

Six Burmese political parties have joined in alliance to increase the chances of their pro-democracy candidates being elected on Nov. 7.

The six political parties are the National Democratic Force (NDF), the Shan National Democratic Party (SNDP), the Rakhin National Development Party, the Chin National Party, the Union Democratic Party (UDP) and the League for Democracy and Peace.

Khin Maung Swe, the NDF party leader, said, "We joined in alliance because we want to show to the people that we are strong, and we'll fight for democracy in the election and in the parliament after the election."

Sai Hla Kaw, the SNDP secretary, said, "We will all benefit from the alliance in terms of more human and financial resources."

The six parties will field 68 candidates in the Upper House (Amyotha Hluttaw) election; 176 candidates in the Lower House (Phithu Hluttaw); and 152 candidates in regional and state houses.

Party leaders agreed at a meeting in Rangoon on Saturday to work together for democracy and equal rights, the rule of law, and for a system of checks and balances in the political process. The leaders said they would try to align with other democratic groups in parliament after the election.

In a statement on Sunday, the parties leaders urged people not to boycott the election and to vote for change the political situation in Burma.

"Many people are not interested in the election because they do not like the 2008 Constitution and some people think that the opposition is too weak to fight for democracy because the National League for Democracy (NLD) is not taking part in this election," said Thein Htay, the UDP party chairman.

In the absence of the main opposition party, the NLD, many observers expect that junta's proxy party, the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) to win a landslide victory.

However, Khin Maung Swe said, "The people know who they should vote for. It is too early to say the USDP is going to win."