

NLD Statement 134/2000:

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

Statement 134 (8/00) (translation)

1 Taw-lan village dictator chairman U Wei Gyaw (a) U Mya Than (Koon-gyan-gon township, Rangoon Division) purchased 6 acres of land owned by farmer Ko Aung Myo Thein and his wife Ma Nwe Nwe Win for six lakhs despite the disapproval and lack of consent by the wife. Ma Nwe Nwe Win continued to cultivate the four acres of land, which was her share of the plot as in the previous year, and her crops were flourishing. Then, village dictator chairman U Wei Gyaw claiming that he has the permission of the township dictator chairman U Maung Myint Kyaw took the plough machine to her field and destroyed the crops. He also took her to court for trespass.

Now, Ma Nwe Nwe Win is daily harassed by the township dictator U Maung Myint Kyaw, the village dictator U Wei Gyaw, the Land Records Department, the Agricultural Trading Department, the Township Court and the police. She is being threatened and blackmailed.

2. U Tin Thein, Chairman of Koon-gyan-gon township, Khalauk-taya village dictator in authority, confiscated 12 acres of the 24 acres of paddy land belonging to farmer U Kyi claiming that he had defaulted in supplying the full quota of "duty paddy" in 1995. As U Kyi was suffering from ill health, his son Ko Soe Thein worked the remaining 12 acres for his father. But again in 1997-98 he was accused of defaulting in fulfilling the "charity" quota resulting in further confiscation and sale of land to others surreptitiously. Ko Soe Thein resented these injustices so he just went ahead to cultivate the family land as usual.

This has resulted in land proceedings and inquiries by the Divisional Land Revenue and Land Records Departments. Meanwhile trespass proceedings have been opened against him by U Tin Thein (village dictator authority) under instructions from U Maung Myint Kyaw (township dictator authority) and he is being daily harassed, threatened and intimidated by the police.

3. The same village dictator authority U Tin Thein, encouraged by a previous township dictator authority had also confiscated 12 acres of land from one U Than Nyunt for shortage by 20 baskets "duty paddy" quota in 1997. Actually, out of the quota of 120 baskets, 100 baskets had been supplied. then the lands confiscated was sold to one U Pauk Sa at Kyats 16,000 an acre.

4. We have also been informed that in 1999, this same village dictator authority U Tin Thein accepted a bribe of Kyats 2000/- per acre from one U Mya Thwin and three other farmers and falsely represented to higher authorities that all their crops were destroyed through insect infestation.

On the other hand for those farmers who truly suffered insect infestation but could not give him money he refused to make the recommendation. We have been given to understand that he bullies and intimidates those who have the means.

5. Over the years chairman of the village dictator authority, U Tin Thein and chairman of the township dictator authority, U Maung Myint Kyaw have been distributing the 40 acres of land demarcated as pasture land to tenant farmers to benefit themselves. Also, there are reports about misappropriation of money which was forcibly collected for repairing the bridge behind the village and timber that had to be donated.

6. Koongyan-gon township is only 30 miles from the city of Rangoon and is within the Rangoon division. If the authorities in this locality, which is in such proximity with the capital, can rule like despots, it is frightening to imagine the magnitude of the despotism that is prevailing in distant regions.

We urge that immediate action be taken against those who are looking to benefit themselves and abusing authority and power unjustly and inequitably at the expenses of farmers and the masses. These unfair actions are also strenuously denounced.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
17 August 2000