

ELECTION MONITOR NO. 25

APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS TO FORM A POLITICAL PARTY

The Union Election Commission has approved the formation of these political parties:

1. Kaman National Progressive Party - 25 May 2010 (Date Applied)¹
2. Khami National Development Party - 25 May 2010 (Date Applied)²
3. Mro National Party - 25 May 2010 (Date Approved)²
4. National Democratic Force - 27 May 2010 (Date Applied)²
5. Regional Development Party (Pyay) - 21 May 2010 (Date Applied)³

APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS TO REGISTER AS A POLITICAL PARTY

After the Union Election Commission approves a political party to be formed, the party has 30 days to register with the Commission. The following parties have applied for approval to register:

1. 88 Generation Student Youths
(Union of Myanmar) - 26 May 2010 (Date Approved)⁵
2. All Mon Region Democracy Party - 24 May 2010 (Date Approved)⁴
3. Chin National Party - 27 May 2010 (Date Approved)³
4. Chin Progressive Party - 24 May 2010 (Date Applied)⁴
5. Democracy and Peace Party - 24 May 2010 (Date Approved)⁴
6. Inn National Development Party - 24 May 2010 (Date Applied)⁴
7. Kayin People's Party - 21 May 2010 (Date Approved)¹
8. Myanmar New Society Democratic Party - 27 May 2010 (Date Approved)³
9. National Democratic Party for Development - 27 May 2010 (Date Applied)³
10. National Political Alliances League - 27 May 2010 (Date Approved)³
11. Peace and Diversity Party - 24 May 2010 (Date Applied)⁴
12. Phalon-Sawaw Democratic Party - 27 May 2010 (Date Applied)³
13. Rakhine Nationalities Development Party - 24 May 2010 (Date Applied)⁴
14. Shan Nationalities Democratic Party - 26 May 2010 (Date Approved)⁵
15. Taaung (Palaung) National Party - 24 May 2010 (Date Approved)⁴
16. Union Kayin League - 21 May 2010 (Date Approved)¹
17. Union of Myanmar Federation of
National Politics - 26 May 2010 (Date Approved)⁵
18. United Democratic Party - 26 May 2010 (Date Approved)⁵
19. Wa Democratic Party - 25 May 2010 (Date Applied)²
20. Wa National Unity Party - 21 May 2010 (Date Approved)¹
21. Wunthanu NLD (the Union of Myanmar)- 27 May 2010 (Date Approved)³

¹ Applications for formation, registration of political party scrutinized, passed - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-26.pdf> (NLM) 26 May 2010.

² Applications for formation, registration of political party scrutinized, passed - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-05-28.pdf> (NLM) 28 May 2010.

³ Applications for formation, registration of political party scrutinized, passed - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-22.pdf> (NLM) 22 May 2010.

⁴ Application for registration of political party passed, scrutinized - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-25.pdf> (NLM) 25 May 2010.

⁵ Application for registration of political party passed, scrutinized - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-05-27.pdf> (NLM) 27 May 2010.

Up to date, 42 parties have submitted applications to form political parties and those that have been approved are now proceeding to register themselves with the Union Election Commission.

MOST POLITICAL PARTIES STILL WAITING FOR FINAL APPROVAL BEFORE CAMPAIGNING

According to the Chairman of the Shan Nationals Democratic Party (SNDP), most of the political parties that have registered with the Union Election Commission have yet to start their campaigns as they wait for the final approval of their applications to be announced. The SNDP is one of the groups whose registration has been officially approved by the Election Commission. The SNDP plans to contest in 40 out of 55 townships in Shan State, 6 townships in Kachin State – (Mansi, Bahmo, Mogaung, Mohnyin, Waing Maw and Namti), 3 townships in Kayah/Karenni State (Loikaw, Dimawso and Phasawng), 2 in Sagaing Division (Hommalin and Maw-Lite), as well as Rangoon and Mandalay Divisions. The party has already been active and has selected a few candidates in some parts of Shan State.⁶

USDP CANDIDATE SPENDS OVER 100 MILLION KYAT IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN

U Thein Maung, who has been tipped to run as the candidate of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) for the Rathidaung constituency, Takhine State, has spent over 100 million Kyat (approx US\$1000) in the past three months on his election campaign in the township, according to several sources in the township. A former teacher said, "Thein Maung has spent a lot of money on his campaign in Rathidaung, but no one has been able to trace the origins of the funds being used." Thein Maung, a former managing director of the Myanmar Textile Industries, is a native of Buthidaung, near Rathidaung Township. He began his campaign as an independent candidate but has publicized that he will run in the election in Rathidaung as a USDP candidate. In an attempt to garner support from local residents, he has made donations to religious and social organisations as well as 100 villages in and around Rathidaung and has promised to develop the region if he is elected.⁷

