

Rohingya Denounces ARSA

Date: December 7, 2021

We, the undersigned Rohingya organizations, denounce the so-called "Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army – ARSA" (or Harakah Al Yakeen), a criminal group that self-proclaims to be fighting for the rights of the Rohingya people. The Rohingya community does not accept ARSA as a group that represents the ideals and interests of the Rohingya community in or outside of Burma. Thus, the group must not claim it represents the interests of the Rohingya nation.

We, Rohingya, are a peace-loving community and condemn any criminal groups that promote violence on the civilian population in the name of our ethnic identity. ARSA is a criminal group targeting vulnerable Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and committing heinous cross-border crimes including but not limited to: murder, extortion, forcible abductions, tortures, sexual violence and drug trafficking etc. These criminal activities have escalated dramatically in the recent months. They have also been found to be misleading communities with propaganda aiming to further destabilize the Rohingya community and the region along the Myanmar-Bangladesh border.

As survivors of the ongoing genocide perpetrated by the Burmese military (the Tatmadaw) and the extremist section of Rakhine Buddhist community, the majority of our community members were forced to flee from our homeland in Myanmar and took refuge in neighbouring countries including Bangladesh. We are sincerely grateful to the people and the Government of Bangladesh for assisting the Rohingya by providing refuge for one million of our people as they have done in the past. Although we found refuge from one form of violence in Arakan, the Rohingya now face violence in the hands of criminal groups like ARSA and others.

On 29 September 2021, a prominent Rohingya leader "Mohib Ullah" was brutally assassinated by ARSA followed by seven more Rohingya refugees in mid-October. ARSA is targeting Rohingya community leadership or anyone whom they feel could expose their criminal activities. As a result, the entire community in the refugee camps of Bangladesh live in immediate fear, ongoing trauma, and further insecurities.

While we greatly appreciate the steps already being taken by the Government of Bangladesh to ensure safety and security in the camps, we urge Bangladesh to maintain the pressure on the criminal groups, including ARSA, until their criminal operations in the camps completely cease and they are neutralized. The camps in

Bangladesh where civilians are taking refuge must be free of any armed activities by any group other than the Government of Bangladesh or under its direct authority and full control.

We make our earnest appeal to the Government of Bangladesh to take serious action against ARSA, which is deliberately destabilizing the situation and continues to be a security threat for our people, for Bangladesh, and for the wider region. Further, we urge the Government of Bangladesh to protect innocent refugees by providing security in the refugee camps, understanding that the vast majority of people in the camps want nothing more than peace and security, and to return home in a safe, dignified, and voluntary manner with our human rights restored and our traditional homeland returned.

We make our earnest appeal to the Government of Bangladesh to investigate the killings of Rohingya refugees including Mr Mohib Ullah. The individuals, and their organisation, responsible for the crimes must face justice and accountability. The Government of Bangladesh must set an example that impunity in these situations will not be allowed or tolerated.

We call upon media organizations, the international community, activists and human rights bodies not to label ARSA as a member of the Rohingya community nor to characterize ARSA as representative, in any way, of the Rohingya people.

We also call upon all international organizations and foreign governments that are working in the camps to have a zero-tolerance policy towards ARSA and any other criminal gangs and criminal activities which are taking place.

We make our earnest appeal to the Government of Bangladesh and to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to work together to respond promptly when refugees report imminent threats, to provide immediate and effective protection to those in danger, and to ensure effective protection for those who report incidents.

We call on the international community — including Australia, Canada, the USA, the UK, Japan, the UN, the EU, the ASEAN and the OIC — to improve the system of providing protection and resettlement to refugees at heightened risk.

As the situation in Myanmar continues to worsen as a result of the 1 February 2021 coup d'état, we express our deepest gratitude to the many ethnic communities in Myanmar who have joined us in supporting our request for peace in the camps and in Arakan. Despite the violence, the COVID-19 pandemic, and forced starvation that

all our brothers and sisters are facing throughout Myanmar because of the military junta, we are grateful for your support and we remain committed to freedom, peace, and prosperity for all with respect for human rights and dignity for everyone.

Signatories:

- Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO)
- Australian Burmese Rohingya Organisation
- British Rohingya Community in UK
- Burmese Rohingya Association Japan (BRAJ)
- Burmese Rohingya Community in Denmark
- Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK)
- Canadian Burmese Rohingya Organisation
- Canadian Rohingya Development Initiative
- European Rohingya Council (ERC)
- Free Rohingya Coalition (FRC)
- Los Angeles Rohingya Association
- Myanmar Ethnic Rohingya Human Rights Organisation in Malaysia
- Rohingya Action Ireland
- Rohingya American Society
- Rohingya Community in Norway
- Rohingya Culture Centre Chicago
- Rohingya Human Rights Initiative
- Rohingya Human Rights Network (Canada)
- Rohingya Refugee Network
- Rohingya Organisation Norway
- Rohingya Women Development Network (RWDN)
- Swedish Rohingya Association

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