Floods hamper political parties’ registration of candidates despite the Election Commission’s extension of deadlines. The Commission leaves out some constituencies, annuls candidacies based on parentage, and introduces further media and party restrictions.

The NLD publishes a draft candidate list, prompting criticism for leaving out many party veterans. Daw Suu campaigns in flood zones and calls Shwe Mann a political ally after he is ousted as Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) Chairman.

Shwe Mann is removed from his post as Chairman of the ruling USDP in an overnight purge led by the military. Military officials and cabinet post holders take on senior party posts.

Severe flooding in Burma results in at least 121 deaths, with Arakan State worst affected. The regime admits to a “weak” response and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi warns that the regime could use floods to undermine the election.

The National Parliament passes the controversial Monogamy and Religious Conversion Bills and extends the state of emergency in Kokang Self-Administered Zone, Shan State.

President Thein Sein rejects ethnic armed groups’ request for an inclusive nationwide ceasefire agreement. Tatmadaw troops continue offensives in Kachin and Shan States, trapping 1,400 Kachin civilians amidst the fighting.

Imprisoned students file a petition against the police for illegal detention and call for action against excessive use of force. Four detained students begin a hunger strike.

During her third official visit to the country, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Yanghee Lee expresses concern at the arrest of activists and journalists, and the growth of religious extremism and hate speech.

Indonesian police rescue more enslaved Burmese fishermen, and Malaysian police find more bodies in a jungle trafficking camp. UNHCR warns swift action is needed to prevent a second boatpeople crisis.

KEY STORY: 2015 ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS

Throughout August, the regime Election Commission (EC) made logistical amendments to ease the pressure on political parties and candidates attempting to meet deadlines to register candidates in the
On 3 August, in response to severe flooding across the country, the regime Election Commission (EC) extended the deadline for political parties to submit candidate lists from 8 August to 14 August, and the deadline to withdraw candidates to 17 August. The extension was useful for some parties, such as the Farmer Development Party which lost all of its Magwe and Sagaing Division files in the floods, but came too late for the Federal Union Party and others who had already ended nominations. The EC also announced that citizens who lost IDs because of the floods could still vote if they acquire new documents from sub-commission offices on 1 November.

**7 August:** It was reported that NLD youth leader Than Wai Kyaw said as many as 50 townships in Kalaymyo area of Sagaing Division lost their NLD-checked voter registration lists in the flood.4

**11 August:** It was reported that floods caused the Rakhine State National Force and Chin Development Party to forfeit ten constituencies, and the Kachin State Democracy Party nine.5

On 6 August, UN Special Rapporteur Yanghee Lee met EC Chairman Tin Aye in Naypyidaw, who told her polling would only be postponed in specific polling stations, not entire constituencies, if at all. He also said that while green card holders (mainly Rohingya) would not be allowed to vote, IDPs could vote in home constituencies or in camps if they stayed in the latter for at least 180 days. Tin Aye also told Lee that if military officials refuse to admit outside observers he will request them to relocate booths outside army compounds.6

On 17 August, the EC sent political parties the election campaign regulations [see box, Campaigning rules].14 Meanwhile, political parties continued to apply to the EC with candidate changes after the 14 August deadline, and on 18 August the EC urged parties to promptly finish submitting requests at

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1 DVB (04 Aug 15) Candidate list deadline extended due to floods
2 Myanmar Times (04 Aug 15) UEC extends candidate deadline
3 DVB (05 Aug 15) Lose your ID in the flood? You can still vote, says govt; Irrawaddy (05 Aug 15) Voter ID Cards to Be Given to Flood Victims Bereft of Documents; UEC; Myanmar Times (06 Aug 15) Voters to get identity cards;
4 Mizzima (07 Aug 15) Kalaymyo NLD youth leader concerned with voting lists
5 Myanmar Times (11 Aug 15) Small parties struggle to match their electoral ambitions
6 EMG (10 Aug 15) UEC boss says floods won’t stop election; Irrawaddy (10 Aug 15) Vice-President’s Candidacy Carries Constitutional Conundrum
8 Irrawaddy (07 Jan 15) USDP, NLD Deny Skirting Rules
9 GNLM (18 Aug 15) Political parties urged to follow rules and regulations on election campaigns, code of conduct
10 RFA (15 May 14) Myanmar Opposition Concerned Over Proposed Campaign Rules
11 Irrawaddy (15 May 14) Election Campaign Rules Spark Concern Among Opposition Parties; RFA (15 May 14) Myanmar Opposition Concerned Over Proposed Campaign Rules
12 Reuters (29 Aug 15) Myanmar bans parties from criticising army in state media
13 Mizzima News (14 May 14) Election campaign laws spark debate
14 GNLM (18 Aug 15) Political parties urged to follow rules and regulations on election campaigns, code of conduct
relevant sub-commission offices. On 19 August, the EC confirmed that all “floating voters” who have lived outside their home constituency for at least 180 days may register with the local sub-commission nearest to them by as late as 10 October.

On 21 August, the EU signed an MoU with the regime to deploy a full Election Observation Mission to the polls in November, consisting of over 100 short and long-term observers. Simultaneously, the EC postponed the scrutiny of candidate nomination for the upcoming general election from 18 to 31 August. On 23 August the EC announced that it postponed the release of nationwide electoral registers from 23 August until September to ease the pressure on voters, who will have 14 days to confirm the accuracy of the lists.

**Election Commission nixes constituencies, rejects candidates, and restricts media coverage**

On 7 August, it was reported that election polling will not be conducted in four United Wa State Army-controlled townships and one National Democratic Alliance Army-controlled township in Shan State. United Wa State Army (UWSA) spokesperson Aung Myint estimated that 600,000 people in his administrative zone would not be able to vote as immigration officials will not enter the area to provide election identification.

On 19 August, local election officials and ethnic leaders in Chin State forecasted that 270,000 people may not be able to vote in November due to the damage caused by floods.

The regime Election Commission (EC) also rejected candidates on various grounds:

- **22 August**: The EC notified incumbent MP and self-identified Rohingya Shwe Maung that his candidature was annulled as his parents were non-Burmese citizens at the time of his birth, although he argued that both parents received National Registration Cards in 1952. Extremist Buddhist monk U Wirathu from the Organization for the Protection of National Race and Religion (OPNRR) reportedly rebuked the USDP for nominating Shwe Maung in 2010, saying that only “national ethnics” should be eligible as MPs.

- **24 August**: It was reported that the Mandalay Election Commission rejected National League for Democracy (NLD) candidate Win Myint on similar grounds, but the NLD vowed to appeal to the regional commission. Win Myint’s appeal was defeated on 25 August, though his lawyer said the Constitutional Tribunal should rule on the matter as the EC’s rule contravenes the rights of citizens in the Constitution.

- **24 August**: The EC notified NLD candidate Yin Myo from Shan State that he was disqualified because his father was not a Burmese citizen at the time of his birth.

- **25 August**: The NLD’s Karenni State Chair confirmed that nominee Phyo Wai Aung had been rejected by the EC for not meeting the National Assembly’s age requirement of 30 years. The same day, USDP announced that none of its candidates have been disqualified.

Also on 25 August, the EC sent a letter to the interim Press Council that outlined restrictions on press coverage of the election, including a limitation of only three press members per media outlet for every polling station.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral system</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The elections will be held according to the “first-past-the-post” system in which the candidate in each constituency that receives the most votes is declared the winner. For the 8 November elections, the regime Election Commission (EC) has designated a total of 1,171 seats distributed across four levels of parliamentary representation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After representatives for each level are elected, the President and two Vice-Presidents are then elected by the Presidential Electoral College. The Presidential Electoral College is composed of three groups from the National Parliament: the People’s Assembly, the National Assembly, and the 166 appointed Defense Services personnel from both Assemblies. Each group elects one Vice-President, and then the National Parliament jointly elects the President from the three Vice-Presidents. The two runners-up become Vice Presidents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Special Branch seeks candidate information, USDP reportedly paid for votes

On 6 August, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi warned voters through video address that the regime could use the floods to undermine the election, recalling the 2008 referendum post-Nargis. The next day media reported that the Mandalay Division Police Force drafted plans to recruit and train over 5,400 special police officers to secure the 5,409 polling booths across the Division.

