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South Korea

# People order Park to step down

- News from around the world -

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### **Park Geun-hye is no longer the President for those who poured onto the streets for candlelit protests in Seoul and other major cities nationwide, Saturday November 26.**

In the biggest anti-government rally in the country's history, more than 1.9 million protesters came out to demand Park's resignation — 1.5 million at Gwanghwamun Square in Seoul and about 400,000 in other areas, according to organizers.

The cold snap and snow did not deter people, furious about the presidential scandal involving Park's friend Choi Soon-sil, from taking to the streets for a fifth candlelit rally.

"I've come to this rally every week. We the ordinary people have to work so hard to survive. Park and Choi Soon-sil extorted money from the people and businesses," said Lee Jeong-su, 51, an office worker. "It's so embarrassing to see this scandal becoming an international issue. I will continue to come out until Park steps down."

The nationwide candlelit rallies, which have drawn a record 4 million people since they began in late October, have also been a major factor pushing an investigation by the prosecution, and the move to impeach the President.

## **Biggest rally in history**

Experts say Park will not be able to win the fight against the people and will have no other choice but to succumb to their demand.

David Steinberg, a professor at Georgetown University, told The Korea Times: "The importance of these demonstrations should not be underestimated. Conservative, respected and rather elderly professors have joined the demonstrations, which speaks to their importance and the widespread sense of grievance."

The protesters marched to 200 meters from Cheong Wa Dae, holding banners that said "Arrest President Park" and "Surrender Now."

Kim Beom-jae, 62, a Seoul resident, said, "We cannot see the true power of the candlelit rallies for now. But I'm sure that they will become an enormous undercurrent that will propel changes in our society."

Not only students but also their teachers and professors took part in the rally.

"I have always taught my students about the importance of honesty and democracy. But now I cannot do it," said Kwon In-taek, a middle school teacher from South Chungcheong Province. "One of my students made a video of the President riding a swing named Soon-sil for his video-making homework. I praised him. Park is no longer our President. My school no longer prevents students from going to the candlelit protests."

Chang Hae-jin, an 18-year-old who took the national College Scholastic Aptitude Test earlier this month, said, "This is my first time participating in a rally. When I was studying for the exam, I was sorry because I could not do anything."

Park should not hide like this. She should be honest about her wrongdoings," according to Yonhap news agency.

# Peaceful rallies nationwide

At 8 p.m., protesters on the streets of cities and towns across the nation turned off lights on their mobile devices and inside buildings for one minute, while those who were driving honked their horns, to express their unity.

Candlelit protests also took place in major cities nationwide.

In Daegu, the birthplace of the President, 20,000 protesters gathered to demand her resignation. People from 71 local civic groups joined the rally in the southeastern city despite the steady rain.

In Busan, 100,000 anti-Park protesters gathered at Seomyeon. Police dispatched 1,000 officers to the site, which saw 50,000 protesters last week. The protesters began a march on the city streets at 9:30 p.m.

Fifty thousand demonstrators gathered at Geumnam-ro in Gwangju, while Dunsan-dong in Daejeon saw 15,000, and 12 districts in South Gyeongsang Province, 14,000.

Jeju Island saw its sixth anti-Park rally, where 3,000 protesters gathered. The rally at the nation's tourism hotspot stretched on late into the night.

The fifth Gwanghwamun rally comes at a critical moment for Park who is drawing no support from the people — her approval rating has fallen to a record-low 4 percent.

Lawmakers from the opposition parties have joined the movement, urging the ruling Saenuri Party to agree with the impeachment motion.

"The Saenuri Party must promptly agree with the impeachment move that the three opposition parties are pushing forward," said Rep. Choo Mi-ae, head of the main opposition Democratic Party of Korea (DPK).

Prosecutors maintain that Park was complicit in the scandal. The DPK said it will put the motion up for a vote in the National Assembly no later than Dec. 9.

Meanwhile, a group of Park's supporters gathered at Seoul Station earlier Saturday to protest the demonstration. One of their banners read, "Impeaching Park will make Korea a communist country."

"Park's father, Park Chung-hee, modernized our country. Recently, previous administrations have only focused on helping North Korea," said Lee Kae-yong, an 80-year-old participant at the gathering, according to Yonhap.

Like the previous rallies, the fifth candlelit rally ended without any clashes.

The rally organizers said they will continue to hold the rallies until Park accepts the people's demand. They said they will watch how the President reacts before deciding the details of the next rally.

[Korean Times](#)