



Date: February 25, 2020

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Free Rohingya Coalition Call for an independent review of BBC World Service
Burmese Language Programme**

*The World Service must not be permitted to amplify, legitimize and put more fuel
on the popular flame of anti-Rohingya racism*

London and Frankfurt: The role of the Burmese language media and social media in condoning and disseminating racial hatred against the Rohingya in Myanmar is increasingly under the international spot light, particularly in light of the cases relating to mass atrocities at the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court in The Hague (<https://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/178/178-20200123-PRE-01-00-EN.pdf>). Journalists who have reported honestly about the crimes perpetrated by the military have been imprisoned or intimidated. The independent Burmese language media is subject to the pressure and influence of the government and the military (<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-myanmar-journalists-trial-specialrepo/special-report-how-myanmar-punished-two-reporters-for-uncovering-an-atrocity-idUKKCN1LJ165>). At this time, it is vital that the free press that reaches the Burmese-speaking public inside and outside the country maintain their impartiality and integrity.

The BBC Burmese service has over decades, including during the period of military rule, been a vital part of the free press, enabling the Burmese-speaking public to access information outside the influence of state censorship and propaganda. In 2013, BBC Burmese, which had operated from outside the country during military rule, opened a bureau inside the country, leaving the organisation open to the same pressure and influence from the Myanmar government as other media outlets. There are multiple and ongoing allegations from both the Burmese diaspora in the UK and those inside the country of racism (and sexism and homophobia) within the service. The allegations relate not simply to the programme outputs, but to patterns of recruitment, promotion and the contracting of anti-Rohingya journalists and staff, and/or staff that have close links with the military (for example, see attached). These Burmese journalists and staff have been able to operate with impunity from the corporation's internal complaints system, while their more liberal-minded colleagues are side-lined.

The BBC and Ofcom complaints procedures are set up to deal with programme output, and not to deal with situations relating to potentially endemic issues of racism in a country where there are immediate risks of genocide (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/09/1046442>). The internal complaints procedures have, thus far, proved themselves to be inadequate in addressing these concerns and restoring confidence in the professional integrity of the corporation.

It is vital that in order to restore the trust of both the Burmese and British public in the BBC brand, that an independent review of the BBC Burmese service is launched, and that safeguards are put in place to ensure that potential whistle blowers working within the Burmese service are adequately protected and thus able to bring their concerns to light.

Rohingya are a protected group under international law, specifically under the Genocide Convention (See ICJ file linked above). Claims in Myanmar that they are “Bengali”, “migrants” or “foreigners” are understood, almost universally, in an international context to be both false and racist. In 2013, on BBC Radio 4’s “Beyond Belief”, then a BBC Burmese staff member, Mr Soe Win Than, made the following comments in English regarding the Rohingya and the regions in which they have been enclosed and subjected to the policies of apartheid (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa16/7484/2017/en/>):

Rohingya is the term that the ethnic group of people call themselves which is not accepted inside Burma. So, there are the foreigners coming to our land, taking away our land. So, there’s a conflict there.

And then, almost the contiguous townships of Rakhine, Burma, originally there were more Rakhine people - ethnic people - but now 95% of the people is Rohingyas/Bengalis there. So, the Rakhine people have the well-founded fear they will be swamped.

Complaints to the BBC against Soe Win Than, who previously served in the Burmese Ministry of Information under Burma's military government, were upheld by the BBC Trust, including that he provided an “inaccurate” depiction of the population and failed to indicate that these racist views were not his own. Nonetheless, he has since been promoted to be the head of the BBC Burmese service. Since that time at least ten thousand Rohingya have been killed and three quarters of a million have fled the military-led campaigns of terror to Bangladesh.

