

The Yangon City Development Committee in eastern Rangoon files a law suit against a new political party that sought donations from people in public markets.

The Yangon [Rangoon] City Development Committee (YCDC) in the eastern district of Rangoon has filed a law suit against a new political party that sought donations from people in public markets in North Okkalapa Township.

The Union of Myanmar Federation of National Politics party (UMFNP), which is led by Aye Lwin, asked for donations at markets in North Okkalapa Township on June 18 because of a lack of funds to organize its activities.

The YCDC accused of the UMFNP of violating the law by asking for donations at public markets without informing the YCDC.

Speaking to The Irrawaddy on Thursday, Aye Lwin said, "We were not violating the law. We were acting in accord with the law."

He said that under the party registration laws, political parties have the right to ask for donations from individuals or businesses as stated in section 15 of the law.

"If I have to go to court, I will raise the question of whether a municipal law can supersede a law that was signed by Snr-Gen Than Shwe," he said.

He said the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) and the township authorities are trying to restrict the activities of political parties to organize and campaign.

"I am not satisfied with them," he said. "We should have independence and freedom according to the rules in the registration and electoral laws."

The USDP is led by Burmese Prime Minister Thein Sein and is considered a proxy party of the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), the mass civic organization supported by the government.

So far, the USDP has exercised more rights in its political activities than all other political parties in the run up to the pre-election campaign season.

Former Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, the mayor of Rangoon and the chairman of the Yangon City Development Committee, is tipped to run as a USDP candidate in Rangoon.

Technically, the election campaign season has not started yet, and the date of the election this year has not been announced. However, the USDP has started campaigning in different areas of the country without interference by township authorities, who sometimes aid in their campaign.

UMFNP members were told by police in Mandalay in June not to display their party flags.

Earlier, the Election Commission in Kamayut Township asked Aye Lwin to sign a statement pledging that the party would not carry out campaign activities that disrupt the state's law and order.

Aye Lwin is viewed as close to the military regime. His party is shunned by many opposition groups.