Statement by the National League for Democracy about its serious concern for the safety of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

(16 December 2004)

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, general secretary of the National League for Democracy NLD, was detained for the first time at her home at No 54/56 University Avenue, Bahan Township, Rangoon, from 19 July 1989 to 10 July 1995. She was again kept under house arrest for the second time from 21 September 2000 to 6 May 2002. During this period the National League for Democracy and the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) could start building confidence from 9 December 2000. Furthermore, a Defense Services spokesperson declared on the day Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was freed that the occasion was “the turning of a new page” of history.

Yet, on 30 May 2003, following the Tabayin (Depayin) incident in Shwebo District, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was arrested for the third time and she is being kept under house arrest until now. The move has irreparably destroyed the process of confidence building. Although the situation makes it necessary for the SPDC to act responsibly and establish an independent commission to investigate the acts of terrorism (against the NLD), SPDC has, until now, not formed that commission yet.

During the third arrest, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s personal physician was permitted to visit her thrice every week to take care of her health. The visits, we understand, have now been restricted to once per week.

On 27 November 2004, when the authorities arrived to inform us of the decision to extend the detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi by one more year under Section 10 (B) of the Law Protecting the State from Destructive Elements, they said security personnel could be stationed as before to facilitate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Later, the authorities said that only six NLD youths can be stationed on security duty near the general secretary. We understand that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi would not accept the ruling since it is tantamount to the authorities imposing restrictions on her. In response, the authorities banished all 13 NLD youths from the compound of the general secretary’s residence.

Hence, the authorities can be seen to be going back several times on what they had promised just a few days ago. Since they have time and again been breaking their promises, the situation makes it obvious that the authorities can no longer be trusted.

Today, no one is taking charge of the security for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and we are deeply concerned for her safety and life. There are only two women at her home taking care of her personal wellbeing. Hence, the responsibility of safeguarding her life and providing her security and health care needs now lies with the authorities. The SPDC is held totally responsible for all incidents that may arise during the period where no security is provided for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.