

Several ethnic political parties believe that they will win numerous seats in the new national and regional parliaments and are competing for every parliamentary seat in many ethnic constituencies.

The Kayin Peoples Party, which includes several retired military officers, will compete in four divisions, one state and one township in Karen State.

Saw Aye Ko, the vice chairman who is also a retired colonel, told The Irrawaddy, "We have 43 candidates who will compete in every parliamentary seat. Although we do not have many candidates, we believe that we win many seats in the upcoming election."

"Every single party has their own technique," he said. "It's important not to underestimate the other parties."

A pro-junta party, the Unity and Democracy Party for Kachin State (UDPKS) has listed seven candidates for seven constituencies in Kachin State, according to Laphai Naw Din, an editor with the Kachin News Group.

Speaking to The Irrawaddy on Tuesday, Laphai Naw Din said, "They can only field those seven candidates because of their limited budget. With so few candidates, even if they all win the political benefits won't be great."

According to the Kachin News Group, Kya Hting Nan, the leader of the UDPKS, was also an organizer for the former Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), which has been transformed into the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), a proxy political party of regime.

Other ethnic parties and their list of candidates who will contest for seats include the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP). With a list of 157 candidates, it is the largest of the ethnic parties.

Sai Hla Kyaw of SNDP told The Irrawaddy: "Our candidates will compete in 114 constituencies from Shan State, 17 from Kachin State, six from Sagaing Division and one in Mandalay Division for every parliamentary seat. I am sure that we will get the full support from our people."

The 39 candidates from the Chin Progressive Party (CPP) will compete in nine constituencies in Chin State and two constituencies in Sagaing Division, Kalay and Tamu townships, according to Hlung Ce, the CPP chairman.

The Rakhine Nationalities Development Party (RNDP) has 45 candidates who will compete in 12 constituencies out of 17 in Arakan State.

Twelve candidates will compete for seats in the people's parliament (lower house), eight for nationalities' parliament (upper house) and 23 for state and regional parliaments, according to RNDP's chairman, Dr. Aye Maung.

The All Mon Region Democracy Party listed 35 candidates who will compete in seven constituencies in 10 townships in Mon State, according to chairman Naing Ngwe Thein.

Registered political parties must submit a list of candidates to the Election Commission between Sept. 16-30.