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Activists march in Yangon on September 21 to mark the International Day of Peace. More images of the event on pages 12 and 17. Pic: Ko Taik

Peace marchers face charges

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin and Htoo Aung

HUNDREDS of people calling for an end to the conflict in Kachin State and elsewhere in Myanmar marched peacefully through Yangon on September 21 as part of events held throughout the country to mark the International Day of Peace.

The Yangon peace march, from Sule Pagoda to the bank of Inya Lake on Pyay Road, was organised by 19 civil society groups.

Other events throughout the country included prayers for peace held at Manwungyee in Kachin

State and in front of Mahamuni Pagoda in Mandalay. In the Kayin State capital, Hpa-an, writers, artists and others spoke at a peace event organised by the Kayin Women's Action Group.

The Yangon Region Police Office said charges would be brought against those who organised the march because it took place without official permission.

An estimated 250 people, many wearing blue T-shirts and blue headbands emblazoned with the slogan "Stop Civil War" took part in the march.

Waving posters and singing songs, the group left Sule Pagoda at about 9:30am and marched via Botahtaung Pagoda, Theinbyu and Banyardala roads, Shwegondine intersection, and Bagaryar and

Kan Lan roads before crossing Pyay Road, to the bank of Inya Lake, near Inya Road.

The circuitous route through 10 townships was necessary because the authorities had banned the group from marching on Pyay Road.

After gathering on the bank of the lake at about 3:30pm, the marchers displayed banners calling for peace before standing at 4pm to offer five minutes of silent prayer for those from both sides who have died in conflicts and for those living in refugee camps.

A monument for peace was erected on the lake's bank and

balloons with the slogan "May the entire nation enjoy genuine peace" were released.

The marchers also distributed a five-point statement calling for an immediate halt to conflict throughout the nation, practical steps by President U Thein Sein to stop the conflicts, the release of a statement by the hluttaws calling for an end to civil war, a judicial committee to enforce the rule of law in war zones, and for all citizens to participate in the effort to achieve peace.

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The following photographs were published as part of a photo gallery on The Myanmar Times' website on September 24, 2012. They can be viewed at: <http://mmtimes.com/index.php/in-pictures/2853-yangon-marks-international-day-of-peace.html>







