

Burma's Election Commission (EC) told four leaders of the National Democratic Force (NDF) to make a second appeal to the government to clear their past acts of “treason” before they would be allowed to take part in this year's election.



Last month, the EC told the four leaders that they would have to submit letters of appeal to the regime for attempting to form a parallel government in late 1990—cases for which each has served a jail term.

Each leader has since submitted an appeal letter to the commission.

“In our first letters, we wrote that we want to run in the election as citizens and that we have served our prison terms for our past cases,” said NDF leader Khin Maung Swe.

On Aug. 7, party leader received a response from the commission saying that their first letters were incomplete and a second appeal would be necessary. In their second appeal letters, they were required to make pledges that they would protect the 2008 Constitution, would not oppose the government and would make no contact with illegal associations.

“We made those pledges in our party registration. I don't know why we are told to do it again. There is some sort of dishonesty in this,” Khin Maung Swe said, adding that he has not yet decided to run in the election as a candidate pending the appeal process.

“Since the commission said it would report to 'superiors' about our appeal letters, this shows

that the commission itself is not independent,” he said. “So I don't expect that I will be allowed to run.”

The NDF was formed by former members of the the National League for Democracy (NLD), who have said that the coming election would bring some positive change to the country even though it would not be free and fair. The party is expected to become the largest pro-democracy party in the election.

The party's founder, Khin Maung Swe, and three other leading members—Tin Aung, Tha Saing and Sein Hla Oo—have all served long prison sentences on charges of treason for their role in efforts to form a government after winning a landslide victory in Burma's last election in 1990. The four men were all elected in 1990. The regime never acknowledged the outcome of that election and it arrested many of the winning NLD candidates.

NLD officials said on Thursday that the party will boycott the election.