

**DVB Debate** is produced by DVB Multimedia Group Ltd. Co. The debate is recorded every Saturday morning in Yangon with a live audience, which is invited to join the discussion as well.



**DVB TV timetable**

Sun	19:15	21:00	night repeat
Mon	10:15	15:15	21:00
Wed	10:15	15:15	21:00
Fri	10:15	15:15	21:00

DVB Debate aims to contribute to a new culture of open debate, in which anyone can participate and agree to disagree, in order to exchange ideas, create better mutual understanding and find solutions for societal issues to improve the future of Myanmar.

The team invites fellow media and debating clubs to join this initiative for open debate. A weekly press release, press picture and cartoon are available shortly after the recording. DVB Debate also has a modest budget to support local debating initiatives.

For any inquiries, remarks or questions, please call 01292743 (office hours), leave a comment on facebook.com/dvb.debate or email [debate@dvb.no](mailto:debate@dvb.no).

# DVB DEBATE



Welcome to DVB Debate, Myanmar's 1st open debate program. This week's debate question is:

***"Is Burma ready for a PR system?"***

If you have any remarks, suggestions or questions, please ask a team member,

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## **This week's topic is THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM**

### ***Historical context:***

As a former British colony, all of Burma's past elections have followed the First Past The Post (FPTP) electoral system. FPTP voting takes place in single-member constituencies. Voters put a cross next to their favoured candidate and the candidate with the most votes in the constituency wins. All other votes count for nothing. In Burma's 1990 election, which used the FPTP system, the National League for Democracy (NLD) got around 60 percent of votes, but won 80.82 percent of seats in the parliament. The military-backed National Unity Party got 35 percent of votes, but only won 2.2 percent of the seats in the parliament. Other smaller parties received a total of five percent of votes but they didn't pass threshold. Earlier this year the National Democratic Force (NDF), submitted a proposal to parliament to reform Burma's electoral system from FPTP to to a Proportional Representation (PR) system before general elections scheduled for 2015. The essence of PR systems is that all votes contribute to the result, not just a plurality or majority. However, the PR voting system requires multiple-member constituencies. Burma's lower house is currently elected from single member constituencies under the 2008 constitution, and therefore implementing a PR system in the lower house would mean amending the constitution. Proponents of a PR system argue that it would promote Burma's emerging multi-party democracy and reduce wasted votes. Others have greeted the move with scepticism, claiming that it could be a veiled attempt to prevent a landslide victory for the NLD.

### ***Facts & figures:***

- Burma currently employs a First Past the Post (FPTP) voting system
- In the 1990 election, the NLD won 80.82 percent of seats in the parliament with just 60% of the votes.
- The parliament's upper house passed a proposal on 11 June 2014 to recommend the Union Election Commission to adopt a Proportional Representation (PR) system in future elections.

- Article 109 of the 2008 Constitution prohibits the use of the PR system for Parliament's lower house because it is currently a single member constituency.
- President of the Lower House Parliamentary Commission to Review Electoral Systems, Tin Maung Oo, announced 8 different possible election systems in Parliament on 21st October. Of these he recommended 2 systems; FPTP or a mixture of FPTP and PR.

### ***Points of view:***

"We held an election in 2010. At that time, a lot of people did not understand the electoral system, so there were many rejected votes. If a new electoral system is introduced, it will be very difficult for ethnic people to understand it."

*Saw Than Myint- The Nationalities Brotherhood Federation (NBF) Spokesman*

"Only the PR system will make the political transition smooth... It will include not only eight major ethnic groups but all the small ethnic minorities and smaller political parties as well. We proposed it because if representatives of all parties are included the system will work better to achieve national unity and peace."

*Khin Maung Swe - National Democratic Front (NDF) leader.*

"A PR system, at this point in Burma's transition, would further institutionalise already strong interest groups like Buddhists, cronies and veterans by ensuring their place in parliament while weakening their opponents. These interest groups do not seek compromise, they seek power."

*Dr Nyo Tun - International consultant*

"Under the PR system, we can get more minority groups' representatives and voices in Parliament, since the seats are in proportion with the number of votes."

*Aung Zin, National Democratic Front (NDF) MP*

### ***Information links:***

[www.president-office.gov.mm](http://www.president-office.gov.mm)  
[www.ndfmyanmar.org](http://www.ndfmyanmar.org)  
[www.nldburma.org](http://www.nldburma.org)  
[www.altsean.org](http://www.altsean.org)

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