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A Kachin political party, the Kachin State Progressive Party (KSPP), will register in early April to compete in the upcoming election, according to party chairman Tu Ja.

The party's leaders discussed registration procedures on Monday.

Speaking to *The Irrawaddy*, Tu Ja said, “We are trying to register our party as quickly as we can...hopefully before the traditional water festival [April 13].”

Tu Ja, the former vice chairman of the ethnic Kachin cease-fire group, the Kachin Independence Organization, formed the KSPP in March last year and officially introduced the party in July 2009. Tu Ja said that he was officially elected chairman on Saturday.

Tu Ja said he supported the regime's stated goal of creating a “flourishing and disciplined democratic nation” with the participation of multiple political parties.

“We have no negative view about the election so far,” he said. “We have to try first.”

He said that the KSPP party would seek to represent all Kachin people and focus on the economic and social development of Kachin State.

“If Kachin State is developed,” he said, “it will automatically share in the wealth of the country.”

He said the party would not discriminate on the basic of background, religion or race.

Since forming the KSPP, Tu Ja said, “We've traveled to many areas in Kachin State and explained the mission of our party. Many people accept our ideology and support our movement.”

He said the party is in the process of writing a constitution.

Asked if the regime's electoral and party registration laws favor elite and wealthy candidates, Tu Ja said, “People who really want to form a political party have to find financing for their party anyway.” If the registration fee is too low, he said, too many political parties will be created.

Some critics have contended that party and candidate registrations fees favor the wealthy.

Party registration regulations stipulate that all political parties have until April 15 to register by filing a 300,000 registration fee (US $300) and 500,000 kyat ($500) for each candidate fielded in the electionl.

Parties may spend a maximum of 10 million kyat ($10,000) for each candidate running for a seat in parliament.

The expenditure can come from either the party's funds or from a candidate's private funds. The level of a candidate's spending represents a significant increase from the 1990 election, in which each candidate's expenditure was limited to 70,000 kyat ($70).

The KSPP is based in Myitkyina, the capital of the Kachin State. The flag of the party will include green and red colors: two green lines—on the top and bottom of the flag—and one red line in the middle.