

Myanmar CSOs Call for the Full Restoration of Rohingya's Rights and an End to Impunity of the Myanmar military

[25 August, 2021] 45 Myanmar civil society organizations (CSOs) have publicly pledged to seek justice for the Rohingya and to heal the wounds of long-running ethnic and religious persecution in Myanmar. The statement is being issued in remembrance of the Rohingya genocide and crimes against humanity that took place four years ago on 25 August, 2017.

“We stand in solidarity with the Rohingya and their immense struggles against oppression and discrimination, and call to fully restore their rights in Myanmar, for justice and accountability, and to end the impunity of the Myanmar military,” the groups said.

“Four years on, justice for the Rohingya remains shamefully elusive. Not a single individual who committed the heinous crimes against the Rohingya have been held to account,” said Khin Ohmar of Progressive Voice. “The same criminals who committed genocide are now carrying out a nationwide campaign of terror with total impunity. They must be stopped. We must face the grave injustices against the Rohingya head on and work to build an inclusive Myanmar that draws its strength from its diversity and solidarity for humanity rather than holding on to the status quo.”

This wave of genocidal violence in 2017 forcibly displaced over 800,000 Rohingya in Bangladesh that now host over 1.1 million refugees. The recent attempted coup has cast a dark shadow in their prospects for return. Conditions in Bangladesh continue to deteriorate as Rohingya refugees live in crowded, underfunded camps facing fires, flooding, the COVID-19 pandemic and relocation to the unsafe and unsuitable island of Bhashan Char.

“The last few months of the spring revolution have shown that women are at the forefront of ending patriarchy and the struggle for human rights and federal democracy,” said Naw Hser Hser of Women’s League of Burma. “It is vital that women of all parts of society, including Rohingya, are part of building a vibrant federal democratic union that celebrates its diversity and is free from misogynistic military rule. For this, Rohingya women must be represented in political processes.”

The joint statement calls on the NUG and the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) to use their power to repeal racist and xenophobic laws such as the 1982 Citizenship Law and the four “Race and Religion Protection Laws”. The four race and religion laws have also perpetuated gendered discrimination and violence, while subscribing to the misogynistic and patriarchal system fostered by decades of military rule.

“For decades, the most severe human rights violations and atrocity crimes committed by the Myanmar military have been documented by local and international human rights organizations,” said Ko Han Gyi of ND-Burma. “The genocide committed against the Rohingya four years ago is consistent with the systemic and brutal violence that is a hallmark of the Myanmar military. The international community must pursue all avenues possible to ensure justice and accountability for the countless victims and survivors of grave crimes and end their impunity.”

At the root of February’s attempted coup is the military’s total impunity. “The passivity, and in some cases total inaction by the international community, in particular ASEAN, to pursue justice and accountability has further emboldened the military in their continued use of atrocity crimes that they commit today. The military and the impunity they enjoy must be stopped,” said the groups.

The statement calls on the international community to immediately pursue justice and accountability for the grave crimes committed against the Rohingya, including by supporting the case against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice, the case before the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the court in Argentina that was filed on the basis of universal jurisdiction. It also urges the international community to pursue other avenues of accountability, including the possibility of establishing an ad-hoc tribunal or a UN Security Council referral of the situation in Myanmar to the ICC. In addition, it also urged the NUG to immediately ratify the Rome Statute of the ICC to ensure accountability for the crime of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Note to Editors:

- See the statement by 45 civil society organizations on full restoration of Rohingya's rights and ending impunity of the Myanmar military [here](#).

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****Update - Number updated for 45 Myanmar civil society organizations*