

Joint Statement by Rohingya CSOs for Immediate and unhindered access to lifesaving aid after Devastating Cyclone (Mocha) in Arakan (Rakhine) State

May 19th, 2023

Arakan (Rakhine) state has been in an emergency since last Sunday as the devastating winds and heavy rain caused by the Category-5 Cyclone Mocha killed scores and caused extensive damage.

The cyclone destroyed infrastructures such as roads, bridges, telecommunication towers, and religious buildings and swept away many houses. According to the latest information from the communities, hundreds of people have died, and many are still missing.

No one was spared from this deadly cyclone. However, specific vulnerabilities of Rohingya exacerbated the impacts on our communities. For example, around 1/3 of us remaining in Rakhine have been internally displaced over the past 10 years and are living in camps with makeshift shelters. Most of the Rohingya IDP camps are along the coast on the direct path of the Cyclone and were hit by tidal waves, which swept away shelters and people. Due to the movement restrictions, there were little evacuation options for us. In the aftermath of the cyclone, when we are in dire need of emergency assistance, humanitarian actors and supports cannot get through to the Rohingya IDP camps as access has been blocked.

Rohingya living in Rakhine State are genocide survivors who have been attacked and discriminated against by the Burmese military for decades. The living conditions for Rohingya were inhumane and insecure long before the cyclone all displaced Rohingya and other internally displaced people must be allowed to back to their place of origin with their own will, safety, and dignity as an initial step of the durable solution.

Arakan (Rakhine) state direly needs immediate emergency aid and longer-term recovery. Local and international actors, governmental and private donors, regional

countries, and the international community all need to work together to assist the millions of people in desperate situations in the aftermath of the most powerful cyclone of decades.

Cyclone is a natural disaster that affects people regardless of religion and race. However, our sufferings are exacerbated by man-made discrimination, such as restrictions of movement, exclusion from organized evacuation, and restriction of humanitarian access. We urge our Rohingya brothers and sisters from local and diasporas to send emergency aid as soon as possible. We urge all parties to provide full access and to allow relief items and humanitarian staff into affected areas, in line with humanitarian principles and with full respect for their human rights and International Humanitarian Law obligations. We would extend our gratitude and appreciation to all organizations and individuals providing emergency response during the natural disaster in Arakan (Rakhine).

Signatories

Organizations

1. Arakan Institute for Peace and Human Rights (AiPAH)
2. Arkan Rohingya Society for Human Rights and Peace – ARSPH
3. Arakan Rohingya Union - ARU
4. Arkan Rohingya Development Association Australia
5. Burmese Rohingya Organization UK -BROUK
6. Burmese Rohingya Community in Japan – RCJ
7. Burmese Rohingya Welfare Organization New Zealand Trust
8. European Rohingya Council - ERC
9. Free Rohingya Coalition - FRC
10. Global Rohingya Women Network
11. Los Angeles Rohingya Association

12. Right for Rohingya Children - RRC
13. Rohingya Center of Canada
14. Rohingya Women Association for Education and Development
15. Rohingya Women for Justices and Peace
16. Rohingya Union for Women Education and Development
17. Rohingya Student Network - RSN
18. Rohingya Youth Association - RYA
19. Rohingya Refugee Committee - RRC India
20. Rohingya Human Rights Initiative - R4R
21. Rohingya Society for Greater Houston
22. Rohingya Progressive Network
23. Rohingya Medics Organization - RMO
24. Rohingya National League
25. Rohingya Youth Federation - RYF
26. Rohingya Education Development Plan - REDP
27. Rohingya Student Unity Rights - RSUR
28. Rohingya Women Empowerment and Advocacy Network – RWEAN
29. United Rohingya Women Welfare Association - URWWA
30. Youth for Rohingya Legal Action - RYLA
31. Youth for Rohingya Development

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