

Anti-lockdown protests spread in China as anger rises over zero-Covid strategy

Beijing students shout 'freedom will prevail', as Urumqi fire prompts levels of disobedience unprecedented in Xi era

People opposed to China's stringent Covid restrictions have protested in cities across the country in the biggest wave of civil disobedience on the mainland since Xi Jinping assumed power a decade ago.

Protests triggered by a deadly apartment fire in the far west of the country last week took place on Sunday in cities including Shanghai, Beijing, Chengdu, Wuhan and Guangzhou, according to footage shared on social media, in defiance of a series of heavy-handed arrests of demonstrators on Saturday night.

In the early hours of Monday in Beijing, two groups of protesters totalling at least 1,000 people were gathered along the Chinese capital's 3rd Ring Road near the Liangma River, refusing to disperse.

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