

The main Burmese opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) challenges the Election Commission's announcement on Tuesday that it will disband the party, a party spokesman said on Wednesday.



NLD spokesman Nyan Win said the party will contend that the commission has no authority to dissolve an existing political party, only parties registered by the commission for the upcoming election.

“We are now planning to confront the Political Parties Registration Law Chapter 4, Article 25 before the court,” said Nyan Win, who is also a lawyer, responding to the announcement in the state-run media on Tuesday.

The commission announced that five political parties were disbanded after they failed to renew registration as a political party for the Nov. 7 election.

Along with the NLD, four other parties were disbanded: the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, the Union Pa-O National Organization, the Shan State Kokang Democratic Party and the Wa National Development Party.

Nyan Win said that under the current political party registration laws, the commission has authority only over newly registered political parties, not parties that were registered in the past.

“The NLD was registered under the State Peace and Development Council Law No. 4/88 [in 1988,” he said.

In March, the regime dissolved various decrees in 1988 that related to the 1990 election and announced the political party registration laws for the 2010 election.

“In March, we [the NLD] issued a legal challenge over the political party registration laws and the result of the 1990 elections. So far, the court has not responded. Therefore the decrees in 1988 are still in dispute and effective,” Nyan Win said.

Despite the announcement, there was no immediate action against the NLD by authorities, NLD officials said. On Wednesday, police stationed in the area around NLD headquarter in Rangoon were seen taking photographs.

“I don’t what to guess what may happen in the future. It depends on the authorities. But we will proceed with what we have to do,” said Nyan Win.

The NLD won a landslide victory in the 1990 election, but the regime never honored the result. In late March, the NLD executive committee decided unanimously not to register the party for the election saying it would not be free, fair and inclusive.

Observers said the dissolution of the party seems to be the first step by the regime to deter future NLD activities, such as party reorganization across Burma. Recently, NLD leaders met with family members of ethnic leaders in prison.

Phyo Min Thein, the former chairman of the Union Democratic Party (UDP) who recently resigned from his post, said the authorities may be preparing to take action against NLD members if they travel to cease-fire areas to talk to ethnic leaders.