Reports surfaced on 10 August that Special Branch Police sought information on candidates from multiple parties, including Daw Suu and affiliates, and from the regime Election Commission (EC) itself, despite the fact that the EC is responsible for inspecting candidate backgrounds. On 19 August, National League for Democracy (NLD) official Win Htein warned candidates to reject Special Branch requests for biographical information or photos.

On 19 August, the Carter Center published a report urging the EC to act transparently and inform the public of the progress and underlying causes of voter list errors, ballot procedures for migrants and IDPs, the appeals process, and the role of auxiliary security forces. It also called for a guarantee that military ballot boxes and advance polling are observable, that civil society groups can coordinate freely, and that media receives expansive access to the entire electoral process.

The same day, Zomi Congress for Democracy said the ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) may sweep the polls in Chin State as it has already “paid staff in every village” to support its candidates. On 11 August, Daw Suu similarly condemned instances of state employees in at least one township reportedly being told they must vote for USDP.

On 24 August it was reported that the NLD spotted an early campaign poster for National Assembly USDP MP Hla Swe in Saw Township, Magwe Division, and planned to submit an official complaint if it was not taken down.

NLD sees rejections, protests, and resignations after publishing candidate list

The National League for Democracy (NLD) published a draft candidate list on 3 August, drawing ire for its omission of 20 activists from the 88 Generation Peace and Open Society (88 GPOS), including Ko Ko Gyi, and outspoken lawmakers such as Nyo Nyo Thin of Bahan Township, Rangoon Division. People queried why party veterans, such as longtime NLD secretary and 20-year party member, Soe Tun, lost out to new members and non-locals even as NLD Central Executive Committee (CEC)
member Tun Tun Hein had listed party loyalty as a main criterion for candidacy.\(^{40}\)

- **3 August**: Long-time member Myo Khin from Yankin Township, Rangoon Division and 20 colleagues resigned from the NLD to protest candidate nominations.\(^{41}\)
- **3 August**: NLD spokesperson Nyan Win rejected accusations of a flawed selections process.\(^{42}\)
- **4 August**: Rangoon Divisional Parliament MP Nyo Nyo Thin told the press that upon requesting the NLD to explain her rejection she learned that she was not even a party member. The Independent MP had applied in March after receiving a request from the NLD to run for a People’s Assembly seat for Bahan Township.\(^{43}\)
- **4 August**: Daw Aung San Suu Kyi praised the nomination row as a “blessing in disguise,” saying it revealed who is working for the country and who is motivated by self-interest.\(^{44}\)
- **7 August**: Nyo Nyo Thin vowed to contest her current seat as an independent while endorsing the NLD in other constituencies.\(^{45}\)
- **7 August**: In Pakokku Township, Magwe Division, local NLD staff and over 300 people protested the CEC’s nomination of four locally suspect candidates, with senior branch office members as well as 1990-elects threatening to resign their office and withdraw their vote.\(^{46}\)
- **7 August**: It was reported that CEC member Win Myint said the party had chosen ten new candidates to replace the 20 that had resigned in protest.\(^{47}\) An additional 12 NLD members resigned due to pressure from authorities on issues such as past violations of the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law or for living outside Burma for ten years.\(^{48}\)
- **7 August**: In Pegu and Taungoo Townships, Pegu Division, Daw Suu told voters to simply vote for the NLD ticket instead of focusing on individual candidates.\(^{49}\)
- **8 August**: In Taungoo, Pegu Division, Daw Suu urged candidates of 14 townships to overlook nomination squabbles.\(^{50}\)
- **9 August**: In Minbu Township, Magwe Division the NLD Divisional Joint Secretary resigned after a closed-door meeting between Daw Suu and Magwe Division NLD leaders.\(^{51}\)
- **10 August**: It was reported that 88 GPOS leader Ko Ko Gyi announced he will not run in the November election.\(^{52}\)
- **10 August**: Over a dozen NLD members joined nearly 100 people from 50 surrounding villages in Hlegu Township, Rangoon Division to protest NLD nominations for Tamwe constituency.\(^{53}\) On the same day, the NLD revoked the membership of the local NLD Committee Chairman, Vice-Chair and eight others in Pakokku Township, Magwe Division, despite objections that over half of those expelled had not protested.\(^{54}\)
- **10 August**: In Pwintphyu Township, Magwe Division, Daw Suu told residents that despite contentious nominations in some districts, the NLD promises overall reform for the country.\(^{55}\)
- **12 August**: It was reported that an anonymous member of the NLD CEC in Rangoon criticized the “lack of democracy in the party,” and said it “needs to reform its own central executive committee.”\(^{56}\)
- **17 August**: It was reported that Daw Suu defended the NLD’s candidate selections, explaining that beside 88 GPOS hopefuls many NLD members were also turned away, but added that she must defer

\(^{40}\) Irrawaddy (03 Aug 15) NLD snubs prominent politicians, activists – and ethnic alliance offer; Irrawaddy (05 Aug 15) Spurned NLD Veterans Demand Answers from Party Leadership
\(^{41}\) Irrawaddy (03 Aug 15) Shunned NLD Election Hopefuls Question the Party’s Selection Process
\(^{42}\) Irrawaddy (03 Aug 15) Shunned NLD Election Hopefuls Question the Party’s Selection Process
\(^{43}\) Myanmar Times (04 Aug 15) 88 Generation should not break away from NLD, say analysts
\(^{44}\) Myanmar Times (05 Aug 15) Outspoken politician didn’t make NLD cut
\(^{45}\) Irrawaddy (03 Aug 15) NLD Leadership Expels Pakokku Party Officials over Protest; RFA (10 Aug 15) Aung San Suu Kyi Urges Support For NLD Amid Myanmar Candidate Row
\(^{46}\) Irrawaddy (11 Aug 15) NLD Leadership Expels Pakokku Party Officials over Protest
\(^{47}\) DVB (08 Aug 15) Rejected by NLD, Nyo Nyo Thin runs independently; Myanmar Times (10 Aug 15) Complaints continue over NLD’s controversial candidate list
\(^{48}\) DVB (08 Aug 15) Rejected by NLD, Nyo Nyo Thin runs independently; Myanmar Times (10 Aug 15) Complaints continue over NLD’s controversial candidate list
\(^{49}\) Myanmar Times (07 Aug 15) At least 12 NLD candidates drop out of election race
\(^{50}\) Irrawaddy (07 Aug 15) Anger Over NLD Candidate Picks Spurs Into Pakokku’s Streets
\(^{51}\) EMG (08 Aug 15) NLD replaces resigning candidates
\(^{52}\) EMG (08 Aug 15) 88 Generation leader won’t run in election
\(^{53}\) EMG (10 Aug 15) 88 leader won’t run in election
\(^{54}\) EMG (10 Aug 15) 88 leader won’t run in election
\(^{55}\) EMG (10 Aug 15) 88 leader won’t run in election
\(^{56}\) Myanmar Times (12 Aug 15) Fury over NLD candidate list continues to spark protests
judgment on nominees until they assume office.  

- **17 August:** It was reported that Arakan National Party candidate and member of the Committee Representing the People’s Parliament, Aye Thar Aung, accused Daw Suu and the NLD of breaking a promise made in July to not field candidates where CRPP members would be running.  

- **17 August:** The NLD administrative committee in Karen State confirmed that senior members Saw Poe Wah and Saw K’lu Htaw resigned from the NLD to campaign under the Karen National Party ticket.  