Worryingly, the three days of preliminary hearing at the International Court of Justice in the Hague on genocide were covered by Soe Win Than and one other journalist – Mr Kyaw Zay Ya. In 2012, following the wide-spread violence in Rakhine state which predominantly targeted Rohingya and other Muslim communities, Kyaw Zay Ya (then not a BBC employee) was one of four Burmese in the UK who organised anti-Rohingya protests, including one outside the BBC in London. The event was promoted on facebook under the headline:

*“Stop Lying BBC, Rohingyas are Bengali Terrorists...they are invading our country, Burma”
(see screenshots 1-4)*

Despite BBC Burmese service's prior knowledge of his racist campaigns against the persecuted Rohingyas, Kyaw Zay Ya has since been recruited by the BBC Burmese Service under Mr Soe Win Than. Worse still, Kyaw Zay Ya was assigned to be the sole BBC Burmese language journalist covering the first two days of the Rohingya genocide trial in the Hague. During the first opening day of the ICJ's public hearings in the Hague Kyaw Zay Ya chose not to present the voices of the Rohingya activists who were gathered outside the world court in support of the Gambia filing a legal challenge against Myanmar or Burma for the latter's breach of the Genocide Convention. Despite complaints by members of the Burmese ethnic minority communities who came to offer Rohingyas their support and solidarity, Kyaw Zay Ya has not been disciplined. Instead the BBC Asia Division and Burmese Service Management have whitewashed Kyaw Zay Ya's racist bias against the victims of genocide.

There are further complaints that have been lodged relating to a photojournalist contracted by the BBC Burmese service inside the country, who has recently posted numerous deeply racist and offensive posts about the Rohingya on facebook (see attachments). The response by the BBC to these complaints was to "speak with" the individual concerned asking him not to post such material. Most worryingly, it did not result them taking a look at their own contracting practices.

It is very important that each of these complaints be not dealt with as individual complaints relating only to BBC Burmese "outputs". In the context of widespread hate speech, potential genocide and/or other mass atrocities in which the domestic media is understood to play a role, it is vital to consider whether patterns of racial discrimination are inherent in the Burmese service as a whole. All elements and aspects of British engagement with Myanmar are under increasing scrutiny – from business, to NGOs, to Britain's Foreign and Commonwealth Office. It is important that the BBC Burmese Service is also held up to scrutiny to ensure it adheres to the same standards of non-discrimination within the rest of the BBC.

As such the Free Rohingya Coalition call for an independent review of BBC Burmese language services including their recruitment, promotion, contracting and internal Human Resources practices.

The coalition's Rohingya co-founder and coordinator of Media Relations Nay San Lwin says, "on behalf of my fellow refugees and survivors of the genocide in our country, I appeal to both the government of Prime Minister Boris Johnson and the parliamentary authorities, to investigate the BBC World Service Burmese language programme for using one of the world's most influential media platforms to amplify, legitimize and put more fuel on the popular flame of anti-Rohingya racism in Burma and among the Burmese diaspora."

Media Contact:

Nay San Lwin | info@freerohingyacoalition.org | +49 176 62139138



Kyaw Zay Ya

Any views inadvertently expressed are mine,
do not related to my working organization.

 Add Friend



1 mutual friend: **Aye Kyi Phyu**



Works at **BBC World Service**



Studied Photography at **University of West London**

MON, 18 JUN 2012 AT 12:00 - 13:00

Stop Lying BBC, Rohingyas are Bengalis Terrorists, not oppressors, they are invading our country Bur...

BBC Worldwide Ltd Media Centre 201 Wood Lane London W12 7TQ UK Tel: +44 (0) 20...



Interested



Going



More



BBC Worldwide Ltd Media Centre 201 Wood Lane London W12 7TQ UK Tel: +44 (0) 20 8433 2000



Public event by **Kyaw Zay Ya** and 2 others

About

Discussion

Posts



Say something...

Details

စရက်၊ ဂျန်လ၊ ၂၀၁၂ ခုနှစ်သည် မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသားများအတွက် အင်မတန်မှ ဂုဏ်ထူးရသော နေ့ဖြစ်ပေသည်။

