



BHRN Recommends Action from Burma's New NLD Government

18 November 2020

London, UK -- Burma Human Rights Network calls on Burma's next government to take rigorous steps to address the massive human rights issues facing the country as it becomes clear the National League for Democracy has expanded their power in the country's general election. The NLD has long been viewed as reformers by the international community having to offer little substance to support that position. With their increased power in the parliament, they must take concrete steps to bring about the change desperately needed for minorities inside the country.

"Burma's general election should be seen as a repudiation of the military and their USDP party. While we have serious objections to this election's exclusion of ethnic and religious minorities, the way forward for the new NLD government remains clear. The NLD government must do the work required to provide human rights for all of its citizens and to protect minorities from any future harm. If they fail to do so, it is hard to see them as any better than the oppressive regime that inspired their movement for freedom in the first place," said BHRN's Executive Director Kyaw Win.

BHRN recommends the following actions to Burma's next Government in order to ensure a more democratic and humane future for the country:

1. The process of Rohingya repatriation must be sped up while ensuring the dignity and rights of the population. In order to do so, Rohingya politicians and leaders in Burma must be involved in the process.
2. The NLD Government must reform the Ministry of Immigration and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. These two ministries have enacted oppressive policies towards minorities and are frequent sources of human rights violations. After the 2015 election, over the last 5 years, the NLD allowed the USDP party to continue to control the MoI and MoRA, as a political bargain. They now have the chance and must change this position. In addition to this, the new NLD government must make it compulsory for the staff working in these ministries to take human rights and freedom of religion or belief training.
3. The 1982 citizenship law is clearly out of line with international norms and contradicts Burma's previous and current constitution, as well as 1948 citizenship law. It must be amended immediately. The NLD government must encourage and promote more debate and discussion on this topic.

4. The NLD must immediately organise a by-election to correct instances where minorities have lost democratic rights to elect representatives in the parliament.
5. The NLD government failed to keep its campaign pledge to not arrest anyone as a political prisoner in the last term. This is the time for the NLD government to keep its promise. The NLD government gave amnesty seven times in the last term, but several political prisoners remain. The NLD needs to immediately release all current political prisoners and create a clear roadmap to end the imprisonment of activists and advocates.
6. Rohingya are not foreigners and their disenfranchisement from the election tarnishes democratic reforms in Burma. Based on Swe Tin Sit data and those who had a threefold citizenship card must be given citizenship immediately and their voting rights must be reinstalled immediately.
7. Nearly 100,00 Burmese Muslims and other minorities at the Thai-Burma border area who become stateless due to the human rights violation of the Ministry of Immigration, they must be given a border pass to stay there legally and those who want to return to Burma must be given full support from the government. This is clearly a human rights violation that took place under the watch of the NLD government during their last term.
8. The NLD government should take serious action against racism and discrimination directed towards all minorities, including racial slurs and racist narratives. NLD government should enact anti-discrimination law to prohibit racism in the country. The NLD government has shown zero tolerance towards freedom of expression while tolerating hate speech. This must be turned around in order for minorities in Burma to feel safer under the NLD government while freedom of expression, which is an essence of Democratic society, must be preserved.

For Burma to be a truly democratic society great reforms are desperately needed. With the NLD's massive wins this past election they are perfectly poised to enact them. The only question is if they have the courage and moral integrity to do so. The international community must make it clear to Burma that now is the time for these actions to take place, and any refusal to act must be met with the same consequences the military faced when they held power.

Organisation's Background

BHRN is based in London, operates across Burma and works for human rights, minority rights and religious freedom in Burma. BHRN has played a crucial role advocating for human rights and religious freedom with politicians and world leaders.

Media Enquiries

Please contact:

Kyaw Win, Executive Director

Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN)

E: kyawwin@bhrn.org.uk T: +44(0) 740 345 2378