

Burma: Millions Expected to Join General Strike in Myanmar on Monday to Oppose Regime

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YANGON—A nationwide general strike against Myanmar's military regime has been called for Monday with the aim of accelerating the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) against the repressive military regime, which overthrew the elected civilian government three weeks ago.

It's likely that millions of people from all walks of life will pour out onto the streets across the country, as the regime's recent deadly crackdowns against ongoing protests have outraged many people.

If it happens, Monday's general strike will go down in the country's modern history as the second nationwide popular uprising, after the one on Aug. 8, 1988 (Four Eights), when millions of people took to the streets to defy the then Socialist regime.

The planned strike is now popularly known as the "Five Twos" revolution, as it will be staged on 22.2.2021. On that day, nearly every business in the country will halt operations as people join the strike. Activists and celebrities are calling on every citizen to join in.

Many shop owners and market vendors have been informing their customers since Saturday morning that they will close on Monday to join the strike.

Myanmar's largest retailer, City Mart Holding, as well as Thai wholesale center Makro in Yangon and several other popular local private businesses also announced on Sunday that their businesses will be closed on Monday.

The Southeast Asian country has already seen hundreds of thousands of people take to the streets over the past two weeks to oppose the regime.

The military regime has stepped up its crackdowns on street demonstrations, beating and opening fire directly on peaceful protesters in several cities. On Saturday, at least two civilians, including a young man, were shot dead in Mandalay when riot police opened fire with live and rubber bullets on residents protecting striking government shipyard workers who had joined the CDM.

Arrests of protest leaders and civil servants who refuse to work under the military regime have also intensified this week.

With the numbers of deaths and detentions at the hands of the military continuing to rise, several netizens posted on social media that "the more you oppress, the more we rise".

Despite the threat of being shot, or getting arrested, thousands of Mandalay residents staged sit-in protests, and protesters across the country continued their marches and rallies on Sunday, showing their determination to take down the regime.

A General Strike Committee involving 25 organizations from different fields including political parties, labor unions, student unions, farmers unions, religious groups, women's groups, monks, doctors, lawyers and writers groups was also formed on Saturday to work for the end of military dictatorship, the abolition of the 2008 Constitution and the establishment of a federal democratic union.

The committee will form local strike committees and arrange the collective people's struggle against the military dictatorship across the country, said committee member U Aung Moe Zaw, who is also chairman of the Democratic Party for a New Society (DPNS).

"We can't collapse. If we drew back at this point, the military regime would intensify its crackdown. Therefore, I think it is important to unite between organizations and intensify the strike."

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