နာမည်ကြီးကမ္ဘာ့မီဒီယာများဖြစ်ကြသည့် BBC, VOA အပါအဝင် အခြားသော မြန်မာပိုင်းအစီအစဉ် ထုတ်လွှင့်နေကြသော သတင်းဌာနများမှ မဟုတ်မမှန် စွပ်စွဲခံရခြင်း၊ တရားခံများကဲ့သို့ ဖော်ပြခံရခြင်း၊ မြန်မာ့ဌာန မျိုးရင်းတိုင်းရင်းသားများ ဖြစ်သည့် ရခိုင်လူမျိုးများ အကြမ်းဖက်ခံရခြင်း၊ ထိုအဖြစ်အား ပြောင်းပြန်ပြောင်းလဲ၍ မြန်မာ့လိုခြံရေး ဝန်ထမ်းများမှ ရခိုင်ဒေသတွင် အကြမ်းဖက်မှုများ ကျူးလွန်ခဲ့သည့် ဘာသာလူမျိုးခြားများ (အကြမ်းဖက်သမားများ) အား နှိမ်နှင်းသည့် သတင်းအား ဘာသာရေးဖိနှိပ်မှုအသွင်ဖြင့် ပြောင်းလဲဖော်ပြခံရခြင်း စသည့် အမှန်တရားနှင့် ကင်းကွာ၍ ဆန့်ကျင်ဖက်ပြုနေသော အချက်အလက်များကိုသာ ဖော်ပြ၍ စော်ကားခံရခြင်းတို့ကြောင့် ဖြစ်ပါသည်။

မီဒီယာကိုအားပြုကာ သတင်းမှားတင်၍ လိမ်လည်ပြောဆိုရန်တိုက်ပေး နေခြင်းကိုဆန့်ကျင်ကန့်ကွက်ရမည်မှာ ကျွန်ုပ်တို့မြန်မာတိုင်းရင်းသားအားလုံးတာဝန်ဖြစ်ပါသည်။ UK နိုင်ငံရှိ BBC ရုံးရှေ့မှာ သတင်းမှား တင်ခဲ့ခြင်းအတွက် ကျနော်တို့မှ ဆန္ဒဖော်ထုတ်သွားမှာဖြစ်ပြီး အားလုံး ပူးပေါင်းပါဝင်ရန် ဖိတ်ခေါ်အပ်ပါသည်။

ရခိုင်ပြည်နယ်တွင် ဖြစ်ပေါ်နေသော ဘင်္ဂါလီရိုဟင်ဂျာ လူမျိုးခြားများ၏ အကြမ်းဖက်ဆူပူမှုများအပေါ်တွင် ကမ္ဘာ့သတင်းဌာနများမှ နိုင်ငံတကာကို သိစေရန် ဘာသာရေး ဖိနှိပ်မှုအသွင်ဖြင့် ပြောင်းလဲဖော်ပြနေပြီး မဟုတ်မမှန် ပြောင်းပြန်ပြောင်းလဲ၍ စွပ်စွဲဘက်လိုက် ရေးသားမှုများ ရှိနေပါသောကြောင့် ယခုလာမည့် ဇွန်လ ၁၈ ရက် ၂၀၁၂ တန်လာနေ့ နေ့လည် ၁၂ နာရီ မှ ၁ နာရီ အချိန်တွင် နာမည်ကြီး မီဒီယာတစ်ခုဖြစ်သည့် လန်ဒန်မြို့မှ BBC Worldwide Ltd Media Centre ရှေ့တွင် မိမိနိုင်ငံနှင့် တိုင်းရင်းသားသွေးချင်းများ အပေါ် အမှန်တရားနှင့် ကင်းကွာ၍ ဆန့်ကျင်ဖက်ပြု စော်ကားနေခြင်းကို ကန့်ကွက်သည့် အနေနဲ့ ယူကေနိုင်ငံရောက် မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသားများမှ ငြိမ်းချမ်းစွာ ဆန္ဒပြ ဖော်ထုတ်သွားမှာ ဖြစ်ပါတယ်။

ထိုကဲ့သို့ ဆန္ဒပြ ဖော်ထုတ်သွားရာတွင် ယူကေနိုင်ငံ၏ မည်သည့် နိုင်ငံရေး အဖွဲ့အစည်းများ၏ လက်အောက်တွင် ရှိမနေပဲ အမျိုးသားရေးစိတ်ဓါတ် အသိဖြင့် မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသားများ အနေဖြင့်သာ လွတ်လပ်စွာ ဆန္ဒပြ ဖော်ထုတ်သွားမှာ ဖြစ်ပါတယ်။

