

An Urgent Appeal to Deescalate Violence on the Streets in Myanmar

To the People of Myanmar, the rulers, and to the International Community,
Peace, Shalom, Shanthi, Salaam!

21-Feb-2021

With deep distress, *Religions for Peace* Myanmar, and *Religions for Peace* International, on behalf of all its regional and national entities, plead with all stakeholders, to deescalate the sad turn of events in the streets of Myanmar. More blood has been shed in this month. *Religions for Peace* stands with the people of Myanmar in their quest for sacredness of life. We strongly condemn shedding of the blood of innocents.

Religions for Peace brings together leaders from diverse faith traditions, investing in a vision of a world without war and violence. Working with all stakeholders in Myanmar, we have appreciated the gains of peace and democracy in the past decade. We nurtured great expectations of a nation built on those gains.

The recent sad turn of events, contesting the election results, have fragmented the nation. We plead with all stakeholders: peace is possible, peace is the only way. A long suffering nation can be healed only through dialogue, not violence in the streets.

The poor of this country, already facing multiple challenges including the lethal pandemic, loss of livelihood and food insecurity, urgently need peace for survival. We plead with all, especially the army, please return to the dialogue table to reconcile all issues.

Religions for Peace Myanmar joins the Venerable Ma Ha Na leaders in their exhortation to ensure peace and existence of Myanmar as a nation and also the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar (CBCM) call for dialogue and de-escalation of street violence.

We also strongly appeal to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as the regional body committed to peace, stability and prosperity, to urgently offer its good services to Myanmar as a member state. The ASEAN Charter commits its members to democracy and human rights, the rule of law and good governance. This is a time to step up its service to the people of Myanmar, including all ethnic minorities, before it is too late.

Religions for Peace stands ready to continue the *Religions for Peace* Advisory Forum on Peace and Reconciliation in Myanmar, as an open space for dialogue, when conditions are acceptable, for all parties to join.