

Leaders of the National League for Democracy remain confused over how to decide on the fate of the party.

How Burma's main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), will decide on whether to register the party and participate in Burma's election remains unclear even after its detained leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, said she is entirely against registering her party under the election law announced on March 8.

On Tuesday, Suu Kyi told her lawyer that her personal view on party registration was neither an order nor an instruction to the party, adding that her party members should make the decision themselves democratically.



Nyan Win, Suu Kyi's lawyer, said "In principle the party will not need Suu Kyi's decision again."

Suu Kyi's message came after news of internal divisions within the party leadership on party registration leaked to the media.

Party officials are unsure whether the scheduled assembly of more than 100 party leaders on March 29 will produce the final decision on whether to register the party or not.

According to party sources, party Chairman Aung Shwe, 92, who, in sharp contrast to Suu Kyi,

supports registering the party, recently told party leaders that he does not like the voting system proposed for the meeting.

Aung Shwe said he prefers members voice different arguments for and against the party registration, hinting on the possibility that the decision on March 29 will not be final.

However, senior party official Win Tin said if Suu Kyi and Aung Shwe disagree on party registration, then the result of the Monday meeting would be final. He added that Suu Kyi's message on Tuesday shows her political wisdom and leadership.

The party is faced with a choice of registering for this year's election without its detained leader, or disbanding because the election law ban parties with members currently in detention.

Party sources said that some leaders who support Aung Shwe and wish to register the party and contest the election recalled at a recent party meeting that Suu Kyi and Aung Shwe were given the party's mandate to make party decisions many years previously, and the final decision cannot be made without their agreement.

"I pointed out at that meeting that the mandate is shared by both Suu Kyi and Aung Shwe. So the mandate can only be used after a meeting between them," said party official Ohn Kyaing.

Ohn Kyaing said he is unsure whether party leaders will reach a decision on March 29 by vote or by accepting a majority opinion, or whether the final decision will be reached only after a meeting between Suu Kyi and Aung Shwe.

Meanwhile, observers think Suu Kyi's unequivocal rejection of the election law will sway party opinion against party registration and participation in the election.

If the NLD party fails to register within 60 days from March 8, when the junta's election law was announced, it will cease to exist as a legal entity according to that law.

“Daw Suu said whether the party gets disbanded or whether it goes into decline and ends in irrelevance are two entirely different outcomes,” said Suu Kyi's lawyer, Nyan Win.