ယူကေနိုင်ငံ၏ နိုင်ငံရေး အဖွဲ့အစည်းများမှ မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသားများကိုလည်း ပါဝင်ပူးပေါင်း ကူညီ၍ လိုအပ်သော အကြံဉာဏ်များ ပေးကြပါရန် လှိုက်လှဲစွာ ဖိတ်ခေါ်အပ်ပါသည်။ ။

တန်လာနေ့ ဇွန်လ ၁၁ ရက်၌ ဤအစီအစဉ် ဖြစ်မြောက်ရန် အစည်းအဝေး၏ ညှိနှိုင်း ဆုံးဖြတ်ချက်အရ အစီအစဉ်ကို အောက်ပါအတိုင်း ကျင်းပသွားမည် ဖြစ်ပါသည်။

နေ့ရက် ဇွန်လ ၁၈ ရက် ၂၀၁၂ တန်လာနေ့
အချိန် နေ့လည် ၁၂ နာရီ မှ ၁ နာရီ
နေရာ BBC Worldwide Ltd Media Centre ရှေ့

အစီအစဉ် ၁ အခမ်းအနား စတင်ကြောင်း ကြေညာခြင်း

အစီအစဉ် ၂ ငြိမ်းချမ်းစွာ ဆန္ဒပြ ထုတ်ဖော်သွားခြင်း၏ ရည်ရွယ်ချက်အား ပြောကြားခြင်း

အစီအစဉ် ၃ ကြွေးကျပ်သံများ ညီညာစွာ သံပြိုင် ရွတ်ဆိုခြင်း

အစီအစဉ် ၄ အခမ်းအနား တက်ရောက်သူ မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသားများမှ လက်ရှိဖြစ်ပေါ်နေသော ရခိုင်ပြည်နယ်အရေးတင် မီဒီယာများ ဘက်လိုက် ရေးသားမှုများအပေါ် ဆန့်ကျင်ကန့်ကွက်ဖော်စကားများ ပြောကြားခြင်း

ထိုကဲ့သို့ ဆန္ဒပြ ဖော်ထုတ်သွားရာတွင် ယူကေနိုင်ငံ၏ မည်သည့် နိုင်ငံရေး အဖွဲ့အစည်းများ၏ လက်အောက်တွင် ရှိမနေပဲ အမျိုးသားရေးစိတ်ဓါတ် အသံဖြင့် မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသားများ အနေဖြင့်သာ လွတ်လပ်စွာ ဆန္ဒပြ ဖော်ထုတ်သွားမှာ ဖြစ်ပါတယ်။

ယူကေနိုင်ငံ၏ နိုင်ငံရေး အဖွဲ့အစည်းများမှ မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသားများကိုလည်း ပါဝင်ပူးပေါင်း ကူညီ၍ လိုအပ်သော အကြံဉာဏ်များ ပေးကြပါရန် လှိုက်လှဲစွာ ဖိတ်ခေါ်အပ်ပါသည်။ ။

တန်လာနေ့ ဇွန်လ ၁၁ ရက်၌ ဤအစီအစဉ် ဖြစ်မြောက်ရန် အစည်းအဝေး၏ ညှိနှိုင်း ဆုံးဖြတ်ချက် အရ အစီအစဉ်ကို အောက်ပါအတိုင်း ကျင်းပသွားမည် ဖြစ်ပါသည်။

နေ့ရက် ဇွန်လ ၁၈ရက် ၂၀၁၂ တန်လာနေ့
အချိန် နေ့လည် ၁၂နာရီ မှ ၁နာရီ
နေရာ BBC Worldwide Ltd Media Centre ရှေ့

အစီအစဉ် ၁ အခမ်းအနား စတင်ကြောင်း ကြေညာခြင်း

အစီအစဉ် ၂ ငြိမ်းချမ်းစွာ ဆန္ဒပြ ထုတ်ဖော်သွားခြင်း၏ ရည်ရွယ်ချက်အား ပြောကြားခြင်း

အစီအစဉ် ၃ ကြွေးကျော်သံများ ညီညာစွာ သံပြိုင် ရွတ်ဆိုခြင်း

အစီအစဉ် ၄ အခမ်းအနား တက်ရောက်သူ မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသားများမှ လက်ရှိဖြစ်ပေါ်နေသော ရခိုင်ပြည်နယ်အရေးတွင် မီဒီယာများ ဘက်လိုက် ရေးသားမှုများအပေါ် ဆန္ဒပြ ထုတ်ဖော်စကားများ ပြောကြားခြင်း

