

## **Southeast Asian lawmakers call for international justice for Rohingya atrocities**

We, the undersigned parliamentarians, are writing to express our grave concerns over the ongoing impunity for perpetrators involved in the atrocities committed against hundreds of thousands of Rohingya in Myanmar since 25 August 2017. We call on the international community to take urgent measures to bring those responsible for the crisis to account.

One year ago, the Myanmar security forces and their proxies launched a violent crackdown in response to attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) on police outposts in northern Rakhine State. The security forces' so-called "clearance operations" resulted in gross human rights violations, including widespread killings, arbitrary arrests, burnings of entire villages, and sexual violence, all of which have been extensively documented by international human rights organizations. More than 720,000 mainly Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh. There are reasonable grounds to believe that the crimes perpetrated in Rakhine State against the Rohingya constitute genocide and crimes against humanity.

The response by the Myanmar government has thus far been woefully inadequate. The government has failed to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the atrocities in a credible and impartial manner, and they continue to block almost all access to affected areas in Rakhine State for international human rights observers. In fact, some of those who try to shed light on these human rights violations now face arbitrary criminal charges. Recent reports also show that the Rohingya population that remains in Rakhine State still face the risk of violence as well as widespread discrimination, which has resulted in appalling living conditions that are unsafe as well as a serious lack of access to basic services and livelihood opportunities. The dignified and voluntary repatriation of refugees from Bangladesh will not be possible as long as these conditions endure.

In light of the above concerns, we, the undersigned parliamentarians, urge the international community to take urgent measures to hold accountable those responsible for human rights violations against the Rohingya people. We call upon members of the United Nations Security Council to immediately refer the human rights situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court.

We also support the call by United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Yanghee Lee, to establish an international accountability mechanism that aims to impartially investigate and provide necessary assistance to future criminal proceedings that are in line with international standards.

Further, we call on our own governments, fellow ASEAN member states with Myanmar, and ASEAN itself, to accelerate efforts and use its influence on Naypyidaw to press the government and military to end all forms of human rights violations against Rohingya. This must include abolishing all discriminatory policies and practices in order to address the root causes of the crisis. It is imperative that they also urge the Myanmar government to grant immediate and unconditional access into Rakhine State, particularly for humanitarian aid groups, independent observers, and local and international media.

We also commit to utilizing our positions as parliamentarians to continue to push for accountability for the crimes perpetrated against the Rohingya, and call on fellow legislators internationally to do the same.

These steps are crucial to not only bring an end to the perpetual cycle of violence and longstanding discrimination faced by Rohingya, but also to end the impunity that has been widely enjoyed by the Myanmar security forces for decades.

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