
ELECTION MONITOR NO. 21

YE TOWNSHIP USDA OFFICE USES GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION TO COMPILE VOTER REGISTRATION LISTS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS

In order to obtain the exact lists of the eligible voters, the Union Solidarity and Develop Association (USDA) has used the Ye Township Peace and Development Council [TPDC] authorities in Mon State. Local sources reported that the USDA plans to use this as leverage to win the most seats for its members in the anticipated 2010 election. The USDA began using members in Ye Township to distribute the Family List Form No.6/66 to determine which residents are above the age of 18 and eligible to vote in the 2010 elections. A university student who refused to become a member of the USDA in Lamine sub-township explained that the Mon State People's Development Council has been able to form groups of 300 to 500 pro-government individuals in each village and sub-township which have more than 1,000 households. These include Hangan, Kaloh, Mawkanin, Kawdoot and Lamine sub-townships in Ye township.¹

MARA PEOPLE TO BE REPRESENTED BY NPP IN POLLS

The Mara group in Chin state will be represented by the National Progressive Party (NPP) in the forthcoming elections. The decision was taken in a meeting attended by hundreds of Mara people in Lailenpi village, Matupi Township between 10 to 13 April. "We had a crucial discussion on whether to contest as a political party or fight as independents in the polls. Finally after heated debate we decided to participate as a political entity called the NPP in the forthcoming elections," said a local teacher, who attended the meeting. NPP members elected a Chairman and 14 executive committee members. However, the NPP has yet to register with the Election Commission of Burma in order to contest the polls.²

NLD CEC MEMBER KHIN MAUNG SWE OBJECTS THE USE OF PARTY FLAG

The NLD's Central Executive Committee (CEC) held a meeting on 26 April to discuss the future of using the party's official name and flag, however ended without an agreement. The party will cease to exist after 6 May 2010 according to the new election laws. However, the party has vowed to continue serving the people by engaging in the community and do social work even after the 6 May deadline. One of its prominent CEC members, Khin Maung Swe, however, has aired his disapproval of the continued use of the party's name and flag once it had been dissolved. To do so, he said, would be dishonouring the students of the 1988 uprising and therefore should be avoided at all costs. The name of the party and the kuk-daung (peacock) symbol must be preserved and specifically used for political purposes he added. Contrary to Khin Maung Swe, another senior party member, Win Tin, has reiterated that in the past the party's name and symbol had been used on many occasions and therefore it would continue to do so.³

¹ YE township USDA office use government administration to request family lists from area residents - <http://rehmonnya.org/archives/1400> (Rehmonnya) 26 April 2010.

² Mara ethnics to be represented by NPP in polls - <http://www.khonumthung.com/kng-news/09-news/mara-ethnics-to-be-represented-by-npp-in-polls/> (Khonumthung) 26 April 2010.

³ NLD CEC member Khin Maung Swe objects the use of party flag - <http://www.mizzimaburmese.com/news/inside-burma/5287-nld----.html> (Mizzima) 28 April 2010.

ELECTION COMMISSION OFFICES ESTABLISHED IN CHIN STATE

Election Commission offices are now being established in various townships in Chin State. Election Commission officials in these townships have been selected from prominent citizens and retired government employees and the offices are each composed of 15 members. In Hakha Township, Bawi Hoe, retired District Education Director, is acting as the Chairman of the Election Commission. The General Secretary is the district general commander and others are retired persons, said Mr. Van Lian, the Chairman of NLD. In Falam township Saliangkap is the chairman and the secretary is the district general commander. The rest are six locals and seven government employees. Similarly, in Tiddim and Thantlang Townships retirees and prominent citizens are in the Election Commission. In Matupi Township the Election Commission is gearing up to work at the village and block level.⁴

ELECTION COMMISSION APPROVES MORE NEW POLITICAL PARTIES

According to the state-run media, parties which have submitted their applications to the Union Election Commission from the period 23 April to 30 April are as follows:⁵

	PARTY	DATE OF REGISTRATION	APPLICANT AND NUMBER
1	Chin Progressive Party	23-4-2010	U Paw Lyan Lwin plus 22 persons
2	Inn National Development Party	29-4-2010	U Aung Kyi Win plus 15 persons
3	Kayan National Party	26-4-2010	U Khu Yu Jin plus 17 persons
4	Northern Shan State Progressive Party	23-4-2010	U Chan Kaw plus 15 persons
5	National Democratic Party for Development	26-4-2010	U Hla Thein plus 21 persons
6	Phalon-Sawaw Democratic Party	23-4-2010	U Saw Khin Maung Myint plus 15 persons
7	Rakhine State National Force of Myanmar	28-4-2010	U Aye Kyaing plus 15 persons
8	Union Solidarity and Development Party	29-4-2010	U Thein Sein plus 27 persons
9	Wa National Unity Party	29-4-2010	U Saw Phillip plus 15 persons

The number of groups that have submitted applications to set up parties up to 29 April 2010 totals 25. Of the 25 groups, the following 12 have been given approval to set up political parties.

