

Commentary

# Military Regime Can't Defeat Myanmar's Brave Hearts

samedi 6 mars 2021, par [Kyaw Zwa Moe](#) (Date de rédaction antérieure : 6 mars 2021).

Recent days have seen our beautiful Myanmar transformed into a killing field : Peaceful protesters shot dead through the head and chest ; streets stained with blood ; cities echoing with the booms of gunfire, the air laced with gunsmoke ; rescue workers brutally beaten ; security forces equipped as if for a battleground, ready to take the lives of yet more unarmed people.

This unwanted killing field is highly likely to see more bloodshed.

Before Feb. 1, Myanmar's cities were peaceful and the country stable. All of that suddenly vanished when, early that morning, the military coup led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing plunged the country into a prolonged, deadly instability.

The coup smashed the political transition to democracy the country had warily cultivated over the past 10 years. Its aim was to expunge the result of Myanmar's general election of Nov. 8, 2020—a landslide victory for the ruling National League for Democracy (NLD)—and dissolve the new Parliament, whose first session was to be convened just hours later. The new military regime arrested the NLD's leaders, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and President U Win Myint, both of whom had been re-elected.

The immediate consequences : The country's economy, which had been showing great potential in recent years, was suddenly thrown into reverse ; the schedule of public COVID-19 vaccinations worked out by the NLD government with international organizations went up in smoke ; the simple pleasures of daily life have vanished for everyone ; the future, for both young and old, is gone.



*Anti-regime protesters in defensive mode as security forces approach in Yangon's Thaketa Township on Feb. 5. / The Irrawaddy*

It did not take long for Myanmar people, particularly students and other young people, to throw themselves into the streets to retake the rights they had so recently enjoyed, and to restore for themselves a bright future under an elected democratic government. Hundreds of thousands of people have since joined them. Before long, it was a genuine, nationwide uprising against the military dictatorship.

Then the shooting began, and the country became a killing field. We can only expect this situation to

go on. Because killing unarmed civilians—along with every other type of oppression and political persecution used by the military regime—has not been able to frighten away the brave protesters, especially young people, at all. Proof of this courage can be found in the history of Myanmar—and in the DNA of the people of this country.

On Sunday, five days ago, when a general strike was organized, the regime's soldiers and riot police killed at least 15 people across the country. On Wednesday, two days ago, the security forces killed at least 31 more protesters in many cities across the country.

All of the protesters who were killed were well aware that there was a very real possibility that they would be killed once they stepped out of their homes.

Kyal Sin, 19, was among the bravest. She was fatally shot dead in the head, right behind her ear, in her hometown of Mandalay on Wednesday. Aware of the risks to her life, she had posted her blood type details on Facebook and pledged that her organs be donated if she were killed. For demanding her rights as a teenager, to a bright future, and to make her political choice, she paid with her life. In last year's election, she cast her first-ever ballot, voting for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's party. On Facebook, she proudly and happily posted a picture taken with her father showing their ink-soaked fingers after visiting the ballot box on Nov. 8.

Like Kyal Sin, many young protesters in cities across Myanmar have been writing their emergency contact phone numbers and their blood types on their arms before taking to the streets since the regime started cracking down against the protests.

Kyal Sin is one of at least 54 protesters to have been killed by the regime's troops and police in many cities and towns since Feb. 1.

The regime's tactic of having troops kill Kyal Sin and her fellow protesters in cruel execution style has done nothing to discourage the protesters. On Thursday, the number of anti-coup protesters on the streets in Mandalay was even bigger, as they paid their final tribute at the young woman's funeral. Kyal Sin, "pure star" in Burmese, is now a martyr for many. Her killing hasn't simply failed to kill the courage of her many thousands of fellow protesters ; it has only made them bolder.

On Friday, we were amazed to see photos of still bigger crowds of protesters taking to the streets in Mandalay. One more young man was shot dead, too. But the people showed no sign of fear. Across the country, Myanmar citizens are proving again in this 21st century that they were born with the DNA of their ancestors.

Their fight will go on. Consequently, the killing will go on. And the killing fields won't vanish anytime soon.

When I took to the streets in the 1988 nationwide uprising as a high school student, I remember one of our mottos : "They die, or we die !" in the fight for democracy against the then dictatorship, which was as brutal as the current one. We were serious, and meant exactly what we said : If they died, we would win ; if they won, we would die.

That motto has been repurposed with characteristic wit by the younger generation for this new "Spring Revolution", which strikes a note of dark humor : "They die, or they die !" The motto has a Generation Z ring about it. One way of interpreting it is that they are so determined to see the death of the military dictatorship, there is simply no way their movement can die. Their determination to annihilate the mighty and cruel military dictatorship knows no bounds. The only conceivable outcome is victory.



*Retreating anti-regime protesters are tear-gassed in Yangon's Thaketa Township on Feb. 5. / The Irrawaddy*

It has been one month and five days since the coup. But the regime is still not in control of the country. It has failed to end any of the many forms of resistance against it—a momentous mass movement on the streets mainly organized by Generation Z ; the Civil Disobedience Movement, or CDM, launched by civil servants and some private workers ; political and diplomatic offensives by the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, or CRPH, formed by elected members of Parliament after the coup ; and social punishment campaigns targeting members of the military regime and all of their various supporters, organized by unknown groups.

Of course, this is a war between a mighty military regime and an unarmed populace. Tragically, the usual formula is that military power combined with evil spirits spells defeat for unarmed people.

But Myanmar's brave hearts are made even braver, though their compatriots be killed, tortured and arrested. The killing field may well claim more Kyal Sins, but brave hearts will continue to demonstrate with their determination and resilience to finish this struggle according to their motto : "They die, or they die."

**Kyaw Zwa Moe**

---

**P.-S.**

- The Irrawaddy 5 March 2021 :  
<https://www.irrawaddy.com/opinion/commentary/military-regime-cant-defeat-myanmars-brave-hearts.html>
- Kyaw Zwa Moe is the Editor of the English edition of The Irrawaddy.