
ELECTION MONITOR NO. 24

USDP NOMINATES ARAKANESE ROHINGYA

Htun Hla Sein, Chairman of the Union Solidarity Development party (USDP) in Maungdaw, has handed over nomination papers to an Arakanese Rohingya, Jangir Alam, according to an elder in Maungdaw. The nomination papers were sent from Naypyidaw, the elder added. Moreover, USDP Maungdaw has chosen some Arakanese Rohingya to compete in the forthcoming elections. They are - Dr. Kamal (Hla Myint), Dr. Zahir, Nurul Amin (lawyer), Aman Ullah (southern Maungdaw) and Muhid Ullah (southern Maungdaw). Other Arakanese Rohingya from Buthidaung nominated are - Dr. Bashir, Azad, and Hareh. They are going to mobilize the Arakanese Rohingya community in northern Arakan State for regime-backed parties which will contest the polls said a local resident.¹

REGIONAL USDP OFFICES OPEN IN MAUNGDAW

The joint offices of USDP Maungdaw and USDP Buthidaung in northern Arakan State were recently opened by Deputy Home Minister Phone Swe, said local sources. The opening ceremony took place in Ward No. 2, Maungdaw, and was attended by government officials, Muslim leaders and local residents. Two signboards were erected in front of the office – "Buthidaung Township Development Association" and "Maungdaw Township Development Association". The offices will be used to organize the Muslim community. The local USDA party will be supervised by two prominent Muslim businessmen - Aung Zaw Win and Aung Naing. Some wonder if the Burmese military has begun to slightly change in their attitude towards Muslim communities in northern Arakan State.²

USDP BEGINS ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The political party led by Burmese prime minister Thein Sein has begun campaigning in Kaw Thauung, Tenasserim division, said a local USDP member. Recently, small groups from the USDP party went from door to door urging people to join the party and to filling out membership application forms on their behalf. According to residents, local authorities convened a meeting to discuss the electoral process and the building of ballot stations. In Thongwa Township, Rangoon Division, the party was providing financial support to local farmers to persuade them to vote for the USDP in the upcoming elections.³

ELECTORAL PROCESS COURSE FOR DIVISION/DISTRICT/TOWNSHIP ELECTION SUB-COMMISSIONS CONDUCTED IN RANGOON AND MANDALAY DIVISIONS

Opening ceremonies to inaugurate electoral courses for division/district/townships election sub-commission officials took place in Rangoon and Mandalay Divisions recently. In Rangoon, member of Union Election Commission Yangon Division (in-charge) Dr Tin Aung Aye and Chairman of Yangon Division Election Sub-commission U Ko Ko gave opening addresses at the two-day course, which was attended by 768 trainees.⁴ A similar course was also conducted in Pyannya Yadana Hall of No. 16 Basic Education High School in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay. Present at the ceremony were member of Union Election Commission for Mandalay Division U Myint Naing, Chairman of Mandalay Division Election Sub-commission U Aung Htut and Election Sub-commission officials from seven

¹ USDP nominates Arakanese Rohingya - http://www.kaladanpress.org/v3/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2587:usdp-nominates-arakanese-rohingya-&catid=120:may2010&Itemid=2 (Kaladan) 18 May 2010.

² Regional Development office opens in Maungdaw - <http://www.narinjara.com/details.asp?id=2605> (Narinjara) 19 May 2010.

³ USDP begins election campaign - <http://www.dvb.no/elections/usdp-begins-election-campaign/9105> (DVB) 20 May 2010.

⁴ Electoral Process course for division/district/township election sub-commissions conducted in Rangoon - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-17.pdf> (NLM) 17 May 2010.

townships and invited guests. Altogether 101 members of seven townships Election Sub-commissions from Mandalay District attended the training course.⁵

UEC MEMBERS MEET DIVISION/DISTRICT ELECTION SUB-COMMISSIONS

Mandalay Division - U Myint Naing, a member of the Union Election Commission (in-charge Mandalay Division), met with members of Mandalay Division, Nay Pyi Taw, Yamethin, Meiktila, Nyaung-U, Myingyan, Kyaukse, Pyin-Oo-Lwin and Mandalay District Election Sub-Commissions at the meeting hall of Mandalay Division General Administration Department on 15 May. U Myint Naing spoke and heard reports on the work of district election sub-commissions.⁶

Kachin State - Member of the Union Election Commission U N Zaw Naw held a meeting with members of Kachin State, Myitkyina District and Putao District Election Sub-commissions at the meeting hall of the SPDC Office in Myitkyina, Kachin State on the morning of 19 May. After hearing reports on the formation of sub-commissions, registration of voters and designation as constituency presented by the chairman and secretary of Kachin State Election Sub-Commission, the UEC member held discussions with those present. Meeting participants then inspected sites chosen for the construction of polling stations.⁷

