

Burma

Myanmar Junta Suspends Over 1,600 Educators for Refusing to Work

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The military regime has suspended at least 1,683 striking educators and administrative staff members of 15 universities from their duties.

Following the Feb. 1 coup, many civil servants in the country have been on strike as they are unhappy with the takeover, saying they can't work under military rule.

The regime ordered doctorate, master's degree and final-year bachelor's degree classes to reopen on May 5 nationwide, and educators and administrative staff to return to work by May 3, asking university authorities to report the list of absentees.

Among those suspended from their duties are professors, associate professors and administrative staff. Notices signed by concerned rectors say they were suspended from their duties due to unauthorized absence.

According to the lists acquired by The Irrawaddy, a total of 339 educators and administrative staff were suspended at Yangon University, 392 at Mandalay University of Arts and Science, 149 at Mandalay University of Foreign Languages, 60 at Myitkyina Technological University, 72 at Taungoo Technological University, 137 at Yangon University of Education, and 45 at Myanmar Maritime University.

Other institutions affected include universities of Computer Studies in Patheingyi and Taungtha, Sittoung University, Maubin University, and technological universities in Taungtha, Hpa-an, Patheingyi and Kengtung.

These figures represent only those The Irrawaddy could verify, and the actual number of those who were suspended could be much higher.

"Whatever happens, we will continue to engage in the civil disobedience movement until the end. We have to resist because we can't leave our future generations under military rule," said a striking assistant lecturer of Yangon University who has been charged with incitement by the regime.

Teachers are happy to be and take pride in being suspended from their duties for joining the CDM, he said, and striking educators who have not yet been included in suspension lists are even concerned that they will be mistaken as for supporters of the regime by the public.

The military regime's push to reopen universities and schools is facing growing resistance, with anti-regime protesters calling for an education boycott as part of the nationwide CDM against the junta. Educators say the resistance is a sign that the coup is failing.

Facing a shortage of educators, the military regime is recruiting lecturers, and is planning to give promotions to non-CDM professors to replace striking rectors and deputy rectors, said the striking educators.

Meanwhile, it is also putting pressure on striking government employees including educators and health workers to return to work by prosecuting them for incitement and arresting their relatives.

The Irrawaddy

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