

Burma's state-run TV announces that laws have been released regarding an election commission, the party registration process, and for members of parliament and regional legislatures.

The Burmese military regime on Monday announced it had released the much-awaited election law, though it did not set a date for the general election, which is scheduled to take place this year.

The state-run television announced that laws have been released regarding an election commission, the party registration process, and rules for members of parliament and regional legislatures.

"Details of the laws will be published in books and in the supplements of state-run newspapers," the state TV reported.

Many observers doubt that the regime's election laws will guarantee a free and fair election as more than 2,000 political prisoners and main opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi remain in detention.

On Friday, Singapore's Foreign Minister George Yeo said that the critical factors that will count toward the legitimacy of the election in Burma will be national reconciliation among the many ethnic groups in the country and the participation of Suu Kyi's National League of Democracy (NLD) and other opposition parties.

He added that if the outcome of the election in Burma is not viewed as legitimate by Burma's neighbors, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations will face problems in recognizing it.

The NLD won a landslide victory in the last election, in 1990, but the military regime refused to recognize the results. The military generals spent more than 14 years drafting a new constitution which most opposition parties and dissidents have criticized as a mandate to

entrench military rule.

The terms of the new constitution exclude Suu Kyi from participating in a general election as she is currently serving an 18-month sentence of house arrest, which is due to expire in November.

On Sunday, US Assistant Secretary Kurt Campbell began a tour of Asian nations, but according to a statement by the US State Department, his itinerary does not include a stop in Burma which he visited last year for talks with the military rulers and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Suu Kyi.

According to diplomatic sources, Campbell tried to plan a visit to the country, but he got no response from the regime.