



For Immediate Release

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### **IRI and NDI to Witness Burmese Elections**

**Washington, DC** – The [National Democratic Institute](#) (NDI) and the [International Republican Institute](#) (IRI) are pleased to accept an invitation from the United States Government to designate representatives to witness the April 1 by-elections in Burma (Myanmar). The invitation was issued in response to a request by the government of Myanmar. One representative from each institute plans to visit the country from March 28 to April 3 to study the conduct and significance of the polls. They will be Peter Manikas, NDI's regional director for Asia; and Johanna Kao, an IRI program director in Asia.

IRI and NDI will not conduct a traditional election observation of the by-elections, since such a mission would require adherence to the [Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation](#), which was launched at the United Nations in 2005. The Declaration is now endorsed by 39 leading intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations in the field, including NDI and IRI, and was recognized with appreciation by the United Nations General Assembly. It sets forth fundamental standards for conducting international observation missions, including the need to observe the process in the months leading up to an election, and to deploy a significant number of observers to assess an election nationwide. The present effort cannot meet the principles set forth in the Declaration, and, as a consequence, IRI and NDI do not intend to issue election observation statements.

Both institutes look forward to being present during the brief period around the elections and to continue their engagement there following the polls. NDI and IRI will be particularly interested in how the experience of the elections can contribute to the conduct of national polls in 2015 and to broader reforms in the country.

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