

Burma

Chinese-Owned Factories on Fire While Myanmar Military Regime's Protest Crackdowns Escalate

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Fire broke out at two garment factories owned by Chinese and Taiwanese investors Sunday afternoon in Hlaing Tharyar Industrial Zone in Yangon as the military regime's security forces launched yet another deadly crackdown on anti-coup protesters in the area.

According to an industrial zone official, the two factories were Global Fashion, a garment factory backed by Chinese investors, and Tsang Yih, one of the largest foreign-owned shoe factories in Myanmar operated by Taiwanese investors.

Myanmar's government investment agency, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA)'s records reveal that Global Fashion is jointly owned by four Chinese investors and a Myanmar citizen. It was registered in 2018 in Myanmar.

Tsang Yih is also a foreign-owned company owned by two Taiwanese investors. The company registered in 2014 and employed more than 9,000 workers last year, according to a company report.

The official from the industrial zone said the cause of the fires is still under investigation.

However, Beijing-based China Global Television Network said that the factories were set on fire by more than 20 people on motorcycles.

The Chinese media outlet claimed that suspects were carrying iron rods, axes and gasoline, and smashed past security personnel, setting fires at the factories' entrances and in warehouses.

A spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Myanmar said that many Chinese-owned factories in the Hlaing Tharyar Industrial Zone were looted and burned by criminals on Sunday afternoon, according to the Paukphaw, Chinese-funded media.

The spokesperson said that many Chinese personnel were injured and some employees were trapped for a while by the fires.

The Chinese Embassy in Myanmar discussed the issue with the Myanmar Chinese Enterprise Chamber of Commerce and also immediately asked local police to take effective measures to ensure the safety of Chinese companies and personnel, an official statement said.

The embassy spokesperson said, "China requires Myanmar to take further effective measures to stop all violent acts, investigate and deal with relevant perpetrators in accordance with the law, and ensure the safety of the lives and property of Chinese enterprises and personnel in Myanmar."

“We call on the people of Myanmar to express their demands legally and not to be incited or used to undermine the friendly cooperation between China and Myanmar,” the spokesperson added.

As of Sunday afternoon, at least three people were reported to have been killed and about five people were wounded by police and military personnel during the crackdown on protesters against the military regime in Hlaing Tharyar on Sunday.

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