



NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTATION - BURMA

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New Briefing Paper, Dismissed & Denied: Civic Rights Undermined In the 2020 Pre-Election Landscape by the Network for Human Rights Documentation-Burma Shows Disregard of Political and Civic Rights by Election Stakeholders

For Immediate Release

4 November 2020: The Network for Human Rights Documentation (ND-Burma) is concerned about the integrity and transparency of the upcoming general election, which is set to take place on 8 November 2020. Research based analysis between the months of August 25 2020 and 25 October 2020 by ND-Burma shows a hostile pre-election environment in our latest briefing paper, *Dismissed & Denied: Civic Rights Undermined In the 2020 Pre-Election Landscape*.

Among our findings, key stakeholders in the lead up to the general election specifically targeted ethnic parties, and marginalized ethnic groups. The campaign period was further compromised by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and armed conflict across the region. Moreover, the experiences of ethnic parties and candidates, as well as villagers were analyzed through the articles in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

Despite several articles set out by both the ICCPR and the ICESCR, voter disenfranchisement was widespread by state and non-state actors during the campaign period, which began on 8 September 2020. This includes the announcement by the Union Electoral Commission (UEC) to cancel the election in 581 village tracts (56 townships), predominantly in Rakhine State, which has serious implications for the over one million people who are now unable to vote. The decision shows a deliberate disregard for civil rights and political engagement, including the right to vote as stated in Article 25 of the ICCPR.

ND-Burma notes several other examples in the briefing paper, including limitations faced by female candidates and barring several Muslim candidates from running in the election without justification. The policing of freedom of speech and increased use of censorship

by the UEC had significant impacts on political parties running on platforms critical of the government and the UEC. International stakeholders also threatened the integrity of the election with prejudiced language alienating ethnic candidates through voting applications.

Further, ND-Burma members are worried for the future of the most vulnerable in the country, especially given the unequal political arena across the campaign period. Our members call for much needed, and long overdue reforms to the UEC, as they have failed to preserve and protect civic rights. Further, we call on the winning political party to listen to the voices of the people in Burma. Their longstanding calls for peace and democracy must be listened to, as to ensure their concerns are met with policies and practices that protect them.

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ND-Burma is a network that consists of 13-member organisations who represent a range of ethnic nationalities, women and former political prisoners. ND-Burma member organisations have been documenting human rights abuses and fighting for justice for victims since 2004. The network consists of nine Full Members and four Affiliate Members as follows.

Full Members:

1. [All Arakan Students' and Youths' Congress](#)

2. [Assistance Association for Political Prisoners](#)
3. [Association Human Rights Defenders and Promoters](#)
4. [Future Light Center](#)
5. [Human Rights Foundation of Monland](#)
6. [Kachin Women's Association – Thailand](#)
7. [Ta'ang Women's Organization](#)
8. [Ta'ang Students and Youth Union](#)
9. [Tavoyan Women's Union](#)

Affiliate Members:

1. [Chin Human Rights Organization](#)
2. East Bago – Former Political Prisoners Network
3. [Pa-O Youth Organization](#)
4. [Progressive Voice](#)