- **24 August:** The NLD and 88 GPOS issued a joint statement saying they have “never been separated” and that the 88 GPOS members from more than 90 townships will aid the NLD’s campaign.

### Daw Suu campaigns in flood zones and stands with Shwe Mann after ouster

In August, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi donated relief items to flood-affected areas as she campaigned in Pegu, Magwe, and Rangoon Divisions.

- **3 August:** Across Pegu Division, Daw Suu aided relief efforts while also raising voter consciousness.  

- **7 August:** Speaking in Pyin Pon Gyi Village, Pegu Township, Pegu Division, Daw Suu said she needed votes in order to help people.  

- **10 August:** Daw Suu donated rice and relief supplies to the remote town of Sidoktaya, Magwe Division and urged residents to vote for the NLD in order to secure prosperous futures for Burmese youth, reminding them to check voter ID lists.  

- **11 August:** Daw Suu met NLD candidates in Prome Township, Pegu Division, and addressed crowds in Shwedaung, Paungde, Nattalin, Zeegone, Gyobingauk, Okpho, Minhla, and Letpadan Townships.  

- **12 August:** In Minhla Township, Magwe Division, Daw Suu told locals that supporting the NLD will end corruption in Burma.  

- **14 August:** NLD Executive Committee member Win Htein said Daw Suu cancelled her trip to Shan State out of concern for the 13 August USDP purge, remarking that the event was consistent with junta tactics and that Daw Suu was displeased with how Shwe Mann was treated.  

- **17 August:** It was reported that the NLD released a five-point economic plan prioritizing fiscal prudence, monetary stability, streamlining government, boosting agriculture, and improving infrastructure.  

- **18 August:** In Naypyidaw. Daw Suu told the press that the NLD counts Shwe Mann as a political ally after an undemocratic ouster and that the controversial reshuffle will give the NLD more votes.  

- **18 August:** Daw Suu told press that the “ridiculous” Recall Bill, which makes it easier for elected MPs to be unseated, shouldn’t be passed, adding that the public must scrutinize whether or not the bill’s submission is motivated by the USDP reshuffle. [see Parliament’s 12th session disrupted, Monogamy and Religious Conversion Bills passed]  

- **21 August:** In Thanlyin, Rangoon Division, Daw Suu revealed the NLD slogan, “Time for Change,” telling voters Burma is a “malnourished democratic country,” and that the USDP is duty-bound to

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57 EMG (17 Aug 15) Suu Kyi explains 88 Generation snub  
58 Myanmar Times (17 Aug 15) Ethnic party angered by NLD’s broken promises on seat-sharing  
59 KIC (24 Aug 15) Karen State: NLD Senior Members Defect To Join New Karen Party  
60 Myanmar times (25 Aug 15) NLD, 88 Generation smooth over election rift  
61 EMG (5 Aug 15) Suu Kyi visits flood victims in Bago Region  
62 EMG (10 Aug 15) Suu Kyi returns to campaign trail;  
63 Myanmar Times (13 Aug 15) In Magwe, flood relief gets political for NLD; EMG (13 Aug 15) Aung San Suu Kyi campaigns on behalf of youth; Irrawaddy (10 Aug 15) Suu Kyi Urges Voters to Forget Candidate Controversy  
64 EMG (17 Aug 15) Suu Kyi’s Shan trip postponed  
65 EMG (13 Aug 15) Corruption-free government facilitates national development, says Suu Kyi  
66 Irrawaddy (14 Aug 15) Suu Kyi Canoeels Shan State Campaign Stop in Wake of USDP Purge; EMG (17 Aug 15) Suu Kyi’s Shan trip postponed  
67 Myanmar Times (17 Aug 15) Revealed: NLD’s economic policies  
68 Reuters (18 Aug 15) Shake-up in Myanmar as Suu Kyi allies with ousted ruling party boss; Reuters (18 Aug 15) Myanmar's Suu Kyi says will work with purged ruling party leader Shwe Mann; Reuters (18 Aug 15) Myanmar's Suu Kyi says ruling party purge undemocratic  
69 EMG (24 Aug 15) Suu Kyi opposes allowing one per cent of voters to recall MP
transfer power if they lose the election.\textsuperscript{70}  
- **28 August:** It was reported that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi told the media that the NLD will select a presidential candidate from within its own party.\textsuperscript{71}  
- **30 August:** Daw Suu toured villages near Naypyidaw and told voters to stand strong against voter intimidation from authorities and to vote for the NLD.\textsuperscript{72}

**Shwe Mann removed as USDP Chairman in regime purge**

On 12 August, during an internal Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) meeting, regime security forces surrounded USDP headquarters in Naypyidaw. In a move described as reminiscent of Than Shwe’s regime, it was announced on 13 August that National Parliament Speaker Shwe Mann had been removed as USDP Chairman overnight, and would be replaced by Htay Oo as Joint Chairman and President Thein Sein as Acting Chairman.\textsuperscript{73} USDP General Secretary Maung Maung Thein was also removed from his post and replaced by a close aide to President Thein Sein, Tin Naing Thein.\textsuperscript{74}

Shwe Mann’s removal was reportedly the regime’s third attempt, this time successful due to the use of security forces.\textsuperscript{75} Regime Information Minister Ye Htut said that Shwe Mann’s removal was due to his links with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and his support for constitutional reform.\textsuperscript{76} Shwe Mann also oversaw the 12 August nominations where only 57 out of 140 military officers who applied were picked as USDP candidates.\textsuperscript{77} On 15 August, in his first statement since he was ousted, Shwe Mann said that he was removed for trying to transform Parliament into a real democratic institution instead of a “rubber-stamp parliament.”\textsuperscript{78}

Following the purge, the regime censored media linked to Shwe Mann, forcing the closure of the USDP-run Union Daily newspaper and Leader weekly journal and taking radio station Cherry FM (owned by Shwe Mann’s daughter-in-law) off air without warning.\textsuperscript{79} Cherry FM was allowed to broadcast again only after signing a written agreement with the regime Information Ministry not to broadcast biased information ahead of the November election.\textsuperscript{80}

On 12 August, President Thein Sein announced that he would not run in this year’s election.\textsuperscript{81} Shwe Mann’s removal is likely to set up a second term for the President, who does not need to be an elected representative.\textsuperscript{82} On the same day, Thein Sein announced the resignation of several ministers, at least six of whom will contend in the elections as USDP candidates and at least eight of whom have assumed official duties in the party’s Central Committee [see below, *USDP reshuffles place hardliners in key positions*].\textsuperscript{83}

The UK and US embassies in Rangoon expressed concern at the use of security forces at a party meeting.\textsuperscript{84} On 18 August, a USDP statement said that President Thein Sein’s involvement in the purge...
was not unconstitutional, as he was not involved in party meetings and the change was agreed by the USDP Central Executive Committee.85

**USDP reshuffles place hardliners in key positions**

In August, the regime reshuffled a number of Tatmadaw commanders, USDP Ministers and increased the USDP Central Executive Committee (CEC) to 53 members, following the removal of Shwe Mann as party Chairman and in preparation for the November elections. 86

