

The NLD begins a leaflet campaign to advise citizens that they have the right not to vote in the election.

Members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) in parts of central and eastern Burma have been distributing leaflets among the public, conveying the message: “Citizens have the right not to vote in the coming election.”

NLD members told *The Irrawaddy* that the distribution of leaflets, together with the NLD's letter of appeal to the general public, has taken place in Mandalay, Sagaing and Magwe divisions, as well as in Karen State.



Khin Saw Htay, an organizing committee member of the NLD in Magwe Division, said they distributed the leaflets not because they were directed to by the party's headquarters, but because they were trying to let people in their areas know about the NLD's activities.

“The NLD headquarters didn't give us any instructions related to these leaflets,” he said. “We are engaged in politics so we do what we have to. People in Magwe are wondering about whom they should vote for without the NLD in the election. So, in our leaflet, we also explain about a voter's right—to vote or not to vote.”

An excerpt from Chapter 1 of the Pyithu Hluttaw Electoral Law was inserted in the text of the leaflet, which states that an element of one's electoral rights is the right to vote or the right to choose not to vote.

So far, 5,000 leaflets have reportedly been distributed in Mandalay and Sagaing divisions.

“People are interested in our leaflets,” said Myint Zaw from the NLD's Mandalay office. “They ask who they should vote for in the coming election. We explain to them their electoral rights.”

The NLD on March 29 announced its decision not to re-register as a political party to contest the election scheduled for later this year. On April 6, it sent out a letter of appeal to the general

public.

“The letter of appeal comprises three main components: an explanation of the NLD's decision not to register for election; the party's apology for not being able to realize its election victory; and its affirmation to continue the democracy struggle by peaceful means,” said Khin Saw Htay.

Apart from distributing leaflets, NLD members in Karen State are working on rewriting the NLD's appeal to make it more understandable within their communities.

“The original letter is very long, so we are summarizing it to be succinct and to the point, so people can easily understand it,” said Nan Khin Htway Myint, an NLD MP-elect in the 1990 election. ‘Then, we will distribute it among our communities.’”