



26th March 2023

DEAR CHIEF EDITOR,

STOP THE HATE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE ETHNIC ROHINGYA IN MALAYSIA. THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ESPECIALLY TIK TOK AND FACEBOOK MUST BE MADE ACCOUNTABLE.

Myanmar Ethnic Rohingya Human Rights Organization in Malaysia (MERHROM) is deeply concerned on the ongoing xenophobia and hate campaign against the Rohingya refugees in Malaysia following the false accusations against me, Zafar Ahmad Abdul Ghani, President of MERHROM on 21st April 2020.

Though the hate campaign slowed down 2 years later, it started again in January 2023 resulting in the harassment, threats and hate crime against the Rohingya refugees. MERHROM have received reports of hate crime from the Rohingya refugees here including hit and run and physical attacks. Many Rohingya refugees contacted MERHROM as they are living in fear due to harassment from locals. This prevents them from going to work resulting in them facing difficulties to feed their families.

In the holy month of Ramadan, we call each and everyone to stop the hate campaign and respect each other. We understand there are some issues that need to be addressed in regards to the Rohingya refugees here but this is not the best way to resolve it as it led to more abuses and harassment towards the Rohingya.

The false accusations against me in 2020, that I demanded Malaysian citizenship and equal rights for the Rohingya in Malaysia was spread again massively in the social media platforms especially on Tik Tok and Facebook. This has provoked people and increased the anger of Malaysians. This is fake news and most people are still believing this resulting in the Rohingya refugees facing continuous harassment and hatred crime.

The impact of the hate campaign is very dangerous especially to the affected community. We must play our part to prevent the hate campaign. Refugees are not threats, we are victims of war, genocide and conflict who fled our countries to seek refuge and protection. We do not come here to steal locals' jobs or to take over the county. We are here to seek protection temporarily until UNHCR finds a durable solution for us.

The false narrative against the Rohingya refugees must be corrected. If not, it will be cancerous in society which will not be beneficial to anyone. It will destroy the country's reputation as Malaysia is known as a multi-ethnic society that lives with high tolerance.

The authorities, civil society organizations, media, social media platforms and the public must do their part to combat xenophobia and hate speech. The xenophobia against the Rohingya refugees

only strengthens Islamophobia. Slanders, fake news, hatred and insults are not allowed by Islam and all religions in the world. Therefore, we must fight xenophobia as much as we fight Islamophobia.

We understand that there are a number of issues that have resulted in the dissatisfaction of Malaysians related to the Rohingya refugees. We hope the Malaysian government, UNHCR, SUHAKAM, civil society organizations and the Rohingya representatives will sit together to address these issues collectively without delay for the benefit of all parties.

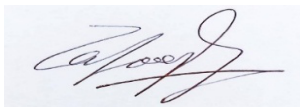
The Rohingya were made stateless by the Myanmar government for long decades. We were denied basic rights to live including education. Therefore, the comprehensive policy is crucial to manage refugees and asylum seekers in the country including to educate them on the country's laws and culture. This will reduce the tension between local and refugee communities.

Rohingya refugees who have been sent to a third country by the UNHCR are able to adapt and comply with the country's laws as a result of the comprehensive law and policy on refugees of that particular country. They are able to access education and become successful citizens. They became good citizens and productive workers of that country.

Xenophobia, Islamophobia and hate speech only put people's lives at risk. Immediate measures and long-term strategies must be drafted to stop abuses and human rights violations. As the most persecuted ethnic group in the world, we call upon United Nations including USA, CANADA, EU, ASEAN, OIC, Australia, New Zealand, human rights agencies, civil society organizations, media and the international community to take necessary and practical actions against the military junta to stop genocide and atrocities in Myanmar. The people of Myanmar are suffering from time to time. They will be forced to leave the country continuously if we fail to stop the genocide and atrocity in Myanmar.

Finally, we call upon the resettlement countries to increase quota for the resettlement for the Rohingya as many of us are still waiting for the resettlement for the past 2 decades.

Yours sincerely,



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President

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