

The Kayin People's Party applies to register as a political party to contest in the upcoming Burmese election.

The Kayin People's Party (KPP) applied to register as a political party on Wednesday to contest in the upcoming Burmese election, according to party sources.

The state-run newspaper *New Light of Myanmar* on Wednesday ran a notice saying that the Karen group, based in Rangoon, submitted an application to the Union Election Commission in Naypyidaw.

A party member said that after approval the party will launch a campaign in areas that are heavily populated with Karen, such as Irrawaddy Division, Rangoon Division and Pegu division as well as in Mon State.

She said the party will seek to represent all Karen in Burma.

Led by Dr. Saw Simon Tha, a Karen physician in Rangoon, the party has 15 committee members. He is a well-known peace negotiator who has worked with both Karen rebel groups and the Burmese junta. In 2004, he arranged peace talks in Rangoon between the Karen National Union led by the late Gen Bo Mya and a Burmese government delegation led by former Burmese Prime Minister Gen Khin Nyunt.

So far, Karen cease-fire groups have said that they will not participate in the upcoming election, according to Karen sources.

There are seven Karen cease-fire groups based in Karen State including the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, the Karen Peace Force led by Col Thu Mu Heh, the KNU/KNLA Peace Council led by Maj-Gen Htain Maung, the Peace Group led by Bado Aung San, and a group led by the late Gen Bo Mya's son, Nay Soe Mya.

Three Karen political parties were formed during the 1990 Burmese election: the Karen State National Organization (KSNO), the Union Karen League and the Karen National Congress for Democracy. The KSNO won one constituency in Karen State.