

ELECTION MONITOR NO. 35

UDP CHAIRMAN RESIGNS, CITING UNFAIR ELECTION

Phyo Min Thein, Chairman of the Union Democratic Party (UDP), has resigned, citing his disapproval of the way in which the present election process is being conducted. Phyo Min Thein said he did not believe the junta's election would be free and fair and that his decision to resign would make the international community more aware of the real situation taking place in Myanmar. He also singled out the irregular activities being undertaken by the junta-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) and urged the international community to take more concrete actions against the military government to compel it hold free and fair elections. The decision by the UDP chairman to resign is the first by a party leader of a registered political party.¹

TWO NEW APPLICATIONS TO FORM A POLITICAL PARTY APPROVED

The following groups have been approved by the Union Election Commission (UEC) to form political parties:

1. All National Races Unity and Development Party (ANRUDP - Kayah State) - 5 August 2010(Date approved)
2. Unity and Democracy Party of Kachin State (UDPKS) - 2 August 2010(Date approved)

To date, 46 parties have submitted applications to form and to subsist as political parties. Forty parties have been approved and granted permission to register with the UEC.²

RECENT SUBMISSIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES' MEMBER LISTS TO UEC

As prescribed under Article 13 (a) of the Political Parties Registration Law, all registered parties have to submit a list of party members to the UEC within 90 days of registration. The following party has submitted their member list to the Union Election Commission (UEC):

1. National Democratic Party for Development (NDPD) - submitted on 4 August 2010

To date, eleven of 40 parties have submitted lists to the UEC.³

NUP CAMPAIGNS IN BAGO DIVISION

The National Unity Party (NUP), created from hard-core members of the now-defunct Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) has been busy campaigning in ten wards in Bago Division since July.⁴

PAMPHLETS TO DISTRIBUTED BY RAKHINE NATIONALS PROGRESSIVE PARTY

According to its party chairman, Dr. Aye Maung, the Rakhine Nationals Progressive Party (RNPP) plans to distribute a pamphlet on political affairs, general knowledge and historical data of the Rakhine region with the aim of educating voters about the current political scene. Party policies, future activities and financial matters will also be published and included in the document. The party is seeking approval from the Press Scrutiny and Registration Division (PSRD) and the UEC. The pamphlet will be disseminated to the public free of charge.⁵

¹ UDP chairman resigns, citing unfair election - http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=19143 (Irrawaddy) 5 August 2010

² Applications for formation of political party scrutinized, passed - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-08-06.pdf> (NLM) 6 August 2010 & More applications to register political parties submitted and approved - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-08-03.pdf> (NLM) 3 August 2010

³ Political parties submit lists of members to UEC - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-08-05.pdf> (NLM) 5 August 2010

⁴ NUP campaigns in Bago Division - <http://www.nmg-news.com/nmg/news020810.html> (Network Media Group) 2 August 2010

⁵ Pamphlets to be distributed by Rakhine Nationals Progressive Party - <http://www.myanmar.mmtimes.com/2010/news/477/news04.html> (Myanmar Times) 30 July 2010

USDP UNEASY TOWARDS NEWLY FORMED KARENNI PARTY

The newly formed All National Races Unity and Development Party (ANRUDP - Kayah State) is now the target of the junta-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), according to local residents in Kayah State (Karenni). Prior to the ANRUDP's creation and registration, the USDP was the sole party in the Karenni region and was assured of outright victory on election day. The introduction of the ANRUDP has cast doubt on the USDP's presumed dominance since many voters could align themselves with the newly established party. The USDP has in the past practiced forced recruitment of Karenni nationals. Where ethnic locals could not be recruited, Burmans were appointed in their places. The ANRUDP is headed by U Mee-yay Myint and U Mee-yay (alias) Ye Aung. The creation of the party has aroused the interest of many Karenni youth due to the party's non-military status.⁶

MEMBERS OF BAWLAKE DISTRICT SUB-COMMISSION INSPECT PRE-ELECTORAL WORKS

On 30 July, Secretary of the Bawlake District Election Sub-Commission U Chan Myay Saw, and members U Thant Zin and U Khin Saw made field trips to Nanphe Village, Bukwa Village, Shanbaing Ward, and Kayahbaing Ward to meet with members of ward and village sub-commissions, returning officers, and deputy returning officers. They inspected lists of eligible voters and files. They also held discussions about pre-electoral work with members of sub-commissions and answered their queries.⁷

ANALYSIS

The decision by UDP party chairman Phyo Min Thein to resign and withdraw from the election could damage the SPDC's election process. The chairman cited his unhappiness with the manner in which election activities are being implemented and the biased position taken by the UEC as his reason for resigning. It is unclear what the consequence of Phyo Min Thein's resignation will be. But some believe that his party will ultimately pay the price for his abrupt withdrawal. It is also uncertain whether other parties will follow his example or remain tight-lipped.

The recent approval of the All National Races Unity and Development Party (Kayah State) has been welcomed by many Karenni nationals, since it will provide locals with the opportunity to vote for a party that represents and promotes their interests. This scenario could be repeated in the other six ethnic states and influence the outcome of states/regions elections. This may in turn become a major factor in shaping Myanmar's political future.

⁶ USDP expresses its displeasure towards newly formed Karenni party - <http://ktimes.org/news/regional/item/677-kya-poo-dont-like-new-party-in-karenni> (Kantarwaddy Times) 6 August 2010

⁷ Members of Bawlake district sub-commission inspect electoral works - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-08-04.pdf> (NLM) 4 August 2010