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Previous position</th>
<th>Current position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aung Ko**</td>
<td>USDP CEC member</td>
<td>Continues as USDP MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aung Thein Linn**</td>
<td>USDP CEC member</td>
<td>Continues as USDP MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com Moe Aung</td>
<td></td>
<td>Navy Chief of Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Hla Hay Win</td>
<td>Army, Navy, and Air Force</td>
<td>CEC member, running for election in Zeyathiri Township, Naypyidaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Than Htut</td>
<td>Office of the Tatmadaw Commander in Chief</td>
<td>Regime Deputy Border Affairs Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Thet Swe</td>
<td>Navy Commander in Chief</td>
<td>CEC member, running for election in Coco Island, Rangoon Division.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Htay Oo</td>
<td>USDP Vice Chairman</td>
<td>Joint USDP Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khin Yi</td>
<td>Regime Immigration and Population Minister</td>
<td>CEC member, Chair of USDP Foreign Affairs Committee, running for election in Zalun Township, Irrawaddy Division.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyaw Kyaw Htay</td>
<td>Union Civil Service Board Member</td>
<td>CEC member and Central Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt Gen Aung Than Htut</td>
<td>Chief of Defense Ministry Bureau of Special Operations 2</td>
<td>Reportedly will run for election in Laogai Township, Shan State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt Gen Khin Zaw Oo*</td>
<td>Chief of Defense Ministry Bureau of Special Operations 4</td>
<td>Likely to run for USDP in election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt Gen Ko Ko*</td>
<td>Regime Home Affairs Minister</td>
<td>Regime Immigration and Population Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt Gen Kyaw Swe</td>
<td>Chief of Bureau of Special Operations 5</td>
<td>Regime Border Affairs Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt Gen Myint Soe</td>
<td>Chief of Defense Ministry Bureau of Special Operations 1</td>
<td>CEC member, reportedly will run for election in Wuntho Township, Sagaing Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt Gen Sein Win</td>
<td>Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Health</td>
<td>Regime Defense Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt Gen Thet Naing Win</td>
<td>Regime Border Affairs Minister</td>
<td>CEC member and Deputy General Secretary. Returned to Tatmadaw post, reportedly to retire and run for USDP in election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt Gen Wai Lwin</td>
<td>Regime Defense Minister</td>
<td>CEC member, returned to Tatmadaw to retire and run for election in Pobbathiri Township, Naypyidaw.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt Gen Win Myint</td>
<td>Chief of Military Appointments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt Gen Yar Pyae</td>
<td>Chief of Armed Forces Training</td>
<td>CEC member, reportedly will run for election in Wuntho Township, Sagaing Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maj Gen Aung Kyaw Zaw (now Lt Gen)</td>
<td>Southern Region Command Chief</td>
<td>CEC member, reportedly will run for election in Wuntho Township, Sagaing Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maj Gen Kyaw Nyunt</td>
<td>Regime Deputy Defense Minister</td>
<td>Returned to Tatmadaw to retire and run for election in Maymyo Township, Mandalay Division</td>
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85 EMG (19 Aug 15) USDP explains Thein Sein’s visit to party headquarters
86 Myanmar Times (14 Aug 15) President axes Shwe Mann; Myanmar Times (12 Aug 15) Officers resign to contest elections; Myanmar Times (14 Aug 15) Ex-generals enter USDP, election fold; EMG (14 Aug 15) Top ministers resign; GNLM (15 Aug 15) President announces three ministerial appointments; Irrawaddy (13 Aug 15) Ministerial Resignations Linked to Shwe Mann Purge; Irrawaddy (11 Aug 15) 45 Senior Military Officers Retire to Contest Nov. 8 Poll; Reuters (13 Aug 15) Myanmar ruling party chief sacked in power struggle with president; DVB (11 Aug 15) Military reshuffle ahead of Nov election; BBC; Irrawaddy (18 Aug 15) All Eyes Averted, Notorious General Steps Up; GNLM (25 Aug 15) Two senior military officers appointed as union ministers; EMG (17 Aug 15) USDP reshuffles leaders; DVB (13 Aug 15) Thein Sein holds emergency meeting; DVB (13 Aug 15) Htay Oo replaces Shwe Mann; GNLM (13 Aug 15) Myanmar president reshuffles cabinet
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Current Position</th>
<th>Previous Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maj Gen Lu Aye (now Lt Gen)</td>
<td>Western Region Command Chief</td>
<td>Chief of Military Appointments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maj Gen Min Naung (now Lt Gen)</td>
<td>North-West Region Command Chief</td>
<td>Chief of Bureau of Special Operations 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maj Gen Tin Aung Chit</td>
<td>Regime Deputy Border Affairs Minister</td>
<td>Returned to Tatmadaw to retire and run for election in Aunglan Township, Magwe Division.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maj Gen Tun Tun Naung (now Lt Gen)</td>
<td>Rangoon Regional Military Commander</td>
<td>Chief of Bureau of Special Operations 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maung Maung Htay</td>
<td>Regime Deputy Religious Affairs Minister</td>
<td>CEC member and Central Secretary, likely to run for USDP in election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maung Maung Thein**</td>
<td>CEC member, USDP General Secretary</td>
<td>Continues as USDP MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myat Hein</td>
<td>Regime Communications, Information, and Technology Minister</td>
<td>CEC member and Head of USDP Campaigns. Running for election in Zabuthiri Township, Naypyidaw (President Thein Sein's former constituency).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyan Tun Aung</td>
<td>Regime Transport Minister</td>
<td>Regime Rail Transportation Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pike Htwe</td>
<td>Regime Deputy Information Minister</td>
<td>CEC member and Central Secretary, returned to Tatmadaw to retire and run for election in Kama Township, Magwe Division.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Than Htay</td>
<td>Regime Rail and Transportation Minister</td>
<td>CEC member, running for election in Myaung Township, Irrawaddy Division.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Than Tun</td>
<td>Regime Deputy Cooperatives Minister</td>
<td>CEC member and head, Central Secretary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin Naing Thein</td>
<td>Ministry in the President's office.</td>
<td>CEC member and USDP General Secretary. Running for election in Kalaw Township, Shan State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Admiral Tin Aung San</td>
<td>Navy Chief of Staff</td>
<td>Navy Commander-in-Chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Win Maw Tun</td>
<td>Regime Deputy Labor Minister</td>
<td>CEC member and Central Secretary, running for election in Yanonchaung Township, Magwe Division.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeyar Aung</td>
<td>Regime Energy Minister</td>
<td>Regime Communications, Information, and Technology Minister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The Harvard International Human Rights Clinic recently recommended prosecution of these Generals for war crimes committed in Karen State in 2005-2006.
**Shwe Mann allies ousted on 12 August

### Burma's previous election conditions

#### 1990 general elections

In 1989, soon after the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) took power following a violent crackdown on the 8888 Uprising, SLORC declared the intention to hold Burma’s first general elections since 1960. Although Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was detained on 20 July 1989 and remained under house arrest until 10 July 1995, the National League for Democracy (NLD) still won by a landslide, securing 60% of the popular vote and 80% of the parliamentary seats (392 of 485 seats). However, SLORC refused to recognize the results and claimed that the vote was only to form an assembly to draft a new constitution, not for forming a parliament.

#### 2010 general elections

The National League for Democracy (NLD) and several ethnic political parties boycotted the last general elections as the election laws were "unfair and unjust." At a time when there were 2,203 political prisoners in Burma, including 428 NLD members, the State Peace and Development Council’s (SPDC) Political Parties Registration Law stipulated that anyone convicted by a court and serving a jail term would not be allowed to form or join a political party, and required registered political parties to expel any convicted or imprisoned member. The polls were held amid severe restrictions, heavy deployment of military and police personnel, and extremely low participation in most areas of the country. SPDC authorities imposed travel restrictions and informal curfews in Burma’s main cities. The junta also obstructed internet and telephone communications across the country.