အစီအစဉ် ၅ ကြွေးကျော်သံများ ညီညာစွာ သံပြိုင် ရွတ်ဆို၍ BBC အား လက်ကမ်းမည့် ဆန္ဒပြ ထုတ်ဖော်ရခြင်း၏ ပြောဆိုရေးသား ဖော်ပြချက် စာမျက်နှာပေါ်တွင် တက်ရောက်လာသူများဆီမှ သဘောတူညီကြောင်း လက်မှတ်ထိုး ကောက်ခံခြင်း

အစီအစဉ် ၆ မြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော်သီချင်းအား သံပြိုင် ရွတ်ဆိုခြင်း

အစီအစဉ် ၇ ရခိုင်ပြည်နယ်အရေးတွင် ဘင်္ဂါလီရိုဟင်ဂျာ အကြမ်းဖက်ဆူပူသောင်းကျန်းသူများကြောင့် အသက်အိုးအိမ်စည်းစိမ် ပျက်စီးဆုံးရှုံးသူများအတွက် ဝမ်းနံ့ကြောင်း အထိမ်းအမှတ် အနေနှင့် ၁ မိနစ် ငြိမ်သက်စွာ မေတ္တာပို့ ဆုတောင်းကြခြင်း

အစီအစဉ် ၈ အခမ်းအနား အောင်မြင်စွာ ပြီးဆုံးကြောင်း ကြေညာခြင်း

ဆက်သွယ်ရန်

ကိုဗညား - 07967212582
မနုန္ဒာ - 07402443332
ကိုကျော်ဇေယျ - 07805163165
ကိုထက်စိုး - 07742824745

Haikal Mansor's Letter to BBC & BBC Burmese

December 21, 2019

RE: Khin Mg Win's Racist Views and Threats

Dear BBC & BBC Burmese,

I am writing to your office with my deepest disappointment on one of your employees at BBC Burmese for his ultra-racist and offensive bigotry towards Muslims, particularly the persecuted Rohingya community.

Khin Mg Win (aka Shwe Inn Thar), a photojournalist at BBC Burmese, whose recent Facebook posts compelled me to write to your office again.

On December 21, he wrote a series of posts on his Facebook under the aforementioned name.

An extraordinary thing happened on that day.

A group of young Burmese activists from "Youth For A New Society (YNS) and "Doa-A-Yae: Coalition for Civil Rights in Burma", went out to streets of Yangon with messages of "I Stand For Freedom, Justice and Equality" and "I Stand Against Genocide In Myanmar". The gesture of solidarity and the call for "freedom, justice and equality" is an extraordinary in a time when the Burmese society is turning a blind-eye to the founding principles of Burma (now Myanmar). It was also highly risky for the young campaigners to go out and condemn "genocide" which the country has committed against our Rohingya people, which the society denies, and which Aung San Suu Kyi is defending at the International Court of Justice in the Hague as the agent of the country.

Khin Mg Win's responses towards the young campaigners and Jpaing the photographer at the campaign, struck me deeply. An employee at prestigious BBC Burmese misuses his position in displaying and propagating his extremist views towards another race and religion.

In his first post in response to the campaign, Khin Mg Win labelled the young campaigners as "*Traitors*". In his second post, he wrote "*Be aware of traitors and beggars. Jpaing and Katpaing group campaigned in the downtown of Yangon accusing the country of committing genocide after they took money from Kalar (offensive racial slur). They commit traitorous acts when Daw Aung san Suu Kyi presently explains the world.*"

In the third post, he threatened "*Whatever happens to the country, it is time to crack down media journalists who are sold out to Kalar.*"

He subsequently deleted the posts from his Facebook after I shared on Facebook and Twitter. Please find the screenshot of the posts in the attachment.

Considering his vast followers and the current state of Myanmar, Khin Mg Win's threat must be taken seriously when freedom of press is being suppressed and journalists are being jailed in Myanmar more than ever for reporting unbiased stories of Myanmar Military's atrocities against Rohingya and other ethnic minorities.

