News



by Catholic News Service

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Mandalay, Myanmar — April 11, 2022
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Nearly 100 soldiers stormed the Sacred Heart Cathedral compound in Mandalay and forcibly entered the cathedral, archbishop's house, parish priest's residence and clergy center April 8.

Archbishop Marco Tin Win, some priests and staff were present during the raid but all were safe and none were detained, church sources told ucanews.com.

Soldiers arrived around 2:30 p.m., and some stood guard outside the compound of the cathedral, the second-largest in Myanmar, while others with guns carried out a search of all the buildings inside the compound.

"They claimed to have been tipped off about weapons being hidden in the clergy center," said one of the sources. The soldiers left after nearly three hours without finding any weapons.

The news of the military raid spread quickly among the local Catholic community in the city's five parishes, causing much concern.

"We were relieved that no one was hurt or arrested and we could resume our church services," said a parishioner who joined the Way of the Cross after the soldiers left in the evening.

Tin Win has designated Saturday evenings for one-hour adoration and the first Sundays of every month for eucharistic celebrations seeking peace in the conflict-

torn nation.

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The prelate is the only Catholic leader to openly lend moral support to the pro-democracy protesters by taking to the street in front of the clergy's house in Mandalay in February 2021.

Catholics are a minority in Mandalay, a culturally and predominantly Bamar Buddhist city that has remained largely free from the ongoing conflict between the military and local people's defense forces.

However, three Catholic villages in the Sagaing region that are part of the Mandalay Archdiocese have been attacked by the military, with four people killed and thousands displaced from their homes.

The latest targeting of a cathedral came after attacks on churches belonging to Catholic, Baptist and other denominations in the Christian strongholds of Chin state and Kayah state. Priests and pastors have been arrested while many unarmed civilians, including Christians, have been killed.

Junta forces also raided Christ the King Cathedral in Loikaw Diocese last November and detained 18 local health care workers. Sacred Heart Cathedral in neighboring Pekhon Diocese in Shan state was attacked three times with artillery shelling.