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87 BBC (06 Aug 08) Was Burma’s 1988 uprising worth it?
88 HRW (26 May 10) Burma: 20 Years After 1990 Elections, Democracy Still Denied
89 HRW (26 May 10) Burma: 20 Years After 1990 Elections, Democracy Still Denied
90 AP (29 Mar 10) Myanmar opposition party to boycott elections; Reuters (29 Mar 10) Suu Kyi’s party says won’t stand in
91 MYANMAR POLL (03 Nov 10) Myanmar opposition party to boycott elections; Reuters (29 Mar 10) Suu Kyi’s party says won’t stand in
92 Irrawaddy (09 Mar 10) Party Registration Laws Set NLD a Deadline; AAPP (Nov 10) Monthly Chronology November 2010
93 Irrawaddy (09 Mar 10) Party Registration Laws Set NLD a Deadline; AAPP (Nov 10) Monthly Chronology November 2010
94 Irrawaddy (03 Nov 10) Informal Curfew in Rangoon; IMNA (06 Nov 10) Authorities Order Phone Lines to Shut Down; IMNA (06 Nov 10) Tightened Security in anticipation of Election Day; KIC (07 Nov 10) Tight security on way to polling stations; Mizzima News (04 Nov 10) Authorities tighten security across Mandalay; Irrawaddy (04 Nov 10) Road to Border Closed Prior to Election; Irrawaddy (03 Nov 10) Naypyidaw Shut Down
95 Irrawaddy (02 Nov 10) Authorities to Cut Myawaddy Mobile Phone Service; DVB (06 Nov 10) SIM card sales blocked in
96 Irrawaddy (06 Nov 10) Regime Reacts Indifferently to Cyber Attack
before the election, local SPDC officials, polling station officials, and Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) members across the country solicited advance or proxy votes for the USDP. In many races, the number of advance votes for the USDP tipped the balance in favor of its candidates. Local SPDC officials, election sub-commission and polling station officials, and USDP members detained and harassed members and supporters of opposition parties and prevented them from monitoring the vote. Ethnic voters in 3,401 villages of Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Mon, and Shan States were excluded from the election as they were deemed “in no position to host free and fair elections.” In total, the USDP won 883 (or 76.5%) of the 1,154 seats at stake in the election.

2012 by-elections
The 2012 by-elections were for 37 seats (originally scheduled to be 40) in the People’s Assembly, six seats in the National Assembly, and one seat each in Pegu and Irrawaddy Divisional parliaments. While unfair election laws, harassment of NLD candidates, and serious violations of election laws characterized the electoral process in the lead-up to the by-elections, there were only reports of minor irregularities on voting day. Complaints mainly concerned tampering with ballots and campaigning near polling stations. EU election monitors generally gave a positive assessment of the voting process but stopped short of calling it ‘free and fair.’ The NLD won 43 of the 44 seats it contested. The Shan Nationals Democracy Party (SNPD) and the USDP won one seat each. The NLD swept all 37 seats in the People’s Assembly, including all four seats in the military stronghold of Naypyidaw. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi won her seat in Kawmoo Township, Rangoon Division, with over 85% of the votes. Despite the NLD’s impressive by-elections performance, NLD MPs accounted for less than 7% of the seats at the national level - the third largest parliamentary group after the USDP and the military.

INSIDE BURMA

Arakan State hit hard as flood death toll reaches 121

In August, Burma experienced severe flooding after Cyclone Komen passed the Arakan State coast at the end of July. While the regime immediately declared Chin and Arakan States and Sagaing and Magwe Divisions as disaster zones, relief efforts were slow. In contrast to the former junta’s refusal to appeal for aid in 2007 after Cyclone Nargis, the regime did appeal for international aid on 4 August. On the same day, regime Information Minister Ye Htut admitted that the regime’s “weak” response to the disaster had led to misunderstandings about evacuation efforts.

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94 SHAN (02 Nov 10) Forced voting for junta party taking place in Shan State North; IMNA (03 Nov 10) Pre-vote at Three Pagodas Pass; SHAN (03 Nov 10) Advance voting continue on outlying areas of Shan State; Irrawaddy (04 Nov 10) Immigration Workers Ordered to Vote USDP; Irrawaddy (05 Nov 10) Advance Voters Describe Lack of Secrecy; Irrawaddy (03 Nov 10) Advanced Votes for Ma-Hta-Theta; Irrawaddy (06 Nov 10) More Gov’t Workers Ordered to Vote USDP; Irrawaddy (07 Nov 10) Mandalay Ballot Boxes Stuffed with Advance Votes; SHAN (06 Nov 10) Vote buying, Vote cheating, forced voting of junta party across Burma; Irrawaddy (08 Nov 10) USDP wins polls with advance votes in Kachin State; Irrawaddy (07 Nov 10) Electoral Irregularities Rampant; SHAN (08 Nov 10) Junta party candidate blowtop in Namkham; Kachin News Group (09 Nov 10) USDP wins polls with advance votes in Kachin State; Irrawaddy (08 Nov 10) NDF Candidates Refuse to Acknowledge Election Results; Kachin News Group (09 Nov 10) USDP wins polls with advance votes in Kachin State; Irrawaddy (08 Nov 10) NDF Candidates Refuse to Acknowledge Election Results; Irrawaddy (17 Nov 10) Mon Leader Accuses EC of Vote Fixing; DVB (10 Nov 10) Anger at ‘fraudulent’ vote remains.
95 Irrawaddy (03 Nov 10) Nasaka targets NDPD supporters for arrest; Irrawaddy (03 Nov 10) Independent Candidates Harassed; Irrawaddy (03 Nov 10) Thugs Return to Rangoon; Irrawaddy (03 Nov 10) Kachin NDF Candidate Embarrass USDP; Irrawaddy (03 Nov 10) Military Officers Threaten Villagers; Irrawaddy (04 Nov 10) USDP Threatens NLD Members; Irrawaddy (06 Nov 10) Pro-Democracy Party Set to Win Big?; Irrawaddy (06 Nov 10) Pro-Junta UGF Urge Insein Residents to Vote; NLM (17 Sep 10) Union Election Commission issues Notification No. 103/2010, NLM (17 Sep 10) Union Election Commission issues Notification No. 102/2010, NLM (17 Sep 10) NLM Union Election Commission issues Notification No. 101/2010, NLM (17 Sep 10) Unio
Also on 4 August, in a Facebook post on Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Sr Gen Min Aung Hlaing’s official page, the military apologized for dropping rice bags into a flooded paddy field in Arakan State, resulting in many bags becoming filled with mud.  

On 3 August, the UN Office for the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) warned that floods had caused extensive damage to shelters and camps around Akyab [Sittwe], Arakan State, home to about 100,000 IDPs, mostly Rohingya. As of 25 August, according to the regime Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Ministry, the nationwide death toll from landslides and floods was 121. Nearly half of the deaths occurred in Arakan State, where 56 people were killed. On 6 August, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi warned voters in a video address that the regime could use the floods to undermine the election, recalling the 2008 post-Nargis referendum.

**UN raises concerns for safe water, adequate food for flood-affected people**

By 20 August, floods had affected an estimated 1.6 million people and displaced 600,000 people, while at least 1.3 million acres of farmland were damaged, raising fears of food insecurity and rising food prices. The UN and other aid organizations flagged the lack of safe water as a serious problem for tens of thousands of people.

On 3 August, the Rice Federation met in Rangoon and announced rice exports would be held off until 15 September to try to curtail a rise in prices. However, on 12 August, it was reported that commodity prices for staples including rice had gone up in Arakan State. On 13 August, it was reported that farmers in flood-affected areas were in urgent need of paddy strains and financial support, with many unable to pay back agricultural loans now that floods had destroyed their farmland.

