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The decision, taken on March 30 at a meeting of a 15-member committee in the Mon State capital, Moulmein, leaves the Mon with no representation in the election.



The alliance includes former members of the central committee of the New Mon State Party (NMSP), an armed group that signed a ceasefire agreement with the junta in 1995, members of the Mon National Democratic Front (MNDF) and other respected Mon community leaders.

The MNDF announced last week that it will not contest the election because the junta's election law is unjust.

The NMSP announced last year its opposition to participation in the election. The party has called for a review of the 2008 constitution, saying it doesn't protect ethnic or democratic rights.

A member of the political alliance's committee, speaking anonymously, told *The Irrawaddy* on Thursday, that a majority rejected the election law and decided not to contest the election.

"It was like the National League for Democracy decision," he said.

When the Mon political alliance formed in June last year it said it planned to take part in the election, although its committee was divided on the issue. The promulgation of the election laws in March swung opinion against participation in the election.

At a meeting of the committee in March, one member, Nai Bangya Aung Moe, told *The Irrawaddy* that the Mon alliance could advance peace and democracy by taking part in the election.

“We need national reconciliation, peace, democracy and development,” he said. “I want to implement work on that.”

A Mon monk in Rangoon said: “They (regime) will not get one vote from our people if the Mon has a political party participating in the election.”

The monk said: “If there is a Mon political party at the election, the Mon people will have a chance to vote for their own people. We will be able to know what is going on inside parliament if we have representatives there. Without our people in parliament, we know nothing about what is going on.”

The MNDF participated in the 1990 election, winning five seats. The junta then disbanded the party and sentenced four elected representatives to long prison terms.

The party's military wing continues to bear arms, saying it will remain armed until the Mon people win freedom.