

STOP PLANS TO DEMOLISH MOSQUES, MADRASAS AND ROHINGYA'S HOUSES

We, the undersigned organizations, strongly condemned the Arakan (Rakhine) State government's plans to demolish more than 3000 Rohingyas' buildings, including 12 mosques and 35 madrasas, in the townships of Maungdaw and Buthidaung, under the pretext of illegal construction.

The announcement of the demolition order on 18 September by Arakan State's Security and Border Affairs Minister Col. Htein Lin at Maungdaw, which was reaffirmed by Maungdaw District General Administrator U Ye Htut, has caused consternation to the entire Rohingya community. This demolition project is part of their long-drawn-out annihilation and ethnic cleansing policy of the defenceless Rohingya people.

It is a joint conspiracy of the Arakan State government and Rakhine Buddhist extremist leaders to destabilize the situation in the territory with intentions to frustrate any attempts to bring about peace and stability in Arakan and produce more internally displaced Rohingyas to be housed in apartheid-like concentration camps also in Maungdaw district.

It is surprising that this sinister design was announced at a time when the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, in her first address to the 71st U.N. General Assembly, was defending her government's effort to resolve the crisis over treatment of the Rohingya or Muslim minority by pointing out to the establishment of an advisory commission for Arakan State chaired by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan at the same time assuring that everybody in Arakan would be safe and secure.

Since Ne Win's military rule in 1962, the basic rights and freedoms of the Rohingya have been severely restricted subjecting them to systematic ethnic, religious and political persecution that amount to crimes against humanity and slow genocide resulting in their deaths, massive destruction of their settlements and holy places of worship causing unprecedented refugee influxes into Bangladesh and other places as witnessed in 1988 and 1991-92.

Since the establishment of NaSaKa border task force in 1992 in north Arakan no building can be built or extended without permission from the authorities. Even to repair and fence the housing, permission is necessary. Building mosques and madrasa has been long stopped whereas intermittent but planned destructions of Islamic edifices and holy places of worship have been regular phenomenon all over Arakan. The famous Sandhi Khan Mosque of historical importance built by Muslim army at Mintayabyin, Mrauk-U in 1433 A.D was also destroyed by Gen. Khin Nyunt in 1992.

The deadly violence and genocidal onslaughts occurred and reoccurred from June 2012 in Arakan against the Rohingya minority have claimed many hundreds of Muslim lives, left over 160,000 of them homeless, forced thousands of them to take dangerous voyages by rickety boats towards Southeast Asian countries where a number of them were drowned or ended up in human- traffickers' mass graves.

In spite of all these happenings the Arakan State government has no conscience about its lying and cruelty against Rohingya on grounds of their ethnicity and religion. The alleged existence of any illegal buildings is unfounded and politically motivated since their construction could not have been possible without approval of the concerned authorities.

It is important that international community have to take effective collective action in time to protect the Muslim Rohingya people in Arakan, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Or otherwise this unprotected minority community will be wiped out.

We, therefore, request the international community, United Nations, OIC, EU, ASEAN, US and UK to put pressure on NLD-led government:

- (1) To stop forthwith the plans to demolish mosques, madrasas and Rohingyas' buildings or structures in Arakan under the pretext of illegal construction.
- (2) To ensure freedom of religion and worship, protection of religious sites, and to immediately restore all basic freedoms, including freedom of movement, marriage, education, healthcare and peaceful-living, and to lift all aid restrictions in Rakhine/Arakan State.
- (3) To end all persecution and ghettoization and to immediately rehabilitate and reintegrate all IDPs in their original places and properties.

Meanwhile, we urge upon the international community to support a UN Commission of Inquiry into the atrocity crimes against Rohingya and other Burmese people in order to publicly announce its findings and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Signatories;

1. Arakan Rohingya National Organisation
2. Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK
3. Bradford Rohingya Community in UK
4. Burmese Rohingya Community in Denmark
5. Rohingya Community in Germany
6. Rohingya Community in Switzerland
7. Rohingya Organisation Norway
8. Rohingya Community in Finland
9. Rohingya Community in Italy
10. Rohingya Community in Sweden
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