

Statement on Rohingya Genocide Remembrance Day | August 25, 2024

This Rohingya Genocide Remembrance Day, we, the Rohingya Women Organizing Committee, commemorate the 2017 genocidal attacks against our community in Arakan, and urge the international community to immediately act to ensure protection, humanitarian access, and justice to all civilians in Myanmar.

Seven years ago, the Burmese military [committed](#) genocidal attacks in Arakan, raiding and looting our villages; torching and burning down over 300 villages; abducting, arbitrarily arresting and detaining civilians; torturing, raping, and gang raping them; and killing over 10,000 men, women, children, and babies. The military's "clearance operations" forcibly displaced more than 742,000 of us from our ancestral homeland.

The 2017 attacks was the continuation of the Burmese military's decades-long genocide against Rohingya. It was enabled by the impunity that the military had long exercised to target our fellow ethnic and religious minorities with war crimes and crimes against humanity – including rape as a weapon of war.

Yet, the Burmese military was not held accountable immediately. That lack of speedy justice for Rohingya clearly emboldened the military to launch an attempted coup on February 1, 2021 and since launch a brutal campaign of war crimes and crimes against humanity against our fellow people of Myanmar. The military is now even emboldened to forcibly recruit the country's youth - including Rohingya - in another evil attempt to cover up its recent losses to our Spring Revolution.

In Arakan, Myanmar's decades-long impunity is now enabling another wave of genocide against our people. The 600,000 Rohingya remaining in the country are being [targeted](#) by the Burmese military and the Arakan Army with further atrocities, on top of being caught in the crossfire of an exacerbating armed conflict for nearly a year. Most recently, the AA launched a mass arson attack on downtown Maungdaw following its August 5 drone and artillery attack killing at least 200 civilians, including women and children; and its May 17 arson attack on downtown Buthidaung. The hundreds of thousands of displaced Rohingya have no access to food, water, shelter, emergency medical care, and other life-saving resources. Women and girls are living in fear of losing their fathers, husbands, and brothers to be abducted, forcibly recruited, or murdered by the Burmese military and the AA. We're hearing from our families, relatives, and loved ones on the ground, in northern Arakan, that the "situation is worse than 2016 and 2017."

Simultaneously, like the years and months preceding the 2017 genocidal attacks, we're seeing a surge in hate speech and genocidal rhetoric against our community proliferating online. Some people are still calling us "Muslim" and "Bengali" - terms to deny our indigenous Rohingya identity. Some are even accusing us of "exaggerating" and spreading "fake news." And devastatingly, some are saying that our principled voices of truth and justice are obstacles to the pro-democracy movement when what we all want remains the same: a Myanmar free of all forms of discrimination, racism, sexism, oppression, persecution, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

As refugees, over one million of our people also are hoping to return home where our rights and dignity as an ethnic minority indigenous to Myanmar should be enshrined. Many continue to

overcome precarious conditions just to survive: no reliable access to safety and protection, shelter, basic needs and livelihoods, even employment and education. These conditions are forcing many Rohingya – mostly women and children – to have no choice but to be trafficked into dangerous land and sea journeys, where they risk forced labor, domestic servitude, forced marriage, child marriage, sexual exploitation, arrest and detention, torture, rape and gang rape, and even death.

Therefore, this Rohingya Genocide Remembrance Day, we urge the international community to immediately act for our community's survival.

We need safety and protection. The United Nations Security Council must take immediate action to protect Rohingya remaining in Arakan, especially by upholding its Responsibility to Protect and Women, Peace, and Security agendas to issue a new, binding resolution on Myanmar.

We need full access to humanitarian aid. Cross-border aid must be immediately enabled to save the lives of Rohingya currently remaining in Arakan. Sustainable and dignified access to aid, especially safety and protection, must also be ensured to Rohingya refugees in countries including Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. Material and financial support must also be directly issued to our civil society, including women's groups.

We need justice. More countries and governments must intervene in *The Gambia v. Myanmar* at the International Court of Justice to help hold the Burmese military accountable for its decades-long genocide against us. For further steps to end Myanmar's decades-long impunity, the AA and all other perpetrators of ongoing atrocities in Myanmar should be held accountable under international law.

Lastly, governments and leaders must continue to meaningfully engage with our people when making decisions that may affect us. We remain resolved in achieving our safe, sustainable, voluntary, and dignified return to our home, Arakan, in Myanmar.

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