**“Black Ribbon” campaign opposes military appointments to health sector**

On 10 August, doctors, nurses and other medical personnel based in Mandalay launched the “Black Ribbon” Facebook page to protest the regime Health Ministry’s 8 August announcement that it would appoint 14 military officers to the ministry, four of whom have no medical experience. The page gathered over 40,000 supporters in three days, with hundreds of Burma’s healthcare professionals at home and abroad commenting and sharing photos featuring black ribbons. On 12 August, regime Health Minister Than Aung stated that the ministry would not go ahead with plans to fill 300 vacancies with military personnel. The Black Ribbon movement’s response was to ask for an official announcement, and for the dismissal of the 14 military appointees. However, it was reported on 14 August that the Ministry would not dismiss the already appointed officers.
Parliament’s 12th session disrupted, Monogamy and Religious Conversion Bills passed

Due to severe flooding, National Parliament Speaker Shwe Mann extended the legislature’s recess beyond 10 August, resuming finally on 18 August. Important developments include:

- **18 August**: National Parliament Speaker Shwe Mann revealed a Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) letter outlining the reasons for his ouster [see above, *Shwe Mann removed as USDP Chairman in regime purge*], obliquely denying misuse of party funds, acting undemocratically between parties, and failure to abide by the constitution. **123**
- **18 August**: President Thein Sein told Parliament he is not undermining USDP unity. **124**
- **18 August**: National Parliament Speaker Shwe Mann rejected USDP MP Thein Tun’s proposal to adjourn Parliament again in the face of disastrous flooding. **125**
- **18 August**: The National Parliament approved a bill extending the state of emergency in Kokang Self-Administered Zone, Shan State for 90 days. The state of emergency was first declared on 17 February, and previously extended on 15 May. **126**
- **18 August**: National Parliament Speaker Shwe Mann began a discussion on the Recall Bill by the Joint Bill Committee and called for its review by 20 August. **127**
- **18 August**: The Joint Bill Committee discussed the Recall Bill with 19 political parties, 13 of whom support a higher threshold for impeachment while six endorse a 1% threshold. The bill would introduce a mechanism for constituents to unseat their MPs, requiring investigation if a single person registers a complaint with the regime Election Commission about a military MP, and investigation of an elected MP if the Commission receives a petition signed by at least 1% of his or her constituency members. **128**
- **19 August**: The National Assembly approved emergency suspension of the current legislative session, and passed bills on blood and organ donations, vehicles, and the elections of the President, Vice-President and People’s Assembly. **129**
- **19 August**: The People’s Assembly passed the Religious Conversion Bill. **130**
- **20 August**: The National Parliament suspended discussion of the Recall Bill in a rarely seen split Parliament. **131**
- **20 August**: It was reported that the People’s Assembly passed the Religious Conversion Bill, indicating a de facto passage as the National Assembly approved the draft in February. **132**
- **20 August**: In a discussion in Mandalay Divisional Parliament, Mandalay Division Border and Security Affairs Minister Myint Kyu described homosexuality as “unacceptable” and urged a police crackdown, saying that police should continue to detain and “educate” gay men. Local MP Tin Tin Mar, who raised the issue in the parliament, called gay people “disgraceful” and said they “fuel crimes.” **133**
- **21 August**: It was reported that NLD MP Win Myint said the 1% threshold on the Right to Recall Bill could herald “chaos” in parliament and affect national stability, echoing complaints of other MPs. **134**
- **24 August**: The National Parliament passed the Interfaith Marriage Law and a law for the preservation of ancient buildings. **135**

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**122** Myanmar Times (4 Aug 15) Hluttaw session postponed; DVB (4 Aug 15) Candidate list deadline extended due to floods

**123** Irrawaddy (18 Aug 15) Before Lawmakers, Shwe Mann Offers Peek Inside the Purge

**124** Reuters (18 Aug 15) Shake-up in Myanmar as Suu Kyi allies with ousted ruling party boss

**125** EMG (19 Aug 15) Ruling USDP MP submits urgent proposal to call a stop to parliamentary regular sessions

**126** GNLM (19 Aug 15) Pyidaungsu Hluttaw grants extension of Kokang region’s emergency order

**127** RFA (18 Aug 15) Myanmar Parliament Approves Third Extension of Martial Law in Kokang

**128** DVB (19 Aug 15) ‘Right to Recall’ bill moves ahead

**129** Irrawaddy (19 Aug 15) As Election Nears, Parliament to Take Up Impeachment Bill

**130** Myanmar Times (23 Jun 14) Military rep proposes Recall Bill amendment

**131** GNLM (20 Aug 15) Amyotha Hluttaw backs motion to suspend parliament

**132** GNLM (20 Aug 15) Amyotha Hluttaw backs motion to suspend parliament

**133** GNLM (21 Aug 15) Pyidaungsu Hluttaw suspends discussion on recall bill

**134** Irrawaddy (20 Aug 15) Burma Parliament Approves Contentious Race and Religion Bills; GNLM (20 Aug 15) Amyotha Hluttaw backs motion to suspend parliament

**135** DVB (20 Aug 15) Mandalay govt vows crackdown on same-sex couples

**136** Myanmar Times (21 Aug 15) Parliament suspends debate on MP recall bill

**137** GNLM (25 Aug 15) Parliament approves appointment of two union ministers
• **25 August:** The National Parliament approved a US$400 million loan from the World Bank to be split between the Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development Ministry and the Electric Power Ministry, a bill amending the constitutional law, and the Red Cross Society Bill.\(^{138}\)

• **26 August:** The National Parliament approved US$260 million and 40 million Euro loans from the Asia Development Bank and the French Development Agency, respectively, intended for the regime Construction and Electric Power Ministries and Mandalay Division. The session also approved adoption of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict.\(^{139}\)

• **26 August:** The National Parliament approved the Broadcasting Bill submitted by President Thein Sein and the creation of a nine-member council to decide the Bill’s by-laws; soon to be effected broadcasting laws will require those with media licenses to renew their license every 45 days and the fees will be differentiated between public service and private broadcasts.\(^{140}\)

• **28 August:** The National Parliament approved a 99.85 billion yen (US$830.5 million) loan from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to the regime Rail Transportation, and the Electric Power Ministries, and passed the Monogamy Bill. It also approved plans for signing the Maritime Labor Convention 2006, before the close of the 12\(^{th}\) session.\(^{141}\)

### Regime insists on excluding three groups from nationwide ceasefire deal

In August, ethnic armed groups continued negotiations amongst themselves and with the regime over the nationwide ceasefire agreement, while clashes continued in Kachin and Shan States.

• **3 August:** President Thein Sein met in Naypyidaw with representatives from the Karen National Union (KNU), two other Karen splinter groups, and the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS), to discuss the nationwide ceasefire agreement. Thein Sein turned down KNU’s request to include the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), the Arakan Army, and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) in the agreement.\(^{142}\)

• **5 August:** The MNDAA, TNLA, and Arakan Army released a joint statement addressed to the regime offering to participate in the nationwide ceasefire agreement.\(^{143}\)

• **18 August:** The National Parliament approved another 90-day extension to the state of emergency and martial law in Kokang Self-Administered Zone, Shan State, first declared on 17 February, and previously extended on 15 May.\(^{144}\)

• **21-24 August:** Ethnic armed groups’ leaders met in Chiang Mai, Thailand, where they agreed to press the regime for an inclusive nationwide ceasefire agreement, and failing that, would ask for political and military guarantees for the excluded groups.\(^{145}\)

• **24 August:** In a meeting with the interim Press Council, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Sr Gen Min Aung Hlaing said there is “no prospect for peace” with the MNDAA as they provoked the current conflict in Kokang Self-Administered Zone, Shan State.\(^{146}\)

### Despite peace negotiations, Tatmadaw clashes in Kachin and Shan States continue

In August, Tatmadaw troops continued to clash with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), and the Shan State Army-South (SSA-S).
• **18 August**: A bomb explosion in Namhu Village, Lashio Township, Shan State, hit a Tatmadaw convoy, killing one soldier and injuring two.\(^{147}\)

• **20 August**: Tatmadaw troops fired mortar shells at KIA positions near Lawt Mai Yang Village, Sumprabum Township, Kachin State.\(^{148}\)

• **24 August**: Tatmadaw troops fired artillery shells at Lawt Mai Yang Village, Sumprabum Township, Kachin State, and attacked a KIA Battalion 7 post nearby, forcing residents of the village to flee.\(^{149}\)

• **24 August**: A bomb explosion took place outside a bank in Muse Town, Shan State.\(^{150}\)

• **25 August**: Tatmadaw troops from LID 99 clashed with KIA Battalion 36 forces in Loi Lak Village, Muse Township, Shan State.\(^{151}\)