Sagaing Division - Member of Union Election Commission Dr Maung Htoo held a meeting with members of Sagaing Division, Monywa District and Township Election Sub-Commissions at the hall of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council office in Monywa on 12 May. Dr Maung Htoo explained the election law, rules and work guidelines issued by the Union Election Commission of the Union of Myanmar. Chairman of Sagaing Division Election Sub-Commission U Tin Oo, Chairman of Monywa District Election Sub-commission U Than Aye and Chairman of Monywa Township Election Sub-commission U Kyin Saw submitted reports on the progress of their tasks.⁸

MORE APPLICATIONS TO FORM AND REGISTER POLITICAL PARTIES SUBMITTED AND APPROVED

Parties which have applied and/or have been approved to form political parties recently are as follows:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Khami National Development Party | - | (17-5-2010) ⁹ | Date Applied |
| 2. Mro National Party | - | (20-5-2010) ¹⁰ | Date Applied |
| 3. Myanmar Democracy Congress | - | (20-5-2010) ¹¹ | Date Approved |

⁵ Electoral Process course for division/district/township election sub-commissions conducted in Mandalay - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-18.pdf> (NLM) 18 May 2010.

⁶ UEC member meets Mandalay division/district elections sub-commissions - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-17.pdf> (NLM) 17 May 2010.

⁷ UEC member meets state/district election sub-commissions in Kachin state - <http://www.Burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-21.pdf> (NLM) 21 May 2010.

⁸ UEC member meets Sagaing division, Monywa district and township election sub-commissions - <http://www.Burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-21.pdf> (NLM) 21 May 2010.

⁹ Applications for formation, registration of political parties submitted - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-18.pdf> (NLM) 18 May 2010.

¹⁰ Applications for formation, registration of political parties submitted - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-20.pdf> (NLM) 20 May 2010.

¹¹ Applications for formation, registration of political party scrutinized, passed - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-21.pdf> (NLM) 21 May 2010.

Parties which have submitted applications and/or have been approved to register as political parties are:

1. All Mon Region Democracy Party	-	(14-5-2010) ¹²	Date Applied
2. Taaung (Palaung) National Party	-	(14-5-2010)	Date Applied
3. United Democratic Party	-	(17-5-2010) ¹³	Date Applied
4. Shan Nationalities Democratic Party	-	(18-5-2010)	Date Applied
5. Chin National Party	-	(19-5-2010) ¹⁴	Date Applied
6. Myanmar New Society Democratic Party	-	(19-5-2010)	Date Applied
7. National Political Alliances League	-	(19-5-2010)	Date Applied
8. Wunthanu NLD (The Union of Myanmar)-	-	(19-5-2010)	Date Applied
9. Modern People Party	-	(20-5-2010) ¹⁵	Date Applied
10. Union Democratic Party	-	(20-5-2010)	Date Applied
11. Democratic Party (Myanmar)	-	(20-5-2010)	Date Approved
12. Kayan National Party	-	(20-5-2010)	Date Approved
13. Rakhine State National Force of Myanmar	-	(20-5-2010)	Date Approved

To date, 39 parties have submitted their applications for formation, and those who have been approved to register are now commencing the process of registration as political parties to contest the polls later this year.

ANALYSIS

The past week has seen increased election campaigning by the USDP in Rakhine state, which is home to a vast Muslim population. The recent opening of two party offices in Buthidaung and Maungdaw of the USDP party underlines this point. The military is taking all measures to secure its control and has even nominated prominent Rohingya businessmen to run as USDP candidates. This is especially controversial since the majority of the Rohingya community are not considered by the SPDC to be citizens of Burma. It could be construed that if they vote, they are citizens.

Election Commissions in the states and divisions throughout the country have recently begun conducting electoral courses for polling station officials. The courses taking place in Rangoon and Mandalay divisions show the importance of the two cities. In the coming weeks ahead, more electoral courses together with coordination meetings of UEC members and sub-commissions will become more frequent. The date of the elections, which has yet to be announced, could depend on the implementation of party registration and other logistical arrangements.

The transformation of cease-fire groups into Border Guard Forces remaining unresolved, and it is still uncertain whether or not fighting will resume. This could be another major factor that will affect the date of the elections.

¹² Applications for registration as political parties submitted - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-15.pdf> (NLM) 15 May 2010.

¹³ Public announcement for remonstrations - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-19.pdf> (NLM) 19 May 2010.

¹⁴ Applications for formation, registration of political party submitted - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-20.pdf> (NLM) 20 May 2010.

¹⁵ Applications for formation, registration of political party scrutinized, passed - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs08/NLM2010-05-21.pdf> (NLM) 21 May 2010.