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Press release

“We are targeted for being Rohingya in Myanmar and everywhere” — new report calls for urgent international and regional action for the Rohingya community

Monday 27 March 2023, by [Women’s Peace Network](#) (Date first published: 22 March 2023).

The Rohingya community is facing a deteriorating situation in Myanmar and across South and Southeast Asia, according to a new report by Women’s Peace Network (WPN): “We are targeted for being Rohingya in Myanmar and everywhere.”



The report’s launch marked the one-year anniversary of the United States government’s official recognition of the Rohingya genocide. It also followed the recent issuance of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar’s report to the Human Rights Council, to which WPN contributed a submission on the situation of Rohingya refugees and internally displaced persons.

WPN dedicated approximately 11 months to this 42-page report through its research, as well as consultations with Rohingya members of its network. The members participated in a six-month-long series of discussions that were conducted by the organization’s research team in the Burmese and Rohingya languages.

“The past years, particularly since the attempted coup, have been tragic for Rohingya. The report reveals this sense of despair that has long tormented my community. We are risking everything to survive in our homeland, Arakan, and in the refugee camps, slums, detention centers, lands and seas beyond Burma. Over five years since the 2017 genocidal attacks, the world’s actions – not words – following the report’s recommendations, are urgently needed to end this exacerbating, unbearable tragedy,” said Wai Wai Nu, WPN’s Founder and Executive Director.

In Myanmar, the situation of the over 600,000 Rohingya remaining in the country has rapidly exacerbated following the Burmese military’s attempted coup on February 1, 2021. The military, which is intensifying a human rights and humanitarian catastrophe across the country, is now

targeting Rohingya with laws and policies that criminalize the exercise of fundamental freedoms, as well as arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, sexual violence, and murder. In over two years, the Myanmar junta has arbitrarily arrested and detained at least 2754 Rohingya, including over 863 women. A growing risk of attacks of genocide by the Burmese military is endangering the community across the country, many of whom are victims and survivors of the 2017 “clearance operations” in Rakhine State.

“Issuing national verification cards and naturalized citizenship means that the genocide is ongoing. Their main purpose from the beginning was to create us as second or third-class citizens and continue to persecute us so that we no longer exist in Arakan,” shared a member of one of WPN’s focus groups in Rakhine State.

Forced to flee the decades-long genocide in Myanmar, the approximately one million Rohingya refugees in other South and Southeast Asian countries too face extremely dire conditions. Tightening access to basic needs, essential services, safety, and protection is leaving the refugees more vulnerable to human trafficking, arrest and detention, forced repatriation to Myanmar, and many other grave, life-threatening abuses. The report draws particular attention to Rohingya’s deteriorating situation in Bangladesh, Malaysia, and India, where the majority of them seek refuge.

From the squalid camps to deadly sea crossings, the above conditions continue to pose uniquely devastating effects to Rohingya women and girls. They include a growing risk of rape, gang rape, sexual exploitation, sexual slavery, domestic violence, and many other forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

The report issues recommendations to the governments of Bangladesh, Malaysia, India, as well as the international community and the Burmese civilian government and leadership, in addressing its findings. In this regard, WPN calls for immediate international and regional actions to help bring the Rohingya community safety and protection, justice and accountability, reparations, and recovery and rehabilitation as a people.

March 22, 2023

Women’s Peace Network

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the Burmese military’s attempted coup on February 1, 2021, the Rohingya community has been subjected to increasingly life-threatening circumstances in Myanmar and other countries in the South and Southeast Asia. A pattern of escalating grave rights violations emerges from such circumstances. In Myanmar, in addition to committing serious international crimes and other violations of international law across the country, the military is targeting the over 600,000 Rohingya who are remaining in the country with laws and policies that criminalize the exercise of fundamental freedoms, as well as arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, sexual violence, and even murder. Such brutal, systematic acts add to the decades-long genocide to which the predominantly Muslim Rohingya have been subjected, and risk the surviving population with further attacks of genocide in Rakhine State. Rohingya who have had no choice but to escape this persecution have since joined the near-one million refugees from their community in Bangladesh, Malaysia, India, as well as other South and Southeast Asian countries, where their access to basic needs and livelihoods continue to deteriorate despite the sustained efforts of the international and regional community. Throughout their desperate attempts to find any semblance of safety or hope, Rohingya face human trafficking, deportation, and various grave rights abuses – all of which pose a gendered effect to

these victims and survivors of genocide. Such conditions are dire, thus requiring immediate attention and effective actions for Rohingya's safety and protection, justice and accountability, and recovery and rehabilitation as a people: a path out of the genocide.

Key recommendations

1. BANGLADESH, MALAYSIA, INDIA and other host countries of Rohingya refugees must ensure them reliable access to basic needs and services, as well as safety and protection, over arrest, detention, and forced repatriation to Myanmar.
2. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY must pursue concrete and comprehensive measures to hold the Burmese military accountable for its international crimes. It must also consult with Rohingya in all decisions and mechanisms that may affect their lives and future.
3. THE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN MYANMAR must recognize the genocide, guarantee Rohingya equal rights and citizenship, meaningfully engage with them in its administration and governance, and provide them with avenues for justice, rehabilitation and reparations in Myanmar.

For more information, please contact info@womenspeacenet.org

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