The use of “Kalar” is highly condemnable, which stokes hatred, fear and violence against Muslim communities.

Furthermore, Khin Mg Win also shared an extremely reprehensible cartoon on his Facebook on June 14, 2018. The cartoon depicts a woman likens to Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina breeding multiple malnourished and dark-skinned children who go behind the curtain and come back as grown up begging and crying in front of international observers. The cartoon speaks itself, which I also attached.

As a photojournalist himself who covers a wide-range of photographs for BBC Burmese, the sharing and posting of sensitive materials which provoke hate and fear, speaks volume.

As a young Rohingya born and grown up under the former military regime, I have listened BBC and a few other Democratic voices to keep hope alive. As our country opens to the ever-growing internet access coupled with the rise of Islamophobia and intolerance, I am extremely disappointed and despised seeing your employee holds such extremely racist views.

It is time for BBC Burmese to send a signal to its employees that it has no place for hate and racism, let alone promoting physical threats. It is time for BBC Burmese to fire its racist employee/s who continue to tarnish the name of channel. It is time for BBC Burmese to have strict policy or protocol in filtering racists out of the channel and in maintaining professional journalistic ethics and codes of conducts.

I hope BBC and BBC Burmese take necessary actions against Khin Mg Win for his atrocious acts of hatred and racism, and breaches of codes of conducts.

I look forward hearing from you.

Happy New Year.

Kind regards,

Haikal Mansor

Screenshots from Khin Mg Win's Facebook



Khin Mg Win (Shwe Inn Thar)

Screenshot 1: Khin Mg Win's Facebook Profile name and photo



Screenshot 2: Khin Mg Win labelled the young activists as "Traitors"



Screenshot 3: Khin Mg Win named Jpaing and the campaign groups as “beggars”



Screenshot 4: Khin Mg Win openly called to “crackdown” journalists

Response from BBC World Service Asia Region Head to Kachin Activist

Dear Hkun Htoi,

Thank you for your email of 22nd January.

I have considered carefully the points you raised about our staff and looked at the editorial examples you have sent us.

To take your first point about one of our staff members being part of a protest page. We have looked at the Facebook screengrab that you attached to your original complaint and ascertained that it dates from June 2012. This was three years before the staff member in question joined the BBC.

We are at all times concerned with the BBC's impartiality and independence while reporting on all matters, but we cannot hold someone responsible for taking part in a protest before they became part of our team. Without any evidence to the contrary, I have no reason to believe that his editorial judgment was clouded by this event.

All BBC journalists sign up to our editorial guidelines on impartiality and Code of Conduct, and no exception was made in this case. We are therefore confident that as a member of our staff he has maintained his impartiality and independence as a journalist since he joined us.

As to your complaints about BBC News Burmese coverage from The Hague. We have deployed a team to cover this very important event over the course of four days. I have reviewed the coverage and could not find evidence that the coverage was biased.

Firstly, the internationally accepted word Rohingya was used frequently in the coverage and there was no avoidance of the term. Over the course of the three days of coverage, our reporter and an editor fronted a number of Facebook lives and conducted ample interviews with all sides. The team also gave background and context and reaction to the trial as it came in.

I'm attaching a comprehensive list of content published by BBC News Burmese here with a short description of the content in English, for ease of reading.

In summary, I am confident that BBC News Burmese was balanced in its coverage, gave equal time to Rohingya and Myanmar voices and used objective and accurate language to describe the Rohingya people.

I stand by my original response that BBC News Burmese has a long tradition of providing robust and independent journalism to audiences in Myanmar and to Burmese speaking audiences around the world, for which it continues to be widely trusted today.

The service upholds the highest standards of journalism and our staff are observing due impartiality and conducting themselves professionally.

If you are not satisfied with my response you can send a complaint to the Controller of Languages, Tarik Kafala, for further escalation.

Please accept my best regards,

Juliana Iooty

Head of Asia Region

BBC World Service

Juliana.iooty@bbc.co.uk

Mobile: [+447711910816](tel:+447711910816)

Extension: [+44236140544](tel:+44236140544)