

The candidate list submitted by political parties to contest the upcoming election on Nov. 7 allows Burma's election observers to predict the dominate political parties and the likely election results in many constituencies.

After the close of the candidate listing period on Aug. 30, two parties, the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) and the National Unity Party (NUP), will contest in almost all the constituencies both in the national and region parliaments, according to the candidate list for 20 political parties researched by The Irrawaddy.

The USDP fielded more than 1,100 candidates, according to sources close to the party. The NUP party fielded 980 candidates in the election nationwide.

There are 1,163 seats in the national and regional parliaments, excluding the 25 percent of the military-designated seats in the parliament.

Aung Ngwe, the head of political department of the NUP said, "Our party will contest in 294 constituencies of the People's Assembly (Pyithu Hluttaw) and 149 constituencies of the Nationalities Assembly (Amyotha Hluttaw). For the State and Region parliaments, we will contest in the 537 constituencies.

"These are the latest figures, and they can be changed later because we have yet to receive the information about our party candidates in very remote areas," he said.

The NUP was transformed from the former ruling Burmese Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) and lost the people's support in the 1990 election due to the failure of the socialist economy under the leadership of the late dictator Gen Ne Win. Like the NUP, the USDP was transformed from the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) founded by the present dictator Snr-Gen Than Shwe.

The two parties have some similarities: Each was founded by former military leaders who ruled

the country during the past 40 years. The people's socio-economic life has little changed during that period. In this election, the two parties are emerging as key rivals.

The third strongest party in terms of the number of candidates contesting in the election is the National Democratic Force (NDF) led by a group of former leaders of the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

"We will contest in 108 constituencies for the People's Parliament, 34 constituencies for the Nationalities Parliament and 19 constituencies for the regional parliaments," said Khin Maung Swe, the NDF's founding leader.

The NDF will field a total of 161 candidates who will mainly contest in Rangoon and Mandalay divisions.

The fourth strongest party is the Shan Nationals Democratic Party (SNDP). The party has become popular in Shan State as "White Tiger" which is the party's logo. The SNDP has targeted the Shan State parliament as well as the People's and Nationalities parliamentary seats in Shan State.

"The SNDP fielded 45 candidates for People's Parliament, 15 candidates for Nationalities Parliament and 97 candidates for the parliaments in Shan and Kachin states," said Sai Hla Kyaw, a central executive member of the party.

In fifth place is the Democratic Party (Myanmar) led by a veteran politician Thu Wai, which is fielding 50 candidates for the national and regional parliaments. The majority of its candidates will run for constituencies in Rangoon and Mandalay.

Moreover, some ethnic political parties, such as the Rakhine Nationals Progressive Party (RNPD), Karin Peoples Party (KPP), Chin Progressive Party (CPP) and All Mon Region Democracy Party, fielded a smaller number of candidates, mainly for constituencies of their respective states. However, in spite of being a Karen party, the KPP will mainly focus on contesting seats in Irrawaddy and Rangoon divisions.

The RNP is fielding 45 candidates in total. It will contest two-third of Arakan State seats in the national and regional parliaments. Likewise, the CPP will field 39 candidates, contesting in almost all the constituencies in Chin State. The KPP and Mon parties will field 42 and 25 candidates respectively in Irrawaddy, Rangoon and Mon states.

From the overview of the distribution of the parties' candidates in states and divisions, the USDP and NUP are likely to face the greatest challenges in Shan, Arakan, Chin and Mon states, and in areas heavily populated by Karen.

For democratic opposition parties based in Rangoon, they will field candidates for constituencies mostly in two divisions (see the chart below). Also, despite some discussions about not competing against each other in some constituencies, the democratic parties are challenging each other for seats representing Rangoon and Mandalay.

The USDP and NUP will not be challenged by democratic parties in most of the constituencies for the national and regional parliaments.

The figures below based on the candidate list may change based on the final approval by the Election Commission.

Distribution of Candidates Fielded by Political Parties in the Parliamentary Election

No	Party Name	People's Parliament	Nationalities Parliament
1	Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP)	-	-
2	National Unity Party (NUP)	294	194

3	National Democratic Force (NDF)	34
4	Shan National Democratic Party (SNDP)	15
5	Democratic Party (Myanmar)	8
6	Union of Myanmar Federation of National Politics	11
7	The Rakhine Nationals Progressive Party	8
8	Karin Peoples Party (KPP)	6
9	88 Generation Student Youth (Union of Myanmar)	7
10	Chin Progressive Party	14
11	New Era People's Party	4

12	All Mon Region Democracy Party	6	7
14	National Political Alliance	6	3
14	Democracy and Peace Party	1	1
15	Unity and Democracy Party of Kachin State	2	4
16	Peace and Diversity Party	3	2
17	Kaman National Progressive Party	2	1
18	The Wa National Unity Party		-
19	Wonthanu NLD	4	-
20	Union Democratic Party	2	1

