

The National Democratic Force (NDF), the political party which broke off from opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy, sent a letter on Saturday to junta chief Snr-Gen Than Shwe and Burma's Union Election Commission (EC) calling for a repudiation of the widespread advance ballots extracted from the voters using dishonest methods.

"In our letters, we described these suspicious advance voting cases which occurred in Rangoon, Irrawaddy, Sagaing and Magwe Divisions and other regions," said Dr. Than Nyein, the chairman of the NDF, which is the largest opposition party running in the election.

"In the letter, we called for the immediate end to these activities and also for the cancellation of the ballots unfairly obtained by EC officials," he said, without mentioning the political party that the EC has been collecting votes for.

Several reports have come from Burma in the final week before the election about large swaths of the Burmese electorate—ranging from teachers to students and from civil servants to factory workers—being forced to cast advance ballots for the junta-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) by a collaboration of USDP representatives, local authorities and township commission officials.

The NDF's letter also stated that these unfair advance votes were in contravention of Article 45 in the Election Law promulgated by the EC, expressed the NDF's belief that the unfair advance votes diminish the rightful political aspirations of the public and expressed the NDF's concern that the unfair advance votes would bring negative consequences to the country.

"We can loudly tell the people that the election is clearly not a free and fair election," said the NDF's political leader, Khin Maung Swe. "After the vote counting, if we find that the advance ballots are more than 50 percent of the eligible voters in a certain constituency, the votes would be invalid."

Voters in South Okkalapa Township said that Dr. Saw Naing, an independent candidate, was going around the town shouting in megaphones, telling people not to let themselves get intimidated into casting advance ballots.