

One year after the violence began: Civil Society Organizations deeply concerned by the human rights and humanitarian situation of stateless Rohingya Minority Rights Group

International

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On

24 of June 2013, 76 civil society organizations endorsed a statement expressing concern over the Rohingya's human rights and humanitarian situation. The International Coalition of the Responsibility to Protect's Minority Rights Group International, Refugees International, Human Rights Watch and ALTSEAN-Burma were among the endorsing organizations.

The Rohingya, a stateless minority of Myanmar, have endured decades of abuse, persecution and discrimination. (...)

One year after the violence began, the root causes and on-going humanitarian and human rights concerns remain largely unaddressed. (...)

Despite heavy restrictions and difficulties in accessing the affected and displaced communities, and threats against, and intimidation and arbitrary arrests of humanitarian aid workers and human rights defenders, civil society actors have monitored and documented the situation, provided humanitarian aid to victims of violence, published statements and reports, briefed the international community and repeatedly raised growing concern over the deteriorating situation in Rakhine State and for Muslim communities throughout Myanmar. (...)

The international legal obligations of all countries concerned require them to protect all persons subject to their jurisdictions, regardless of whether they are citizens, stateless persons, asylum seekers or refugees. In its treatment of the Rohingya, Myanmar has violated the right to life, the right to be free from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, the right to nationality, the right to food and shelter including the fundamental right to be free from hunger and the right to the highest attainable standard of health. Myanmar must also answer allegations of crimes against humanity being perpetrated by state actors against the Rohingya. Refugee recipient countries including Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Sri Lanka have also acted in violation of the right to seek and to enjoy asylum and the right to liberty and freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, and in certain instances, the right not to be subjected to refoulement.

The undersigned civil society organizations express deep concern with regard to the human rights and humanitarian abuses that continue to disproportionately affect the Rohingya, jointly speak out on behalf of all victims of violence and abuse, displacement and denial of humanitarian aid in Rakhine State – be they Rohingya, Rakhine or of other ethnic or religious identity; and one year after the violence began, emphatically state that all violence,

discrimination and abuse must end now.

To the government of Myanmar, we urge that immediate steps are taken to:

- Facilitate unimpeded humanitarian access to all those affected by conflict regardless of registration status, and take effective action against those who intimidate humanitarian agencies.
 - Produce a plan for reconciliation, end movement restrictions, and ensure safe voluntary returns.
 - Provide protection to all people living in Rakhine State, end impunity, prosecute all perpetrators of violence and other abuses through a fair judicial system, arrange for immediate release of those who have been arbitrarily detained and provide adequate redress to all victims of violence and injustice.
 - Invite the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish an office.
 - Review the 1982 Citizenship Act and other discriminatory laws and practices to ensure that all persons have equal rights and equal access to citizenship and are not discriminated against on grounds of ethnicity.
- To the governments of refugee recipient countries, we urge that immediate steps are taken to:**

- Protect all refugees and asylum seekers from Myanmar – and take into account the acute and specific protection needs of stateless Rohingya.
 - Desist from arbitrarily detaining Rohingya refugees and asylum seekers and attempting to return them to Myanmar in violation of the principle of non-refoulement.
- To international community, we urge that immediate steps are taken to:**

- Insist on protection of minority rights, including the right to nationality, as a pre-requisite to full relations.
- Press the government of Myanmar to present its plans for promoting reconciliation, ending the movement restrictions, and enabling safe voluntary returns in Rakhine State.
- Press the government of Myanmar to act on the recommendations above, including ending impunity and achieving greater accountability and justice. (...)

[Read full statement.](#)