



# Special Advisory Council for MYANMAR

## Rushed Efforts to Enforce Repatriation of Rohingya Are Recklessly Irresponsible

14 July, 2023

The member States of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council and broader international community must do far more to support the struggle for human rights and democracy in Myanmar if they are genuine about wanting to facilitate the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation of Rohingya refugees, says the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (SAC-M).

The UN Human Rights Council adopted resolution A/HRC/53/L.30 on the "Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar" on 14 July 2023. The resolution urges "Myanmar" to immediately commence the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation of all forcibly displaced Rohingya from Bangladesh (OP32), among other calls. This contradicts earlier statements in the resolution that recognise the lack of tangible progress in creating conditions in Myanmar conducive to repatriation.

**"A UN Human Rights Council resolution should be concerned with human rights – in this case, the human rights of the Rohingya. Instead, resolution A/HRC/53/L.30 appears to be more concerned with normalising premature and dangerous initiatives to bring about their repatriation,"** said Yanghee Lee of SAC-M. **"Rohingya refugee communities have made it very clear that they do not want to return to Myanmar before their rights are guaranteed and their citizenship restored. That should be the focus of the Human Rights Council."**

The Government of Bangladesh has recently been cooperating with the military junta in Myanmar to implement a so-called repatriation pilot scheme, that has involved members of the junta visiting the refugee camps in Bangladesh and several Rohingya refugees visiting a repatriation facility in Myanmar.

Rohingya who took part in the so-called 'go-and-see' visit concluded they would not return to Myanmar under the arrangement as suitable conditions do not exist. UN agencies have provided practical assistance to the scheme, despite the UN Refugee Agency expressing a position that conditions for sustainable repatriation do not exist - an assessment also publicly stated by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the UN



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Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights during the current 53rd Regular Session of the Human Rights Council.

Rohingya living in Myanmar, primarily in Rakhine State, are subjected to a systematic violation of their rights that may amount to genocide. The discriminatory 1982 Citizenship Law effectively deprives the Rohingya of full citizenship. Rohingya are also denied freedom of movement, including 120,000 people who have been confined to camps in central Rakhine for eleven years. The military systematically denies international actors access to Rohingya communities in need of humanitarian assistance, most recently in the wake of devastation caused by Cyclone Mocha in May.

**"Myanmar is right now in the midst of a fully-fledged national liberation movement to free the whole country from the externally abetted tyranny of the military,"** said Marzuki Darusman of SAC-M. **"That is the same military that perpetrated the atrocities against the Rohingya in 2016 and 2017, seeking to re-impose the same constitutional framework that enabled their persecution for generations. The cause of the Rohingya is the cause of Myanmar. The two cannot be divorced from one another."**

The crisis in Myanmar has worsened throughout 2023. The military junta has increased its use of airstrikes against civilians and civilian infrastructure as it cedes control on the ground to the increasingly organised democratic resistance. The Myanmar people have received little support from the international community in their efforts to resist the military's attacks and establish a peaceful federal democracy. The military junta, meanwhile, continues to receive weapons and strategic supplies from UN member States, financial support from its network of business interests and crony companies, and has control over when, where and how desperately needed international humanitarian relief can enter the country.

**"Any genuine initiative on the part of the international community to facilitate the repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar, and, indeed, all refugees and internally displaced persons that have fled the military's decades of violence, will require a far greater effort to support the democratic movement inside the country,"** said Chris Sidoti of SAC-M. **"That means expediting accountability through the International Criminal Court, strengthening sanctions regimes and arms embargoes, and providing humanitarian, diplomatic, financial and technical support to the people through the National Unity Government, National Unity Consultative Council, Ethnic Resistance Organisations and civil society."**

