

Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO)



20 June 2021

Statement of ARNO on the NUG policy Position on Rohingya in Rakhine State

On 3 June 2021 the National Unity Government (NUG) of Myanmar issued its “Policy Position on the Rohingya in the Rakhine State.” In response, the Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO) with the Rohingya people cautiously welcomed this development. The announcement was a step in the right direction towards a credible solution for the Rohingya community of Myanmar. This process would need to be inclusive from the onset. In this regard, we encourage further direct engagement between the NUG and Rohingya representatives, and as such ARNO and our partners stand ready to play our part in what needs to be an inclusive process of engagement with Rohingya representatives.

Against this background, we wished to emphasise the following in response to the policy position:

1. We welcome the NUG’s clear acknowledgment of the violence and gross human rights violations inflicted upon Rohingyas, including the massive displacement inflicted on our people, with hundreds of thousands fleeing their homes in Rakhine State in the last decade. The brutality and crimes of the Tatmadaw against all civilians now in Burma is a sad reality the Rohingya people have experienced for many years. The NUG’s expression of sorrow and sympathy to the plight of the Rohingya helps to bring about genuine reconciliation.
2. In parallel we welcome the NUG’s commitments to actively seek justice and accountability for all crimes committed by the military against the Rohingya and all other people of Myanmar. Such accountability process needs to be comprehensive and look beyond just the period of since 1 February. In this regard, we are encouraged by the NUG’s commitments towards reparation and justice in the future Federal Democratic Union Constitution.
3. The cornerstone of the legitimate rights and demands of the Rohingya centre on our recognition as citizens of Myanmar. The NUG’s position towards repealing the 1982 Citizenship Law is critical in this regard, including the abolishment of National Verification Cards, and replacing it with a just and inclusive legislative process that recognises the legitimate rights of the Rohingya as citizens of Myanmar.

4. Finally, we fully endorse the NUG's position on the voluntary, safe, and dignified repatriation of Rohingya people who fled to neighbouring countries from Rakhine State due to the military's brutality. It is critical for there to be a credible policy and plan in place by the NUG in addressing the refugee needs of the Rohingya and of all Burmese people who have been forced into refuge at the hands of the Tatmadaw.

Underpinning the above is the need for genuine engagement and inclusion of Rohingya representatives. Such approach would ensure a just and durable solution for a future democratic Myanmar that we all seek. In particular we seek through this inclusion to urge the NUG to:

- (i) Intensify the focus and preparations for a comprehensive accountability process. This requires the NUG to initiate a process that grants the International Criminal Court jurisdiction over crimes committed within Myanmar against the Rohingyas and other communities. To support credible accountability efforts, it is important that NUG acknowledges all past crimes against Rohingyas to ensure victims see justice served and the cycle of violence is not repeated.
- (ii) Accept the findings and recommendations of the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar (IIFMM). This includes an unequivocal acknowledgment that genocide and crimes against humanity have been committed against the Rohingya, as stated by the UN Fact-Finding Mission.
- (iii) Commit to a comprehensive and durable solution to safeguarding the universal rights of the Rohingya as indigenous to Arakan/Rakhine State and therefore to Myanmar. Indeed, the Rohingya are entitled to rights and privileges on a par with other ethnicities of Myanmar. Our inherent rights and ethnic identity should be safeguarded in a future Myanmar, including through the Federal Charter, new constitutional process and vision set out by the NUG.

We recognise addressing these issues are complex and securing the fair and just solution would not occur overnight. We stand ready to work with our NUG partners along this process, and remain committed to joining hands with NUG and others in the Spring Revolution against the military dictatorship in all possible ways, and bring about a free, fair and democratic future Myanmar.

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