Statement issued by
the National League for Democracy (NLD)
Rangoon

1. On the 14th April, 2004, NLD Chairman U Aung Shwe and Secretary U Lwin were released after 10 months of house arrest.

2. However our two top leaders Vice Chairman U Tin Oo and General Secretary Daw Aung San Suu Kyi have not been released yet.

The authorities have to this day closed down our NLD head office and all township, divisional, ward and village offices.

The fact that we have not been allowed to function and perform our normal duties is completely unacceptable.

3. We emphatically ask that our two top leaders, the Vice Chairman and the General Secretary, be immediately released and that our branches be immediately reopened. The remaining members of the Central Executive Body will not be making any decisions regarding the National Convention without the participation of our Vice Chairman and General Secretary.

4. On the 30th March, 2004, the National Convention Committee announced that the “temporarily suspended National Convention” would be reconvened on the 17th May 2004 in Rangoon and that invitations to representatives would be issued in time. This “temporary” suspension has lasted about 8 years and circumstances have changed.

5. We have heard that invitations to attend the National Convention have been issued. On the 7th April, 2004, the authorities delivered one invitation to the Chairman of the NLD and it was issued to him as an individual. As the NLD is a valid political organization with a separate entity, the invitation to the Chairman to attend in his individual capacity was not accepted by the Chairman.

6. We make it known that at the 1993 National Convention, the NLD, motivated by genuine and constructive intention, addressed letters 066/Org/95 and 067/Org/95 to the Chairman of the National Convention Convening Committee which stated inter alia that

“…………….we find that there is need for discussion and amendments because the purpose of the National Convention is to construct an authentic democratic state which is the earnest desire of the people and basic democratic principles must be written into the constitution which means that the foundation for democracy is being laid …………”.

In the letter 066/Org/95 it was specifically pointed out in detail the undemocratic pattern and rules formulated for the convening and the processes that were being adopted. The authorities completely disregarded our submissions and made no attempt to even give it a thought.

7. For this reason the NLD dispatched letter No 070/Org/95 dated 28/11/95 to the Chairman of the National Convention Commission in which the following was clearly stated:-
“4. The NLD’s representatives at the National Convention would not continue to attend the convention until such time as a proper discussion and consultation is arranged with successful outcome in order to achieve

(a) National reconciliation,

(b) A genuine and authentic multinational democratic nation,

(c) A constitution that is acceptable by a majority of its citizens.

The current National Convention Commission is aware of the contents of this letter and the circumstances under which it was written.

8. In violation of the rules framed by the National Convention Commission, the NLD representatives were expelled in less than 48 hours.

9. Should the same procedure and rules be adopted in the holding of the National Convention, it will not be appropriate for us to attend. The formation of a National Convention has to conform to democratic principles and its rules and procedure and process must follow suit.

10. Since it has been declared that the suspended National Convention will now be reconvened our views are:-

(a) Since we intend to establish a democratic Union of Burma, the processes formulated for the 1993 National Convention need to be reviewed and altered.

(b) There has been no consultation or discussion as to the amendments to the procedure and rules that were set for the previous convention.

(c) The NLD assumes that the previous 104 rules of procedure will still apply.

(d) Invitation to attend the previous National Convention was issued to the Central NLD office. Likewise it is proper that invitation to the reconvened Convention should be addressed to the Central NLD office.

(e) The NLD has not been given sufficient time to deliberate on the issues pertaining to the National Convention because of the short notice and invitation and most importantly, its leaders have been and some are still held incommunicado.

(f) Law 5/96 relating to the National Convention has not been repealed. The announcement was made on the 9th April 2004. It is necessary that the environment and political climate be congenial for discussion of important issues at the National Convention.

(g) If there is no coming together and agreement of the parties prior to the Convention, the same situation will arise and the NLD representatives would have no option but to withdraw. This will result in harmful consequences and would reflect unfavorably for the country in the eyes of the world.

We publish this statement and hope that the National Convention Commission will give it due consideration.