

The National League for Democracy says it will not take down signs and insignia from outside the party's Rangoon headquarters after May 7.

Leaders of Burma's main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), have decided not to remove the party signs and insignia from outside the party's headquarters in Rangoon after the deadline for party registration, according to party sources.

One source said the decision is in line with Suu Kyi's view that the NLD will not cease to exist even if it is officially dissolved by the military junta for refusing to register as a political party, the deadline for which is May 7.

"However, the party leaders would not try to prevent the authorities from removing the party signs," the source said.

After the May 7 deadline for party registration, the NLD headquarters and hundreds of its branch offices across the country, which were only allowed to be reopened last month, are expected to be closed down.

"Why should we remove the party sign? We don't assume that our party is finished just because we didn't register it," said outspoken party official Win Tin.

The party leadership is currently faced with the dilemma of what the party will do after May 7. Speaking to *The Irrawaddy*, Suu Kyi's lawyer Nyan Win, who met with the detained NLD leader on Wednesday, said, "All we can say for now is we will continue in politics. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has many ideas on what to do next. But it is unfortunate that she is still under house arrest."

At Wednesday's meeting, Suu Kyi expressed her satisfaction at the party's decision on March 29 not to register and contest the polls this year, Nyan Win said.

"The party will be no more, but Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice-chairman Tin Oo and party leader Win Tin will continue the democratic movement," Nyan Win said, adding that the party does not wish to give false hope to the Burmese people by contesting the election.

As part of its preparations for the party's future after May 7, the party's central executive committee formed a 17-member committee this week to oversee the party's property and finances.

While some observers view the party decision as “suicide” or a self-defeating response, recent surveys conducted by *The Irrawaddy* suggest that many people in Burma welcomed the party decision, saying the party would no longer be a respectable organization if it decided to register under the regime's “unjust” election laws. The election laws effectively bar Suu Kyi and more than 2,000 political prisoners from this year's polls or from being members of a party.

On Wednesday, the United Nationalities Alliance (UNA), a coalition of 12 ethnic parties which contested and won 67 seats in the 1990 election, issued a statement in support of the NLD decision. Prior to the NLD decision, ethnic leaders representing the UNA made it clear that they will not contest the polls without a review of the regime's 2008 Constitution.

Neither the NLD party or its leader Suu Kyi, currently serving an 18-month house arrest sentence, have ever succeeded in any legal procedure against the regime.

But Suu Kyi's lawyers said that she asked them on Wednesday to continue pursuing legal proceedings on three cases: her continued detention; the lawsuit against regime leader Snr-Gen Than Shwe for setting unjust election laws; and for repairs at her Inya Lake house, which were halted by the Rangoon municipality after Suu Kyi's estranged brother and a distant relative launched objections.

Burma's supreme court in February rejected Suu Kyi's appeal against her current detention, and refused last month to accept a lawsuit against Than Shwe, saying it has no power to consider the case.

The Burmese regime has not set a date for the polls this year. Than Shwe described the election as “the very beginning of the process of fostering democracy,” in his speech on Armed Forces Day in Naypyidaw last month.