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## ELECTION MONITOR NO. 26

### **SNDP FACES CHALLENGE IN WOING SUPPORT OF OTHER ETHNIC NATIONALITIES**

The Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) will face a challenge in persuading other ethnic groups living in southern Shan State to vote for the party according to local residents. The SNDP will need to provide and give assurances that voting for the SNDP party will entail concrete and tangible results which will benefit the non-Shan ethnic nationalities of the region. Other major ethnic nationalities living in Shan state (South) include Pa-O, Yin-net, Palaung, Bamar and Chinese nationals, of which the Pa-O are thought to be second largest in population. Under the circumstances, the SNDP will do well to coordinate its strategies in planning to garner support of the non-ethnic Shans living in prominent towns like Loilem and Panglong. The main opposition for the SNDP in these two towns will likely be from the Pa-O National Organization (PNO) headed by Aung Kham Hti, while the regime-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) and National Unity Party (NUP) will be the other major parties to contest the polls in southern Shan State.<sup>1</sup>

### **USDP AND SWAN-AHR-SHIN RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS IN MAING-YANG**

Local authorities in Maing-yang, Kyaing-ton District, Shan State, have recently begun to recruit local residents to join the junta-supported Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) as well as the Swan-Ahr-Shin group. The latter became prominent as the regime's enforcers who carried out violent attacks on unarmed civilian protestors during urban unrest. According to a chairman of the local Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) in Maing-yaung, instructions have been given to each local VPDC offices to recruit ten members for the Swan-Ahr-Shin group and twenty members for the USDP, respectively. The local township People's Police Officer together with other local officials have also been campaigning to recruit new members and, in return, promising financial support and food rations as incentives. Recently, Lahu national U Saw Wai and Simon from Parmaing Ward, and Dr. Zaw Win Htut and Saing San Sam from Zay-dan Ward were elected as Executive Committee members of the USDP in Ward No.11 Maing-yaung.<sup>2</sup>

### **EU DELEGATION MEETS WITH NDF PARTY MEMBERS**

Members of the newly formed National Democratic Force (NDF) party including Dr. Than Nyein and U Khin Maung Swe recently met a delegation from the EU and explained the party's political objectives and aspirations. During the meeting, Khin Maung Swe pin-pointed national reconciliation, working in parliament with other democratic forces and implementing economic reforms as key areas of focus for the NDF's agenda. With regards to the elections, the NDF leader said the NDF is urging the ruling junta to open the borders and allow observers in. Meanwhile the NDF would look "to reach into the parliament and try to change the constitution which is not up to democratic standards". Also present at the meeting were U Thu Wai of the Democratic Party (Myanmar) and leaders of the National Unity Party.<sup>3</sup>

### **REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES TO SUBMIT MEMBER LISTS TO ELECTION COMMISSION**

An announcement for registered parties to submit member lists to the Union Election Commission (UEC) was made on 28 May 2010, was published in the daily newspapers and was announced

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<sup>1</sup> Shan National Democratic Party (SNDP) faces challenge in wooing support of other ethnic national groups - <http://www.mongloi.org/burmese/2008-08-01-03-22-02/85-2008-08-01-03-14-40/881-sndp> (Mongloi) 29 May 2010

<sup>2</sup> USDP and Swan-Ahr-Shin recruits new members in Maing-yang - <http://www.mongloi.org/burmese/2008-08-01-03-22-02/85-2008-08-01-03-14-40/882-2010-05-29-08-22-36> (Mongloi) 29 May 2010

<sup>3</sup> EU delegation meets with NDF party members - <http://burmese.dvb.no/textonly/news.php?id=11045> (NLM) 31 May 2010



## **ELECTORAL PROCESS COURSES OPEN IN SAGAING, KAYIN AND KAYAH STATES**

The opening ceremonies of Electoral Process Courses for members of District/Township sub-commissions organized by State and Division Election Sub-commissions were conducted in Sagaing Division<sup>9</sup>, Kayah<sup>10</sup> and Kayin<sup>11</sup> State respectively and attended by UEC members. Member of UEC Dr. Maung Htoo (in-charge for Sagaing), U Saw Ba Hlaing (in-charge for Kayin State) and U Khin Maung Nu (in-charge for Kayah State) attended the opening ceremonies and explained how laws, rules and work of the commissions related to the election process.

## **UEC MEMBER MEETS DISTRICT/TOWNSHIP SUB-COMMISSIONS IN THATON LANGKHO**

Work coordination meetings between Members of the UEC and District/Township Election Sub-commissions were held in Thaton, Mon State<sup>12</sup> and Langkho, Shan State (South)<sup>13</sup> on 24 and 2 June respectively. UEC Member U Nyunt Tin (in-charge of Mon State) and members of the Thaton District Sub-commission and sub-commissions of four townships of the district attended the coordination meeting held in Thaton on 24 May morning, where U Nyunt Tin instructed the members on electoral work, election law and rules. Similarly, UEC member Dr. Sai Kham Hlaing accompanied by Shan State Election Sub-Commission members U Sai Tun Mya and Secretary U Thein Htay Win met members of the District/Township sub-commissions in Langkho and gave instructions on the electoral process and election laws.

## **ANALYSIS**

The past week has seen the introduction of the Announcement No.64/2010, which requires registered political parties to submit member lists to the Election Commission - another obstacle placed on political parties to derail participation in scheduled polls later this year. Those that fail to comply will have their registration cancelled and the party will be abolished.

Parties have already been quite occupied with the cumbersome 2-step registration process and recruiting members. This new announcement will not be welcomed, given the limited time frame. What is certain is that similar obstacles will be introduced by the Commission in the coming months with the aim of cutting down the number of opposition parties prior to the elections. It is also likely that parties that the junta does not approve of could be eliminated in this manner.

With the number of applications to form parties reaching 42 and parties approved to register totalling 32, it may seem that all is well with the political party registration process. However, the unexplained delayed approval of the Kachin State Progressive Party (KSPP) and the Northern Shan State Progressive Party to form political parties raises serious questions about the impartiality of the Union Election Commission. The new time limited requirement of Announcement No. 64/2010 does not make it any easier for the political parties.

The SPDC still has not set the election date, but the Union Election Commission has been slowly but gradually been conducting coordination meetings and electoral process courses throughout the 14 divisions and states. Lobbying campaigns have been stepped up the government-backed USDP in the country, and the recruiting of Swan-Ahr-Shin members has raised concerns as to what role they will play on Election Day. Whatever the outcome of the elections, change will come; all that remains to be answered is "Who will benefit from the change - the people, or the junta?"

<sup>9</sup> Sagaing Division electoral process course opens - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-05-29.pdf> (NLM) 29 May 2010

<sup>10</sup> Electoral process course opens in Kayah State - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-06-04.pdf> (NLM) 4 June 2010

<sup>11</sup> Electoral course launched in Hpa-an - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-05-31.pdf> (NLM) 31 May 2010

<sup>12</sup> UEC member meets members of Thaton District/Township Subcommissions - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-05-30.pdf> (NLM) 30 May 2010

<sup>13</sup> UEC member meets Langkho district/township sub-commissions - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-06-03.pdf> (NLM) 3 June 2010