

Amid accusations that the USDP has been using state resources, the Burmese junta has moved to declare the party's assets separate from those owned by the USDA.

The office of the Burmese military regime's auditor general is producing a list of properties owned by the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) to show whether they belong to the state or to the party formed by the association to run in this year's election.

A source close to the auditor general's office told *The Irrawaddy* that the list was drawn up to avoid complications arising from the fact that the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) grew out of the USDA, a state-sponsored organization formed under the patronage of the ruling regime.

“All the possessions of the USDA will be examined to show the division between the party and the association,” said the source.

The USDA was formed by the regime as a mass civic organization in 1993. It claims to have more than 24 million members nationwide, including civil servants and members of the military. The USDA Central Panel of Patrons include Snr-Gen Than Shwe, Prime Minister Thein Sein, and other government ministers.

On April 29, Thein Sein and 26 ministers and senior officials formed the USDP to contest the election later this year. The Election Commission officially recognized the USDP as a political party on June 8.

A senior military officer at the Ministry of Defense in Naypyidaw said the USDA will continue to function as a social organization that uses state-owned properties, which must be clearly distinguished from the USDP's assets. Otherwise, he said, the party will be criticized for not acting in accordance with the law.

“The party will purchase buildings, vehicles and office equipment from the association. They need to do it according to the election law,” he said.

At the end of this month, the USDP will reportedly put up signboards at buildings owned by the party, according to sources.

Under Chapter III, Section 12 (a-5) of the Political Parties Registration Law, a party “shall not

have the right to subsist as a political party if it is ... found that the organization obtained and used directly or indirectly money, land, house, building, vehicle, property owned by the State.”

Some observers have noted that since the USDA's assets belong to the state, any use of the association's property by the USDP would constitute a violation of the Political Parties Registration Law.

However, a USDP official told *The Irrawaddy* that the party will legally acquire assets from the USDA with money donated by some of the country's leading businessmen.

It is believed that about 25 businessmen close to the regime have donated large sums of money to the USDP.