USDP HANDING OUT 'INCENTIVES' IN SHAN STATE

According to local sources, the USDP is canvassing for votes and passing out "incentives" in Namshang and Nankhan townships in Northern Shan State. They are canvassing in villages and are promising national identification cards as well as financial support to locals in return for votes. At the same time, would-be organisers from local villages have been promised computers, mobile phones and transportation fees as incentives to bring people to the polling stations to vote for the USDP. One villager said that the USDP membership card was being used as an incentive. "If we become USDP members, they say we will be given money, and those who don't have a national identification card can easily travel across the country," said one source, who also said it was unclear if the USDP would give out incentives before the election or after. According to a prominent lawyer in Rangoon, Aung Thein, canvassing for votes by using local village authorities is illegal. Who added that "Using the power of village authorities means that the USDP is violating the election laws. But, as they [the USDP] are acting like an elected party, nobody dares complain about their activities." Similar activities are also on-going in Yenangyaung Township in Magway Division, where locals have been recruited to join the party with the aim of gaining votes and support for the party.⁸

⁶ Most political parties still waiting for final approval before campaigning -

http://www.shanland.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3042 (SHAN) 25 May 2010.

⁷ Over 100 million kyat spent by USDP candidate in election campaign - <http://www.narinjara.com/details.asp?id=2612> (Narinjara) 25 May 2010.

⁸ USDP handing out "incentives" in Shan state - http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=18562 (Irrawaddy) 26 May 2010.

UEC MEMBERS MEET STATE/DISTRICT/TOWNSHIP ELECTION SUB-COMMISSIONS

Work coordination meetings between members of the Union Election Commission and officials from the respective State/District/Township election sub-commissions were held recently in five divisions and states throughout the country. Election Commission members U Nyunt Tin, U Tha Htay, Dr. Ba Maung , U Win Kyi and Dr. Daw Myint Kyi conducted coordination meetings in Bago and Magway Divisions as well as Shan, Mon and Chin States respectively. During the meetings UEC members explained the work and activities of the election sub-commissions and attended opening ceremonies for electoral work courses being conducted in preparations for the scheduled elections.⁹

NAY PYI TAW DISTRICT/TOWNSHIP SUB-COMMISSIONS CONDUCT ELECTORAL COURSE

An electoral process course for members of Nay Pyi Taw District/Township Sub-commissions was conducted at Yadanamon hall of Nay Pyi Taw Pyinmana Basic Education High School No (1) on 22 May, with an address by member of the Union Election Commission, U Myint Naing. Chairman of Mandalay Division sub-commission U Aung Htut and members U Kyaw Win and U Kyaw Than Tun reported on election matters. U Pe Khin, member of district sub-commission district law officer, and U Khin Soe, Head of district Immigration and National Registration Department, explained election laws and rules and answered the queries, and also demonstrated how to build ballot stations and cast votes. The course was held from 22 to 23 May.¹⁰

ANALYSIS

During the past week, the number of parties submitting applications to form parties has grown to 42, including the National Democratic Force (NDF). The formation of the NDF party has been criticized strongly by the NLD, since the NDF party leadership is made up of former NLD Central Executive Committee members. However, the formation of the NDF could be seen as providing the electorate with a viable alternative to the USDP.

It is, however, becoming apparent that the SPDC is using the two-step approval process – first to form a party and then to register the party – to hinder or weed out ‘undesirable’ parties. A good example is the Kachin State Progress Party (KSPP). Although it applied on 5 April 2010 to form a party, the Union Election Commission has yet to give its approval. While other parties that applied to form parties at a later date have already been given approval to register for the elections (i.e. The Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) submitted an application to form a party on 9 April 2010 and their application to register as party was approved and passed on 26 May 2010). Once a party is formed, the Commission could also reject a party’s application to register to contest the elections. This process should be watched carefully.

The creation of the USDP has allowed the party to operate much more independently than before, allowing its members to surge ahead with campaigns in many parts of the country. With the advantage of strong financial support and government backing at its disposal, the USDP has been able to reach remote and rural areas of the country, a feat which no other political party has been able to accomplish or match. Indications are that the USDP together with the National Unity Party

⁹ UEC members meet state/district/township election sub-commissions - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-22.pdf> (NLM) 22 May 2010.

⁹ UEC members meet state/district/township election sub-commissions - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-23.pdf> (NLM) 23 May 2010.

⁹ UEC members meet state/district/township election sub-commissions - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-24.pdf> (NLM) 24 May 2010.

⁹ UEC members meet state/district/township election sub-commissions - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-25.pdf> (NLM) 25 May 2010.

¹⁰ Nay Pyi Taw district/township sub-commissions conducts electoral course - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-05-28.pdf> (NLM) 28 May 2010.

(NUP) will most likely to gain the upper-hand on a nation-wide scale, while ethnic ceasefire-groups and other minorities will do well in their home electoral regions (except the KSPP which has strong ties with the KIO). This is more likely since the majority of ethnic groups and parties have stated that they will run in regional parliamentary elections rather than contest in all three parliamentary elections or at the national level. With all but the election date yet to be decided, the regime's implementation of its Seven-Step Road Map seems to be proceeding as planned by the SPDC.

The administrative procedural work of the Union Election Commission (UEC) also seems to be proceeding swiftly with work coordination meetings being held in the various states and divisions. Such activities have now been completed in over half of the states and divisions in the country.