

No to referendum and election: NMSP

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Chiang Mai -- The New Mon State Party (NMSP), one of the ceasefire groups has made it clear that the junta's roadmap of referendum and elections cannot resolve the political crisis in Burma.

NMSP became the first ceasefire group which said 'No' to the Burmese regime's announcements February 9. The party spokesman Nai Aung Magne said, "This is not our political objective."

"Both the Announcement 1/2008 and 2/2008 are not our political objectives. Our political objective is to resolve the country's political problems through tripartite dialogue. We don't oppose and condemn their announcements and we have nothing to do with these announcements. But we cannot support these announcements," he said.

The junta's announcements say the new constitution will be approved by the referendum to be held in May 2008 and the new election in accordance with this new constitution will be held in 2010.

Though the opposition forces criticized these two statements as incomplete and vague, the UN Special Envoy Mr. Gambari welcomed the announcements as a positive step.

Mr. Gambari who is currently on a tour of China before his trip to Burma said, "This is the first step taken by the regime which has first clearly expressed a timeframe in its roadmap."

But the United Nations General Secretary, Ban Ki-moon warned on February 11 that the forthcoming referendum must represent all views and must reflect the true will and desire of the people.

"The solution they are finding is different from ours. We want tripartite dialogue to resolve all these crises. We can't see other solutions except it. We can't trust other solutions and means. Anyway we will follow our political objective without any deviation from it," Nai Aung Mange from NMSP said.

He also said that the forthcoming referendum and new constitution are not solutions to establishing a federal union and democracy in the country.

NMSP started its armed struggle in 1958 and reached a ceasefire agreement with the junta in August 1995. It attended the National Convention (NC) in 2004 but walked out from the NC in 2005 after differences with the junta on NC's meeting procedural code. They then attended the NC in 2005 as observers.

In the meantime, the Foreign Minister of the ruling SPDC told reporters in Singapore that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will be barred from contesting the new election.

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