

The Mon cease-fire group, the New Mon State Party (NMSP), released a statement on Oct. 18 requesting people in Burma including ethnic Mon to abstain from voting on Nov. 7.



The NMSP statement said, “All people in Burma need to oppose this election so that we can have a free and fair election in the future. The current election is like the junta referendum that forced the people to vote for the 2008 Constitution, its only purpose being to legitimize the military's Constitution.

“It is not a genuine constitution for the Union of Burma as it contains only a few democratic and ethnic rights. Its purpose is purely to maintain the military junta's power and rule for the long term.”

NMSP spokesperson Nai Hong Sar Pon Khaing said, “The main purpose of this statement is to let people know how the party stands on this election and to tell them clearly what the party thinks they should do on Nov. 7.”

The party's statement said the junta is holding the election to whitewash over the 1990 election result, and that the November poll would not bring national reconciliation, long-term peace or stable development, which is what the people really want.

Nai Hang Thar, the secretary of the NMSP, said the regime is holding this election to legitimize their control and dupe the international community into giving them recognition and support.

The NMSP refused to participate in the election in Burma as the party does not accept the 2008 constitution giving the military 25 percent of the seats in the parliaments, saying it will result in continued military rule and no political change after the election.

Released 15 days before the election, the statement reflects the increased tension between the

military junta and the NMSP since the party's rejection of the junta's April 2009 border guard force plan and the lack of political progress despite 15 years of cease-fire with the junta.

The All Mon Regions Democratic Party (AMRDP) led by Nai Ngwe Thein, a former assistant director from the Ministry of Education in Mon State, is to run in the election, however, with 34 candidates contesting in seven out of 10 townships in Mon State. The AMRDP predicts they will win a majority votes in Mon State.

With the AMRDP supporting and predicting success in the poll in contrast to exiled Mon and the NMSP who are urging Mon people to boycott it, the Mon people are confused about whether to vote.

"It is wrong telling people not to vote because the absence of opposition will only result in a USDP victory," said Nai Ngwe Thein as party members nearby distributed Mon songs on CDs to local people encouraging them to vote for his party.

Responding to overseas criticism of the AMRDP's participation, the party's leaders said it is time to fight for the rights of the 2 to 3 million ethnic Mon in Burma at the new parliament in Naypyidaw and not criticize from outside the political arena and the country.

"The election will not be free and fair as the junta has banned international monitoring groups from observing the election and ignored calls by the UN and the international community to let all political parties participate in the election," the NMSP statement said.