

MNHRC Law Must Be Amended for Better Protection of Human Rights

[Yangon - 3 August, 2019] Today, the 24 members of the CSO Working Group on MNHRC Reform released a briefing paper that outlined key recommendations to amend the MNHRC Law in order to reinvigorate the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC). Given the lack of trust among the public, and its poor track record since the law was promulgated in 2014, various issues outlined in the briefing paper highlight areas where the MNHRC could be better equipped to protect victims of human rights violations as it is mandated to do.

The briefing paper makes recommendations in terms of the selection process, the ability to visit prisons without prior notification, its operational independence and powers, the pluralism of its staff, engagement with civil society, dismissal procedures, funding, and accountability to Parliament.

Speaking at the press conference in Yangon, Aung Khaing Min, Executive Director of Progressive Voice stated that, “given the depth and breadth of human rights issues in Myanmar today, the MNHRC has not been able to adequately investigate serious cases of human rights violations, especially those committed by the Myanmar military, and has done little to protect human rights defenders and human rights activists.”

Thinzar Shunlei Yi, Advocacy Coordinator of Action Committee for Democracy Development agreed, stating that “If the MNHRC Law were amended, especially in regards to the selection process, the MNHRC would be empowered by commissioner with the willingness to tackle the power and impunity of the Myanmar military and its abuses.”

The current terms of several prominent MNHRC Commissioners ends at the end of September 2019, and it is now incumbent on the President to convene the Selection Board to either renew their terms or nominate new members. The recent debate in Parliament of the 2018 MNHRC report demonstrated that there is political will from some Members of Parliament to make the necessary amendments. Therefore, the CSO Working Group on MNHRC Reform calls on the Union Parliament to address the issues outlined in the briefing paper and make necessary amendments to enable the MNHRC to be more independent, effective and active in the promotion and protection of human rights.

For more information and media inquiries, please contact:

- Aung Khaing Min, Executive Director, Progressive Voice
+95 (0) 9261009995, akm@progressive-voice.org
- Thinzar Shunlei Yi, Advocacy Coordinator, Action Committee for Democracy Development
+95 (0) 9795574775, thinzarshunleiyi@gmail.com
- Aung Zaw Oo, Communications and Advocacy Director, Association of Human Rights Defenders and Promoters
+95 (0) 9421039493, 2012hrdpnetworks@gmail.com
- Thet Thet Aung, Director, Future Light Center
+95 (0) 9794932344,
- Aung Myo Kyaw, Executive Committee Member, Assistance Association for Political Prisoners
+95 (0) 9428117348, tawwin09@gmail.com
- Maung Saungkha, Executive Director, Athan
+95 (0) 9773937273, saungkhasithu@gmail.com