

The European parliament declares that Burma's election law is undemocratic and should be repealed

The European Parliament (EP) denounced Burma's electoral law and asked for the military junta to repeal it in order to open the political process for the participation of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners, according to a press release issued by the 27 countries of the EP on Thursday.

The EP "calls for the electoral laws published in March 2010, which make the holding of free and transparent elections impossible, to be repealed," and urged the Burmese authorities "to heed the appeals of the international community to allow Aung San Suu Kyi and all other prisoners of conscience to participate in the political process."

The EP "condemns the holding of elections under completely undemocratic conditions and on the basis of rules which exclude the main democratic opposition party and deprive hundreds of thousands of Burmese citizens of their right to vote and stand for election, in a clear attempt to exclude the country's entire opposition from the ballot."

Speaking to *The Irrawaddy* on Thursday, Ohn Kyaing, a spokesperson for the National League for Democracy (NLD), said: "The European Parliament's resolution is right because we will be on the wrong track if we accept the [election] law. The EP acted for the benefit of the people of Burma."

However, Chan Htun, a veteran politician and long-time supporter of the democracy movement in Burma, doubts the effectiveness of the EP resolution.

"I don't think there will be any change just because of this new pressure," he said. "We have to change the situation by ourselves, but the military regime here is so strong that it's hard for pro-democracy activists to initiate even a small campaign."

Meanwhile, an official delegation to Burma from the Czech Republic led by Jiri Sitler, Deputy Foreign Minister, met NLD leaders such as Tin Oo, vice-chairman of the NLD, Win Tin, Nyan Win, Ohn Kyaing and Han Thar Myint at the British Club in Rangoon on Thursday.

Asked about the NLD's future plans, Tin Oo told the delegation that the NLD will continue its unfinished political work, explaining that the party's current social work included helping people satisfy their basic needs, such as getting access to clean water, in some areas hit by Cyclone Nargis in 2008.

On Wednesday, the Czech delegation met with regime authorities in Naypyidaw, but the state-run *New Light of Myanmar* did not report the delegation's visit.

The Czech Republic and its former president, Noble Peace Laureate Václav Haval, who nominated Aung San Suu Kyi for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991, has been strongly supportive of the democratic movement in Burma.