

REGIONAL NEWS

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# Opposition presses on for interim government

**RANGOON, Burma** — Burmese opposition leaders say they will not accept any polling organized by the current military dominated one-party government. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of demonstrators rallied in Rangoon.

Opposition leaders Aung Gyi, Aung San Suu Kyi and former Defence Minister Tin Oo yesterday told the election commission they were not satisfied with the government's promise Saturday to end 26 years of one-party rule and hold elections as early as late October.

They told the commission that polling could not be held because of the rapidly deteriorating security situation, Aung Gyi said after the meeting. He said they asked the commission to tell the government they would not support or participate in the election and would continue pressing for an interim government.

They also said it would be unfair to hold the elections by the three-month target date because opposition groups have not yet formed parties and have no funds to compete against the ruling Burma Socialist Programme Party, state-run Radio Rangoon later reported.

The commission chairman is Ba Htay, a retired financial commissioner under a civilian government before the 1962 military coup ended democracy in Burma. Like the other four elderly commission members, he is regarded as neutral but not particularly prominent.

The commission, appointed Sunday by Parliament, invited the three opposition figures to the talks at its headquarters.

On Monday, the three signed their first joint statement, a letter to President Maung Maung demanding an interim government.

The three were joined later yesterday by former Prime Minister U Nu in a meeting with student leaders, who asked they immediately form an interim

government. But the opposition leaders said this was not possible without cooperation from the current government.

Meanwhile, some 3,000 uniformed medical personnel joined tens of thousands of other demonstrators marching yesterday in Rangoon to demand the formation of an interim government that would oversee free general elections.

About 75 people, including two Buddhist monks, began 48-hour hunger strike outside city hall, reviving a tactic used decades ago in the struggle against British colonial rule.

All telephone and telex lines from Rangoon were out, although local telephone service was working. It was not known if the services, unreliable under normal circumstances, had been deliberately disrupted.

The doctors, nurses and staff members of military and other hospitals marched peacefully through the capital as part of the continuing popular uprising against Maung Maung and the ruling party.

The last multi-party elections on Feb 6, 1960, swept U Nu to power over an army-backed party. He was toppled in the 1962 coup led by Ne Win, who crushed dissent and pursued rigid socialist policies that made resource-rich Burma one of the world's poorest nations.

Massive protests began after Ne Win resigned on July 23 and the party named hard-liner Sein Lwin his successor. Sein Lwin resigned 17 days later, and Maung Maung on Aug 19 became the country's first civilian leader since U Nu. — AP

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