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**Statement of the Burma Lawyers' Council
Regarding the Threat of Legal Action Against U Aung Shwe, Chair of the National League for
Democracy, and U Aye Tha Aung, Secretary of the Committee Representing People's
Parliament**

On February 15, 2007, the BBC reported that the Chief of Police of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), the military regime currently ruling Burma, threatened to take legal action against U Aung Shwe, Chair of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and U Aye Tha Aung, Secretary of the Committee Representing People's Parliament (CRPP), for the allegedly illegal formation of the CRPP. It is known that the objective of CRPP is to convene People's Parliament as an implementation of the results of the May 1990 election, in which the NLD prevailed but the SPDC refused to honor.

The reported threat by the SPDC Police Chief gravely concerns the Burma Lawyers' Council (BLC). The SPDC has a history of punishing its political opposition by claiming that the formation of their organizations violates the law. For instance, in 2005, the SPDC arrested and convicted nine Shan leaders, including U Khun Htun Oo, Chairman of the Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD), for attempting to form a committee called the "Shan State Academics Consultative Council". The leaders were accused, among other things, unlawfully interfering with the National Convention, violating a law related to the forming of organizations, printing and publishing prohibited materials and etc. Despite a complete lack of evidence, the Shan leaders were condemned to multiple sentences of imprisonment for life and hard labor.

A statement recently released by the BLC, carefully analyzing each of the charges and the evidence against the Shan leaders, unequivocally concluded that none of the charges were justified based on the current laws of Burma, the verdicts violated numerous international human rights and recognized freedoms, the sentences did not fit the alleged crimes, and the convictions were political statements that were intended to punish and intimidate the opposition. The BLC found that the judge deciding the case regularly ignored important legal provisions favorable to the defendants, misinterpreted the laws that nearly any act could be criminalized, and relied on blatantly inadequate evidence upon which to base the convictions. The verdicts clearly reflected the SPDC's unlawful control over the judiciary in Burma.

Legal action, threatened by the SPDC, for the formation of the CRPP would similarly be unlawful. To the knowledge of the BLC, the CRPP has never engaged in any illegal activities. Its objectives are not to bring about instability or violence, but rather to restore a legitimate government in Burma. U Aung Shwe and U Aye Tha Aung have done nothing that would justify the Police Chief's threat. Accordingly, any action taken against them would be a severe violation of law.

The BLC demands that the SPDC cease its illegal harassment of U Aung Shwe and U Aye Tha Aung and respectfully calls upon all organizations and people both within and outside Burma to similarly condemn the SPDC's unlawful actions. To this end, BLC will cooperate with and energetically support all efforts to bring about justice and protect human rights from the legal aspect, including one for the immediate and unconditional release of U Khun Tun Oo and other Shan national leaders.

For More information,

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Burma Lawyers' Council

February 16, 2007