

Joint Appeal to the UN Security Council to Act on Myanmar's Rohingya Crisis

In advance of the United Nations Security Council's December 12 meeting on the situation in Myanmar, we, a global coalition of 81 human rights, faith-based and humanitarian organizations, urgently call on the Council to take immediate action to address the campaign of ethnic cleansing and mass atrocity crimes, including crimes against humanity, committed against the ethnic Rohingya population by Myanmar's security forces in northern Rakhine State, as well as the continuing restrictions on humanitarian assistance throughout the state since October 2016.

Words of condemnation by the UN, including the Security Council's Presidential Statement on November 6 and the UN General Assembly's Third Committee's adoption of a resolution on Myanmar, have not resulted in Myanmar's government ending its abuses or holding those responsible to account. It is time for prompt, concerted and effective international action.

Myanmar authorities are still heavily restricting access to northern Rakhine State for most international humanitarian organizations, human rights monitors, and independent media. Most of Myanmar's Rohingya population, estimated at more than one million, have been forced to flee to Bangladesh as refugees. Despite a bilateral agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh, there are insufficient guarantees that return at this time can be informed, safe and voluntary, that requirements for documentation of prior residence will not be used as a pretext to reject legitimate returns, that temporary holding centers will not become semi-permanent internment camps and that returnees will have the same rights of movement, access to livelihoods and health and education services as other residents of Rakhine State. The UN Fact-Finding Mission, which is tasked with preparing a report on abuses nationwide, has thus far been prevented from gaining access to the country.

Over 646,000 Rohingya have been made refugees since August 25, when Myanmar security forces launched "clearance operations" in response to armed attacks on security posts by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA). Refugee testimonies provide overwhelming evidence of Myanmar military-led atrocities during these operations, and a similar campaign that had begun in October 2016. The crimes against humanity perpetrated against the Rohingya include massacres and other unlawful killings, widespread rape and other sexual violence, looting, deportation and mass arson of hundreds of Rohingya villages. The violence also displaced tens of thousands of people from other ethnic minorities. Rohingya who remain in Myanmar continue to face severe food insecurity and threats in addition to systematic violations of their rights to a nationality, freedom of movement, and access to healthcare, education, and livelihood opportunities.

The Myanmar government has the primary responsibility to protect its diverse population without discrimination and regardless of ethnicity, religion or citizenship status. But, the civilian and military leadership of Myanmar, including the military's Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, refuse to even acknowledge the serious human rights violations against the Rohingya and continue to deny any wrongdoing by state security forces in Rakhine State while ignoring decades of institutionalized discrimination against the Rohingya community.

We urge the Security Council to immediately impose an arms embargo against Myanmar's military that covers the direct and indirect supply, sale or transfer, including transit and trans-shipment of all weapons, munitions, and other military and security equipment, as well as the provision of training and other military and security assistance. The Security Council should also place targeted sanctions on senior officers responsible for crimes against humanity or other serious human rights violations. Financial sanctions should target senior officers who ordered criminal acts or are liable as a matter of command responsibility. The Security Council should explore all avenues for justice and accountability, including through international courts.

If the pledge to "never again" allow atrocities means anything, the Security Council cannot delay action any longer.

Signatories:

ALTSEAN-Burma
African Life Center
Ameinu
American Jewish World Service
Amnesty International
Arab American Bar Association
Association Suisse Birmanie
Burma Action Ireland
Burma Campaign UK
Burma Human Rights Network
Burma Task Force
Canadian Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
Carl Wilkens Fellowship
Center for Development of International Law
Center for Justice & Accountability
Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP-Liberia)
Darfur Women's Action Group
David Rockefeller Fund
Emgage Action
Entrepreneurs du Monde
Equal Rights Trust
European Rohingya Council
Fortify Rights
Foundation for Ethnic Understanding
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Genocide Watch
Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

Global Justice Center
Global Network of Women Peacebuilders
Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict –
Southeast Asia (GPPAC-SEA)
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
Holocaust, Genocide and Interfaith Education Center at
Manhattan College
Human Rights First
Human Rights Now
Human Rights Watch
Humanity United Action
Info Birmanie
Initiatives for International Dialogue
Interfaith Center of New York
International Campaign for the Rohingya
International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect ICR2P
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
Investors Against Genocide
Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human
Rights
Jewish Alliance of Concern over Burma (JACOB)
Jewish World Watch
Law @theMargins
Majlis Ashura - The Islamic Leadership Council of New York
Médecins du Monde
Middle East and North Africa Partnership for Preventing of
Armed Conflict (MENAPPAC)
Muslim Bar Association of New York
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)
Muslim Social Justice Initiative (MSJI)
National Lawyer's Guild - International
Network of Spiritual Progressives
Partners Relief & Development
Pax Christi Metro New York
Permanent Peace Movement (PPM)
Physicians for Human Rights
Rabbinical Assembly
Refugee Center Online
Refugees International
Rohingya Community Ireland
Sadhana: Coalition of Progressive Hindus
Save the Children
Society for Threatened Peoples – Germany

STAND Canada
Stanley Foundation
Stop Genocide Now
Swedish Burma Committee
Syrian Network for Human Rights
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
The Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights
The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies
Turning Point for Women and Children
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Nations Association - Sweden
Viet Tan
World Federalist Movement – Canada
World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy (WFM-IGP)