

When Suu Kyi is free, she probably will not have the NLD party as a platform to express her views, but the Burmese public and the international community will still look to her for leadership.

Freedom and justice can't be expected under the rule of a military regime, and Burma is no exception.

After two-decades of military rule, the junta has produced hundreds of unjust laws to repress political activists and to restrict the freedom of the people.

It's no surprise that the recent election laws included new restrictions on the election process. However, what is surprising to Burma watchers is that the new Political Parties Registration Law even goes beyond the 2008 Constitution.

Chapter 15 titled "General Provision" is the last chapter of the Constitution. Article 449 reads: "This Constitution is the Basic Law of all the laws of the Union."

Article 407 of the Constitution is titled "The Right of Non-existence of Political Parties." The article identifies four types of people who are prohibited from forming a political party: people who are part of unlawful associations; people who have direct or indirect contact with insurgent groups; people who receive funds or material support from a foreign government, association or a foreigner; and people who abuse religion for political purposes.

The Constitution doesn't say anything about a political party not being formed by a political prisoner or a prisoner serving as a member of a party.

However, Article 4/e of the Political Parties Registration Law reads: "People who are serving a prison term cannot form a political party," and Article 10/e reads: "People who are serving a prison term cannot be a member of a political party."

Those two electoral rules, observers believe, are directed specifically at Aung San Suu Kyi and are intended to exclude her from the election process.

Indeed, Snr-Gen Than Shwe's ultimate aim is to eliminate Suu Kyi from Burmese politics entirely, and Chief Justice Aung Toe and the whole judiciary system has helped carry out the general's desire.

Suu Kyi's fame at home and abroad has always been a sore point for Than Shwe. What makes it even worse is that a woman has been able to defy him, the leader of a 450,000-man army.

Than Shwe tried to create a Constitution and election laws which will in effect put an end to Suu Kyi active role in Burmese politics.

Step 1 was to create a Constitutional barrier to her becoming president or a member of parliament.

Step 2, was to renew her sentence of house arrest to cover the election period.

Step 3 was to create a political party registration law that causes her to be expelled from the NLD or causes the party to be dissolved.

As expected by the junta, the NLD leadership is now divided over the issue of party registration, with Chairman Aung Shwe, and Khin Maung Swe, expressing a desire to re-register the party.

However, Suu Kyi called for her party to reject registration and not to participate in the election.

It's likely the NLD Party, as we know it, will be dissolved. It's possible that an NLD proxy party could take part in the election.

Suu Kyi, after her release, probably will not have the NLD party to give her a platform to express her views, but there's no doubt that the Burmese public and the international community will still look to her for leadership.

She can be expected to continue down the road first walked on by her father, Aung San, the founder of post-colonial Burma.

As Suu Kyi always said, this is the road to democracy.