	PARTY	DATE OF PERMISSION
1	88 Generation Student Youths (Union of Myanmar)	22-4-2010
2	Democratic Party (Myanmar)	29-4-2010
3	Difference and Peace Party	29-4-2010
4	Kayin People's Party	29-4-2010
5	Myanmar New Society Democratic Party	29-4-2010
6	National Political Alliances League	29-4-2010
7	New Era People's Party	29-4-2010
8	Pa-O National Organization	23-4-2010
9	Ta-aung (Palaung) National Party	23-4-2010
10	Union of Myanmar Federation of National Politics	22-4-2010
11	Wa Democratic Party	28-4-2010
12	Wunthanu NLD (Union of Myanmar)	23-4-2010

⁴ Election Commission offices in Chin state - <http://www.khonumthung.com/kng-news/09-news/election-commission-offices-in-chin-state/> (Khonumthung) 28 April 2010.

⁵ Application to form political parties scrutinized and approved - <http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newspaper/304newsn.pdf> (NLM) 30 April 2010.

Parties that fall within the competence of Political Parties Registration Law Article-25 and have submitted their applications for continued existence as political parties to the Union Election Commission (UEC) are:

	PARTY	DATE OF APPLICATION	LEADERS OF PARTY
1	Lahu National Development Party	23-4-2010	U Kyar Har She and U Yaw Thap
2	Mro (or) Khami National Solidarity Organization	9-4-2010	U San Tha Aung and U Lar Bwe
3	National Unity Party	29-3-2010	U Tun Yi and U Than Tin
4	Union Kayin League	8-4-2010	U Saw Maung Chaw and U Than Aung

Out of the four, the following parties were found to be in accord with the Political Parties Registration Law and Rules and the Union Election Commission permitted them to register as political parties:

	PARTY	DATE OF PERMISSION
1	Lahu National Development Party	29-4-2010
2	Mro (or) Khami National Solidarity Organization	28-4-2010
3	National Unity Party	29-4-2010

USDA TRANSFORMS TO POLITICAL PARTY

The long awaited transformation of the government-backed Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) to a political party became a reality when the organisation submitted its application to the Election Commission on 29 April. The Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) is headed by Prime Minister Thein Sein and 27 other prominent USDA members, including cabinet Ministers, Deputy Ministers and the Mayor of Rangoon Division. The USDP registration was announced officially on the state-run television and published in the daily newspapers on 30 April. Members of the newly formed party include:

1. Htay Oo (Maj-Gen), Minister for Agriculture and General-Secretary of the USDA
2. Zaw Min (Col), Minister for Electrical Power and Joint-Secretary of the USDA
3. Thaug, Minister for Science and Technology and Secretary of the USDA
4. Tin Htut (Maj-Gen), Minister for Cooperatives
5. Aung Thaug, Minister for Industry I
6. Thein Zaw, Minister for Communications, Posts and Telegraphs
7. Kyaw San (Brig-Gen), Minister for Information
8. Aung Thein Lin (Brig-Gen), Mayor of Rangoon

All will most likely resign from military service. The USDA at the time of the transformation has been established in 17 state and regional associations; 66 at the district level, 320 at the ward level and 15,421 at the village tract level.⁶

⁶ USDA transforms to political party - <http://www.khitpyaing.org/news/April2010/30410f.php> (Khitpyaing) 30 April 2010.

ANALYSIS

The long awaited transformation of the USDA from a social organisation to that of a political party comes as no surprise but once again highlights the desire of the regime to dictate the results of the elections later this year. The Union Solidarity and Development Party (UDSP) will now begin to use its authority in its entirety while taking advantage of the already existing vast membership of the USDA organisation, to campaign and to gain support in the run up to the elections.

With the registration of the USDP, party registration numbers continue to rise as the closing dateline draws nearer. Significantly, the parties that have registered as new parties and those that have re-registered are in the majority ethnic-based while the remainder have direct or indirect links to the military regime.

Although the election date has yet to be announced, the Election Commission and sub-commissions are now being formed in the states/divisions and regions with the appointment of prominent local community leaders and ex-government officials. While the tasks of the election commissions start to take shape, the process of eligible voter registration in the country does not seem to be neutral. The involvement of the USDA and the Township Peace and Development Councils in Mon State seems to be aimed at fostering and gaining votes for junta backed-parties.