



November 28, 2025

Update: University students forced to give advance votes in regime election in southern and eastern Shan State

In the third week of November 2025, local regime officials in Pindaya, Namzarng and Kunhing townships in southern Shan State and Mong Hsat township in eastern Shan State forced over 250 university students to cast advance votes for the election scheduled for the last week of December.

The junta is planning to hold the first phase of the election on December 28, 2025, and the second phase on January 11, 2026. Students who will be attending university outside of their resident constituency on the day of the election are being compelled to cast advance votes.

The majority of the students being pressured are freshmen entering university for the first time. In order for these first-year students to enroll in universities opening this December, they require a “good conduct” recommendation letter from their quarter or village administrator. Furthermore, students attending certain universities (such as in the fields of education and medicine) require a criminal clearance certificate from the police station. Students attending other academic years also need recommendation letters to rent dormitories and lodgings. The relevant administrative bodies have refused to issue the required recommendation letters to students unless they can provide proof of casting an advance vote.



A polling station for advance voting in Namzarng township

In Kunhing township, quarter/village administrators, ten-household heads, and hundred-household heads went door-to-door from the first week of November to list the university students and inform them they must come to cast an advance vote on November 17 and 18. On these dates, 36 university students cast votes at 2 polling stations in Kunhing township.

In Namzarng township, between November 17 and 20, a total of 79 university students cast advance votes at nine ward/village Election Commission offices.

A university student from Namzarng going to attend university in Mandalay explained: "I didn't take the matriculation exam for three years and only took it last year, so I am over 18. When I went to the quarter office to get my recommendation letter for university enrollment, they told me to come back after voting. They said I had to go cast an advance vote from the 17th to the 21st. So, even though I wasn't interested in voting, I was forced to go and cast a vote."

Similarly, on November 17, 94 university students were forced to cast advance votes at the General Administration Department office in Pindaya township, Danu Self-Administered Zone, southern Shan State.

In Mong Hsat township, eastern Shan State, 47 university students cast votes on November 18 and 19 at six quarter/village Election Commission offices to obtain their recommendation letters. One of the pressured students said that most of them voted against their will.

In Lawksawk township in southern Shan State, ward/village officials collected data of university students between November 12 and 15 and told them they had to vote. However, at this time they have not yet been notified to go and vote. A female student reported that when students went to request the necessary recommendation letters for university attendance, officials said they would only be issued after they have voted.

These acts of compelling people to vote against their will underscore that the military regime's election is neither free, fair, nor democratic.

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Burmese version