jail authorities at Thayetmyo who are acting as servants of the military anashins. We vehemently denounce such unfeeling and heartless measures against fellow humans and ask for immediate cessation and stern action against the perpetrators of these willful and unjust actions.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
16 August 2000