• **25 August**: Tatmadaw troops fired mortar shells at KIA positions near Lawt Mai Yang Village, Sumprabum Township, Kachin State.\(^{151}\)

• **25 August**: Tatmadaw troops from LIBs 137 and 138 clashed with KIA Battalion 7 forces near Lawt Mai Yang Village, Sumprabum Township, Kachin State.\(^{153}\)

• **25-26 August**: Tatmadaw troops from LID 77 clashed with TNLA Battalion 434 forces in Namhsan Township, Shan State.\(^{154}\)

• **26 August**: Tatmadaw troops from LIB 138 attacked a KIA Battalion 7 post near Lawt Mai Yang Village, Sumprabum Township, Kachin State, and took over the post.\(^{155}\)

On 21 August, rights groups and the UN expressed concern for over 1,400 Kachin IDPs trapped by fighting in Sumprabum Township. UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) called on the regime to allow full humanitarian access and to allow civilians to leave the area safely.\(^{156}\)

### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Imprisoned student protesters file petition against police; begin hunger strike**

In August, trials continued for imprisoned student protesters. Developments included:

• **11 August**: Tharawaddy Township Court, Pegu Division, denied bail to ten students imprisoned following the Letpadan crackdown, and dismissed a case brought by defense lawyer Robert San Aung against police for the illegal detention of the students for 24 hours following their arrest.\(^{157}\)

• **21 August**: After Amarapura Township Court, Mandalay Division, rejected their bail application, Yadana Bon University students Naing Ye Wai, Aung San Oo, Jit Tu and Nyan Lin Htet, imprisoned for an anti-regime graffiti protest in June, went on hunger strike to be allowed to sit their exams.\(^{158}\)

• **22 August**: At a press conference, the Yadana Bon University Student Union announced that its students will boycott exams if four Yadana Bon students currently held in Obo Prison, Mandalay Division, are not allowed to sit theirs. The students also threatened more countrywide student protests.\(^{159}\)

• **25 August**: Kyauktada Township Court, Rangoon Division, charged student protesters Zeyar Lwin and Paing Ye Thu under Article 18 of the Peaceful Assembly Law and Article 505(b) of the Criminal Code for a 30 June protest against the military’s presence in parliament.\(^{160}\)

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\(^{147}\) DVB (20 Aug 15) Burmese solider killed by roadside bomb: witness

\(^{148}\) Kachinland News (20 Aug 15) Burmese Army Prepares for New Attack on Lawt Mai Yang

\(^{149}\) Kachinland News (26 Aug 15) Battles Intensify as EAOs' Leaders Prepare for NCA Talks in Naypyitaw

\(^{150}\) Myanmar Times (26 Aug 15) Armed ethnic groups deny involvement in Muse blast

\(^{151}\) Kachinland News (27 Aug 15) Burmese Army Seized KIA’s 7th Battalion Frontline Post

\(^{152}\) Shan (27 Aug 15) Burma Army Detains Civilians in Shan State

\(^{153}\) Kachinland News (26 Aug 15) Battles Intensify as EAOs' Leaders Prepare for NCA Talks in Naypyitaw

\(^{154}\) Kachinland News (26 Aug 15) Battles Intensify as EAOs' Leaders Prepare for NCA Talks in Naypyitaw; Irrawaddy (28 Aug 15) Fighting Flares in Northeast as High-Level Peace Meeting Nears

\(^{155}\) Kachinland News (27 Aug 15) Burmese Army Seized KIA’s 7th Battalion Frontline Post; Irrawaddy (28 Aug 15) Fighting Flares in Northeast as High-Level Peace Meeting Nears

\(^{156}\) Irrawaddy (21 Aug 15) Army Restrictions Leave Kachin Refugees Without Aid

\(^{157}\) DVB (12 Aug 15) Student activists denied countersue claim, bail

\(^{158}\) Myanmar Times (24 Aug 15) Graffiti students launch hunger strike; EMG (24 Aug 15) Students go hungry to sit exams

\(^{159}\) EMG (26 Aug 15) Yadana Bon University students threaten to boycott exams

\(^{160}\) RFA (25 Aug 15) Myanmar Students Call for Legal Action Against Letpadan Police; EMG (24 Aug 15) Students on trial for opposing military seats in parliament
• **25 August**: Fifty-eight detained Letpadan student protesters submitted a petition at Tharawaddy District Court, Pegu Division, calling for legal action against excessive use of force by the police officers who detained and beat them during the March crackdown.\(^{161}\)

• **26 August**: The Assistant Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) and Former Political Prisoners Society (FPPS) released a statement expressing concern at the treatment of the four Yadanabon student protesters currently held in Obo Prison, Mandalay Division. Prison officials have placed them in solitary confinement since the students began a hunger strike on 21 August. The organizations called for the students to be allowed to sit their exams, and criticized the regime for “punishing” their hunger strike with solitary confinement.\(^{162}\)

**UN Special Rapporteur Yanghee Lee’s third official visit restricted by regime**

From 3 to 7 August, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Yanghee Lee made her third official visit to Burma. Following aggressive reactions from extremist monks [See January 2015 Burma Bulletin] to comments from her previous visit regarding Rohingya, she stated that she remains committed to carrying out her mandate impartially.\(^{163}\)

During her visit, the Special Rapporteur met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, National Parliament Speaker Shwe Mann, advisors to President Thein Sein, regime Election Commission Chairman Tin Aye, and other officials.\(^{164}\) On 4 August she held meetings in Rangoon with activists including defense lawyer Robert San Aung, and editors from the Daily Eleven, Democratic Voice of Burma, Mizzima, the Irrawaddy, and Myanmar Journalists Network.\(^{165}\) On 5 August, the Special Rapporteur travelled to Tharawaddy Prison, Pegu Division, to meet with imprisoned activists,\(^{166}\) and met with Arakan State Chief Minister Maung Maung Ohn and town elders from Arakan State in Rangoon.\(^{167}\)

Despite claims by Arakan State spokesperson Hla Thein on 6 August that the Special Rapporteur’s planned visit to Arakan State had to be cancelled last minute due to flooding,\(^{168}\) Yanghee Lee revealed in her concluding statement on 7 August that the regime had refused her access to Arakan State before she arrived in Burma.\(^{169}\) She expressed disappointment that the regime had only granted her a five-day visit although she had requested ten days, and that requested meetings were refused or cancelled without notice. In addition, the Special Rapporteur expressed concern that some of the people she met with on this and previous visits were photographed by security forces and later questioned, and urged activists to report any reprisals against them by the regime.\(^{170}\)

**Regime rejects UN Special Rapporteur’s remarks**

On 7 August, in a statement concluding her third official visit to Burma, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Yanghee Lee:\(^{171}\)

- Expressed concern at the disenfranchisement of IDPs, those living in conflict areas, migrant workers, and hundreds of thousands of former white card holders, particularly Rohingya.
- Said that more can and must be done to improve the situation of Rohingya by returning their legal status and ending “institutionalized discrimination.”
- Criticized the selective use of Article 18 of the Peaceful Assembly Law and Article 505(b) of the Criminal Code.

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\(^{161}\) RFA (25 Aug 15) Myanmar Students Call for Legal Action Against Letpadan Police

\(^{162}\) AAPP & FPPS (26 Aug 15) AAPP and FPPS call for the release of the Graffiti Students

\(^{163}\) UN (03 Aug 15) Myanmar: UN Special Rapporteur starts official visit

\(^{164}\) GNLM (03 Aug 15) Ms. Yanghee Lee visits Myanmar; Irrawaddy (06 Aug 15) UN Rights Envoy Meets Jailed Student Activists

\(^{165}\) EMG (05 Aug 15) UN Special Rapporteur Yanghee Lee meets human rights activists, media

\(^{166}\) Irrawaddy (06 Aug 15) UN Rights Envoy Meets Jailed Student Activists

\(^{167}\) Myanmar times (06 Aug 15) UN rights rep’s next report will ‘benefit country’: chief minister

\(^{168}\) Narinjara News (06 Aug 15) UN representative calls off Arakan visit

\(^{169}\) UN (07 Aug 15) End of Mission Statement Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar 7 August 2015

\(^{170}\) UN (07 Aug 15) End of Mission Statement Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar 7 August 2015

\(^{171}\) UN (07 Aug 15) End of Mission Statement Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar 7 August 2015
• Called for the immediate release of all Letpadan student activists and an immediate end to the practice of arbitrarily arresting students, activists, farmers and workers and charging them on multiple counts for exercising their right to free expression.

