

Several opposition parties in Burma have said they will not recognize the election results unless the country's Election Commission conducts vote-counting in a transparent and clear manner, after the election on Sunday was marred by widespread fraud and a low voter turnout.



“We have told other parties not to sign declarations recognizing the results of the polls without a clear explanation about the overwhelming incidents of suspicious advance votes and irregularities during the vote-counting,” said Khin Maung Swe, the leader of National Democratic Force (NDF), the largest opposition party in the election though it contested just 164 seats.

Although NDF was assured of victory in at least 10 constituencies, Khin Maung Swe said that the polling station officials in many townships, including Thanlyin and Kyauktan in Rangoon, suspended the counting of ballots on Sunday night at a point when the count showed the NDF leading by some 1,000 votes.

“Without any reason, the polling officials said they could not continue the vote count,” he said. “They said that the Union Election Commission would make a decision over the poll results.”

Khin Maung Swe added that, in some constituencies, advance ballots represented about half of the eligible voters.

Than Than Nu, a parliamentary candidate in Mandalay Division representing the Democratic Party (Myanmar), said that her chance of winning was no longer good, complaining that she saw suspicious bags of ballots coming in to the polling station during the vote-counting.

Widespread cases of voters being forced or coerced into casting advance ballots is expected to produce a landslide victory for the junta-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP).

"A high percentage of advanced votes were cast in Mudon Township, almost all from government employees," said Dr. Min Naing Soe of All Mon Region Democracy Party.

Dr. Saw Naing, an independent candidate in South Okkalapa Township, said that although he was leading after the voting count, he was declared the loser after the results were sent to the township Election Commission.

The initial official poll results showed victories for several USDP candidates contesting the 1,159 seats in the bicameral national parliament and 14 regional parliaments.

The official winners included Shwe Mann, the junta's third-highest ranking official who contested Naypyidaw for the USDP, defeating his only rival, the National Unity Party. Burma's Foreign Minister Nyan Win who was announced the winner in Pegu Division since he had no opponent.

US President Barack Obama has denounced the election and the European Union has stated that the Burmese authorities did not take the necessary steps to ensure a free, fair and inclusive electoral process.

"The results will be the decisions made by Election Commission," said Khin Maung Swe. "Not a reflection of the people's will."

An official from the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) said the overall voter turnout was less than 50 percent, and less than 30 percent in several regions.

"The voter turnout in Rangoon was especially low," she said. "This does not lend legitimacy to the outcome of the election."

"The reason there may be a high count in some regions is due to the number of advance votes," she added.