



The Facebook ad spending of the political parties

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Myanmar's political parties have so far spent just a few thousand US dollars between them on Facebook ads for the upcoming election, even as lockdowns to curb Covid-19 have prevented on-the-ground campaigning in many places.

The Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) has put the most money into ads so far, with pages linked to the party spending \$3,250 to boost posts.

The People's Pioneer Party (PPP) is a close second at \$3,166, according to data from the Facebook Ad Library Report, an initiative by the company to boost transparency around political spending.

Thura Shwe Mann's Union Betterment Party (UBP) has spent \$2,068 across three pages, while the Tai-Leng (Shanni) Nationalities Development Party spent \$500.

Meanwhile the ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) has instructed candidates and party officials not to spend any money on online ads.

"We are going organic," said Dr Myo Nyunt, a senior party official. "We will let our supporters spread the word. Currently, the party officials have been instructed not to pay for boosted posts."

A handful of NLD candidates and supporters have nonetheless posted paid ads on Facebook, the Ad Library data shows, although the costs were not disclosed because each account spent less than \$100.

The image displays five screenshots of Facebook pages, each with a 'Page transparency' and 'Total spent by Page on ads about social issues, elections or politics' section. The pages are for Myanmar NOW, USDP Women Committee, Brighter Future Youth Committee, U Tin Aung Chit, and USDP Farmers Committee. The ad spend data is as follows:

Page Name	Page Created	Total Spent (Aug 4, 2020 - Sep 9, 2020)	Recently Spent (7 days - Sep 3 - Sep 9, 2020)
Free to Talk	Aug 20, 2020	\$549	\$0
USDP Women Committee	Sep 13, 2019	\$1,891	\$353
Brighter Future Youth Committee	Sep 21, 2019	\$434	≤\$100
U Tin Aung Chit	Dec 21, 2019	\$195	\$0
USDP Farmers Committee	Apr 5, 2020	\$181	≤\$100

USD Facebook pages with paid advertisements

Rallies banned

Rakhine state has been under partial lockdown and a nighttime curfew since Covid-19 infections began to surge there late last month, meaning parties have been unable to start their campaigns.

And a de-facto internet ban remains in place in seven of the state's townships, with users only allowed access to 2G internet and therefore unable to send or view pictures and videos, or to load many pages.

With 29 of Yangon's 44 townships under partial lockdowns and travel in and out of the city banned, traditional canvassing in Myanmar's most populous city has also been stifled.

Thet Thet Khine
@ththkh.ppp
346,454 likes • Politician

Page transparency
Page created Sep 14, 2015
Page name has not changed
Primary country/region location for people who manage this Page includes: Myanmar (10)

Total spent by Page on ads about social issues, elections or politics
Aug 4, 2020 - Sep 9, 2020
Myanmar
\$2,034
See spend details

Recently spent by Page on ads about social issues, elections or politics
7 days • Sep 3 - Sep 9, 2020
Myanmar
\$529
See spend details

PPP - People's Pioneer Party
@pppmyanmar
286,491 likes • Political Party

Page transparency
Page created Oct 31, 2019
Page name has not changed
Primary country/region location for people who manage this Page includes: Myanmar (19)

Total spent by Page on ads about social issues, elections or politics
Aug 5, 2020 - Sep 9, 2020
Myanmar
\$657
See spend details

Recently spent by Page on ads about social issues, elections or politics
7 days • Sep 3 - Sep 9, 2020
Myanmar
\$166
See spend details

PPP-People's Pioneer Party Mayangone
@pppmyangone
6,915 likes • Political Organization

Page transparency
Page created Jan 25, 2020
Page name changed 1 time
Primary country/region location for people who manage this Page includes: Myanmar (11)

Total spent by Page on ads about social issues, elections or politics
Aug 5, 2020 - Sep 9, 2020
Myanmar
\$475
See spend details

Recently spent by Page on ads about social issues, elections or politics
7 days • Sep 3 - Sep 9, 2020
Myanmar
\$176
See spend details

Facebook pages sponsored by the People's Pioneer Party

The Union Election Commission has warned that parties must follow health ministry guidelines while campaigning. Rallies with more than 50 people are banned and attendees must stand at least six feet away from each other.

Campaign events in areas that are under full or partial lockdown because of a spike in local cases are banned entirely, the ministry said.

While the NLD has shunned online ads, its leaders have set up personal Facebook pages in recent months that they will use to reach voters ahead of the November 8 poll.

State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint and other senior figures have all opened personal accounts.

Dr Myo Nyunt said the party was still focussed on its ground game for the coming weeks.

"We will try to campaign door-to-door as far as possible," he said.

While the USDP is the top spender on Facebook, party spokesperson Nan Myamya Mimi Zaw said it was not the party's key focus.

"We have Facebook pages. We are active on Facebook but we are not doing anything extraordinary," she told Myanmar Now.

The People's Pioneer Party, by contrast, is doing most of its campaigning on social media because of lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, said Kaung Min Khat, who handles the party's online activity.

"We ask our candidates to publicise themselves on their Facebook pages. The party's central committee also has plans to boost them, and get them in touch with the voters," he said.

- [2020 Election](#)