• Expressed concern at the arrest of journalists, which, combined with the killing of freelance journalist Aung Kyaw Naing (aka Par Gyi) and the attack on the CEO of Eleven Media, created a climate of fear within the media.

• Highlighted the growing problem of religious extremism and hate speech. She raised the case of writer and former National League for Democracy member Htin Lin Oo, who was sentenced for “insulting religion” after criticizing extreme Buddhist nationalism. Lee compared his case with a political party leader in Bahan Township, Rangoon Division, who was not subject to legal action despite being filmed at a rally on 27 May calling on supporters to “shoot, kill and bury” Rohingya.

• Criticized the ‘National Race and Religion Protection’ laws package as being in clear violation of international human rights standards.

On 13 August, the regime Foreign Ministry released a statement in response to the Special Rapporteur’s statement. The ministry maintained that the Special Rapporteur’s visit to Arakan State was prevented by flooding. It stated that the regime rejected the “invented” term Rohingya, and that those unable to vote are not restricted from applying for citizenship under the 1982 Citizenship Law. The regime statement rejected many of Yanghee Lee’s concerns by saying that “no one is arrested or charged for simply exercising their rights peacefully.”

DISPLACEMENT

More bodies found in Malaysia camps; enslaved fishermen rescued

In August, there were human trafficking developments both inside Burma and in neighboring Indonesia and Malaysia.

• 4 August: The regime approved trafficking charges filed against 20 people in Arakan State, the first trafficking prosecution in a State widely viewed as a trafficking hub.

• 5 August: Indonesian police rescued 45 enslaved Burmese fishermen in Jakarta.

• 10 August: Authorities deported a further 159 of the 733 boatpeople rescued in the Andaman Sea in May [See May and June 2015 Burma Bulletin] from Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, to Bangladesh.

• 22 August: Police in Rangoon arrested and returned ten Rohingyas, nine of whom were children, for entering Rangoon without permission. They had left IDP camps in Akyab [Sittwe] Township, Arakan State, and paid a trafficker to bring them to Rangoon.

• 23 August: Malaysian police discovered 24 bodies in an abandoned trafficking camp in a jungle bordering Thailand, adding to the 106 found in May [see June 2015 Burma Bulletin], many of whom are thought to be trafficked Rohingyas.

• 25 August: Authorities, led by Saw Naing, Deputy Director of Immigration in Maungdaw Township, deported a further 125 of the 733 boatpeople rescued in the Andaman Sea in May [see May 2015 and June 2015 Burma Bulletin] from Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, to Bangladesh.

• 28 August: In Geneva, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) called for urgent action before the end of the monsoon season to prevent a second boatpeople crisis in the Bay of Bengal. Referring to a new report which says that 31,000 people boarded boats there in the first six months of

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172 GNLM (13 Aug 15) Press Release
173 GNLM (13 Aug 15) Press Release
174 Myanmar Times (12 Aug 15) First human trafficking case in Rakhine to head to court
175 AP (06 Aug 15) 45 Burmese fishermen rescued, suspected trafficking victims
176 GNLM (11 Aug 15) Boat People Return Home
177 Myanmar Times (27 Aug 15) Nine Muslim children from Rakhine State arrested in Yangon; Irrawaddy (26 Aug 15) Rohingya IDPs Detained in Rangoon: Police
178 AP (23 Aug 15) Malaysia Finds 24 More Bodies of Human Trafficking Victims
179 GNLM (26 Aug 15) Myanmar hands over 125 boat people to Bangladesh
2015 (a 34% increase on the previous year), UNHCR urged regional governments to act on proposals made at the Bangkok Special Meeting in May to set up a task force to address the situation.180

**ECONOMY**

**Central Bank tries to quiet rumors of bank closures**

After the 12-14 August Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) reshuffle and ouster of former party Chairman Shwe Mann, some banks saw increased cash withdrawals.181 Rumors spread online that Kanbawza, Asia Green Development, and other private banks would close, prompting the Central Bank to issue a televised statement on 17 August to deny the rumors and to confirm the Bank would insure reserves of the industry.182 The next day Central Bank Deputy-Governor Satt Aung emphasized the liquidity of private banks and said the Bank would release US dollars on the market to prevent further depreciation of the kyat.183

Meanwhile, some restaurants, hotels and international schools have been charging prices in US dollars, due to the kyat’s volatility.184 On 20 August, with the kyat at 1,300 per US$, a senior Central Bank official said the Bank will punish companies promoting use of the US dollar. A 24 August Bank order required all businesses to carry out domestic transactions in kyat, with enforcement of fines expected to begin by the end of the year.185

**Factories begin layoffs after minimum wage is set at 3,600 kyat (US$2.80)**

On 18 August, the National Minimum Wage Committee held a final meeting in Naypyidaw between employers and labor representatives and finalized a 3,600 kyat (US$2.80) daily minimum wage, currently leaving double-time overtime rates intact.186 On 24 August, five representative organizations of the US and Canadian garment and footwear industries sent a letter to the regime Labor, Employment and Social Security Minister and the Chair of the National Minimum Wage Committee endorsing a uniform daily wage across all industries.187 On 28 August the National Minimum Wage Committee announced the new minimum wage will be implemented 1 September, excluding small and family-run businesses with less than 15 employees.188

On 31 August, it was reported that employers had already begun firing workers, with at least 300 laid off in Rangoon’s Hlaing Tharyar Industrial Zone.189 On the same day, the regime Labor, Employment and Social Security Ministry declared that employers must sign employment contracts with workers, including small enterprises with less than 15 workers.190

**OTHER BURMA NEWS IN AUGUST**

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<th>The regime Election Commission approves the registration of the Union Farmer Force Party from Pegu, Pegu Division.</th>
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<td>11</td>
<td>In Naypyidaw, Vice-President Nyan Tun and several regime ministers oversee the Central Bank’s signing of the Sovereign Credit Ratings Advisory Mandate.</td>
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<td>In Oukiada Village, Paung Township, Mon State, villagers rebuked Long Life Aggregate Mining Co for lack of transparency and mentioned reports of bribery at a company press conference.</td>
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<td>Ahlone Township Court, Rangoon Division, sentences five activists, previously sentenced to four</td>
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years and eight months in prison in May for protests against the Letpadaung copper mine, to an additional four months in prison under Article 18 of the Peaceful Assembly Law.

27 The regime Election Commission approves the registration of the Daingnet Ethnics Development Party from Buthidaung, Arakan State.

*Please visit www.altsean.org/ChronologyHome.php to access Altsean-Burma’s full database of chronology entries covering Burma-related events.*

**REPORTS ON BURMA RELEASED IN AUGUST**

“Monthly Chronology of Burma’s Political Prisoners for July 2015”, Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) [http://goo.gl/DX4fvj](http://goo.gl/DX4fvj)


“Myanmar Assessment Report - A study on Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) for Disaster Risk Reduction in Northern Rakhine State (August 2015)” REACH Initiative [http://goo.gl/rxBMs2](http://goo.gl/rxBMs2)

“Myanmar: Emergency Response to Floods | Situation Report 24 August 2015” World Food Programme (WFP) [http://goo.gl/pAb5Tn](http://goo.gl/pAb5Tn)
