



## Our Position on Burma's Military Election Laws

### A Statement by the Ten Alliances



19 March 2010

**Our coalition of Ten Alliances strongly condemns the regime's undemocratic election laws released last week and sees them as confirmation that upcoming polls will only serve to legitimize a military selection, and will in no way be genuinely democratic elections.**



- **The Union Election Commission Law, the first of five election laws, creates an Election Commission consisting of members handpicked by the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).** This Commission, which clearly lacks any independence whatsoever, is authorized to have final decision-making power on party registration, election postponement, and the formation of tribunals to judge election disputes.
- **The Political Parties Registration Law bars our most viable opposition leaders and activists from the electoral process,** by banning them from party membership and contesting the elections. The law also requires that parties register within 60 days, giving the National League for Democracy two months to decide whether to kick-out Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and almost 500 of its members who are behind bars, or become a banned party.
- **The Political Party Registration Law also requires that political parties pledge to “abide by and protect” the 2008 Constitution, a fundamentally flawed document designed to keep the military’s hold onto power.** The constitution guarantees military entrenchment by placing army officials in top positions of power and above the law, provides blanket immunity for past atrocities, and centralizes military control over ethnic areas. Furthermore, the constitution cannot be amended without the military’s agreement, as they maintain effective veto power over amendments.
- **The SPDC’s election laws suggest that elections may not be held in some ethnic areas.** The Election Commission has the power to decide whether polling can be held in places affected by “natural catastrophe or security reasons,” which may include areas controlled by armed ethnic groups as well as ceasefire groups who have refused to be placed under the military’s command as a Border Guard Force. This stipulation could disenfranchise a significant number of ethnic people.

Election laws are just one more means through which the regime is controlling the entire elections process. **Instead of resolving conflict through peaceful means, the SPDC is taking coercive measures against the opposition, including the continued jailing of nearly 2,200 political prisoners, and ongoing attacks against ethnic people.** In addition to the regime's non-reconciliatory constitution, which denies demands for ethnic equality and federalism, the regime has increased hostilities against ethnic armed and ceasefire groups, in an effort to secure control over its borders, with devastating consequences for ethnic civilians. In 2009 alone, military offensives in Eastern Burma forced 43,800 ethnic people to flee over the border.

Our Ten Alliances, with democratic forces and ethnic nationalities inside and outside the country, have consistently called on the regime to meet the following minimum benchmarks for the elections to be a step towards genuine democracy and national reconciliation:

- 1) The unconditional release of all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi;
- 2) Cessation of attacks against ethnic communities and democracy activists; and,
- 3) Genuine and inclusive political dialogue, including a review of the 2008 Constitution.

**The regime's new election laws serve as a clear signal that it does not plan to meet these benchmarks and that these elections will in no way be free, fair, or credible.**

We believe that the election process, singlehandedly planned and completely controlled by the military regime, will in no way lead to national reconciliation or end the crises faced by our country. This is a crucial time for the international community to stand with the people of Burma.

**We urge international governments to denounce the 2010 elections as undemocratic, and not recognize the results.**

- National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB)
- Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB)
- National Democratic Front (NDF)
- National League for Democracy – Liberated Area (NLD-LA)
- Members of Parliamentary Union (MPU)
- National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB)
- Forum for Democracy in Burma (FDB)
- Women's League of Burma (WLB)
- Students and Youth Congress of Burma (SYCB)
- Nationalities Youth Forum (NYF)