



Repatriation Plans for Rohingya are Premature and Inhumane

1st November, 2018 London, UK -- Burma Human Rights Network vehemently opposes plans by the Bangladeshi and Burmese governments to begin repatriation of the nearly 800,000 Rohingya refugees in mid-November of 2018, which would put that at risk of serious harm and deprivation of human rights. The plan was announced on October 30th in Bangladesh after the third Joint Working Group (a collection of 30 representatives from Bangladesh and Burma) meeting on the repatriation of the Rohingya. The move comes only a week after the Chair of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar said that the Genocide against the Rohingya was 'ongoing'.

“To return the Rohingya to Burma at a time where there are no mechanisms to ensure their safety, dignity, or human rights is unconscionable. These are survivors of a genocide and they are being asked to return to a place where they face the risk of future attacks, life-threatening restrictions on travel, institutional discrimination and disenfranchisement, and indefinite detention in displacement camps, all under the supervision of the same people who murdered and raped their loved ones.” said BHRN Executive Director, Kyaw Win.

Conditions for the Rohingya still living inside of Rakhine State give strong indications of what those who would be repatriated would face. Since 2012, Rohingya living in central Rakhine have remained in squalid camps with limited access to food and medicine, which they are forbidden to leave without special permission. The Rohingya living in Northern Rakhine State live under strict travel restrictions prohibiting them from leaving their villages even if they are in dire need to seek food or medicine. NGO access in the region remains restricted by the authorities, depriving those already struggling to survive. Burma cannot claim to be capable of returning nearly 800,000 Rohingya with dignity and human rights while utterly failing those Rohingya already under their care.

Bangladesh and Burma must cease plans to repatriate the Rohingya living in Bangladesh and must first develop mechanisms to ensure the safety, dignity and human rights of the Rohingya for when they do return. The international community must use all leverage they have over the two nations to insist plans for premature repatriation do not occur. The international community must also assist Burma in creating conditions which are both safe and equitable for all living in Rakhine State. This includes unimpeded access for NGOs and citizenship rights, freedom of movement, and self-identification for the Rohingya.

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