

Burma's Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), the junta-backed social organization, began dismantling its branch office signs in several Rangoon's townships on Monday, according to photographs obtained by *The Irrawaddy*.

The removal of the USDA signs was witnessed by Rangoon residents in at least five townships—Kyauktada, Mingalar Taung Nyunt, Tamwe, Yankin and Ahlone.

It's not immediately known if the removal of the signs has anything to do with the transformation of the USDA into the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP). However, according to sources close to the USDA, the association had planned to remove its signs after approval by the Election Commission of the USDP's registration as a political party.

Burma's Prime Minister Thein Sein and 26 ministers and senior officials formed the USDP on April 29 to contest the election later this year. All of them are also members of the USDA, which was formed by the regime in 1993 and claims to have more than 24 million members nationwide.