



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

Twenty-fourth session

Agenda item 8

**Follow-up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration  
and Programme of Action**

### **Written statement\* submitted by the Maarij Foundation for Peace and Development, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[28 August 2013]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

## **The human rights situation in Myanmar and crimes against the Rohingya minority**

On (19 June 2013) – UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay on Wednesday urged the government of Myanmar to devote urgent attention to tackling the continuing discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities in the country, warning that failure to act could undermine the reform process. The High Commissioner expressed her hope that discussions on Myanmar during the recent session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva would further encourage the government to combat discrimination.

Expressing its deep concern at the gross violations of human rights against Muslims in Myanmar, including against the Rohingya, the Council urged the government to allow humanitarian assistance and aid to reach the people and communities affected. It also called on the Government to end impunity for all violations of human rights.

Investigating and ensuring accountability for human rights violations was a basic obligation that the Government must fulfil, Pillay said. “My Office continues to receive credible and consistent reports of widespread and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Rohingya and other Muslims in Rakhine State, including by the security forces,” she said.

The High Commissioner said her staff had received credible allegations of arbitrary arrest and detention, the practice of torture in places of detention and denial of due process rights, as well as extrajudicial killings and sexual violence, including rape.

“Furthermore, I am concerned that those involved in mob violence against Muslim communities in Meiktila, Lashio and elsewhere are not being held to account, which sends out a message that violence directed against Muslim communities in Myanmar is somehow acceptable or justified,” she said.

“The Government must urgently pursue legal and institutional reforms, including reforming local orders and national laws that discriminate along lines of ethnicity and religion,” the High Commissioner said.

In May, it was announced that a local order would be revived that limits Rohingya Muslims in the townships of Buthidaung and Maungdaw in Rakhine State to having a maximum of two children.

“This is blatantly discriminatory,” Pillay said. “This order should be rescinded immediately.”

Myanmar’s 1982 Citizenship Law has also been widely criticized for discriminating against unlisted minority groups, including the Rohingya. Some 800,000 Rohingya have been left stateless and increasingly vulnerable to a range of human rights violations.

“Institutional reforms also involve providing human rights training for military, security and police personnel, including with regard to appropriate use of force in dealing with peaceful protests,” the High Commissioner said, urging a full investigation into the shooting dead of three Rohingya women earlier this month. The women were killed as they took part in a peaceful demonstration in Rakhine State, when police allegedly fired into a crowd of demonstrators in Pa Rein village, Mrauk-U Township.

“My Office is ready to support the Government’s progressive reforms and to assist in addressing all forms of discrimination and other human rights challenges. I therefore hope to see quick progress in the establishment of an OHCHR Country Office in Myanmar with a full mandate,” Pillay said. International human rights organizations including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the American Association for the Advancement

of Science have repeatedly documented and condemned widespread human rights violations in Myanmar. The Freedom in the World 2011 report by Freedom House notes that "The military junta has... suppressed nearly all basic rights; and committed human rights abuses with impunity.

Evidence has been gathered suggesting that the Myanmar government has marked certain ethnic minorities such as the Karen, Karenni and Shan for extermination or 'Burmisation'. This, however, has received little attention from the international community since it has been more subtle and indirect than the mass killings in places like Rwanda. According to Amnesty International, the Muslim Rohingya people have continued to suffer human rights violations under the Myanmar junta since 1978, and many have fled to neighbouring Bangladesh as a result] Violence against Christian communities such as the Kachin has also flared since fighting restarted in June, 2011 in the 2011–2012 Kachin Conflict.

The Rohingya have consistently faced human rights abuses by the Myanmar government which has refused to acknowledge them as Myanmar citizens and attempted to forcibly expel Rohingya and bring in non-Rohingyas to replace them. This policy has resulted in the expulsion of approximately half of the Rohingya population from Myanmar. An estimated huge number of people have been displaced in the recent sectarian violence between Rohingya Muslims and Buddhists in Myanmar's western Rakhine State. As a result of this policy Rohingya people have been described as "among the world's least wanted" and "one of the world's most persecuted minorities. Since a 1982 citizenship law Rohingya have been stripped of their Myanmar citizenship. Rohingya are not allowed to travel without official permission, are banned from owning land and are required to sign a commitment to have not more than two children.(ENDED)

The government refuses to issue identification cards to Rohingya, which are necessary to be able to travel, as well as to obtain passports and enroll in higher education.

They are denied land and property rights and ownership. The land on which they live can be taken away at any time.

The Rohingya people are barred from government employment. Marriage restrictions are imposed on them. They are limited to two children per couple. They are subject to forced labor, extortion and other coercive measures. Public services such as health and education are neglected. Illiteracy is 80%.

More than 40,000 Rohingya children in western Myanmar are deprived of rights to travel, go to school or to marry in the future, because their parents had an unauthorized marriage or exceeded the two-child limit the Myanmar government has imposed on the Rohingya. These blacklisted children are refused birth registration, and so are not included in family lists and must be hidden during the authorities' population checks. The Rohingya are subject to curfews and other restrictions on basic freedoms.

The Rohingya are a dehumanized and persecuted minority in Myanmar. Many attempt to flee to Bangladesh or Malaysia in rickety boats, but are not accorded the rights of refugees in those countries. Some boat people drown.

Maarj Foundation for Peace and Development (MFPD) would like to stress on what is stated in the below statement of the President of the Human Rights Council

On 11th June 2013 the Human Rights Council in the Twenty-third session (Agenda item 1) Organizational and procedural matters, Myanmar\*, Pakistan (on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation): statement by the President PRST 23/...Situation of human rights of Muslims in Myanmar At the meeting, held in June 2013, the President of the Human Rights Council Read out the following statement: "The Human Rights Council:

- (a) Expresses its deep concern at the gross violations of human rights against Muslims in Myanmar, including against Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine State;
- (b) Acknowledges the statement made by President U Thein Sein on 28 March 2013, in which he guaranteed that all perpetrators of violence would be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, and notes the establishment of the Central Committee for Implementation of Stability and Development in Rakhine State following the report of the independent commission of investigation on Rakhine;
- (c) Recalls the various statements made by the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Myanmar and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar in which they urged the authorities of Myanmar to protect the civilian population from violence and to ensure full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the statement made by the High Commissioner in her briefing to the Human Rights Council on 27 May 2013;
- (d) Urges the Government of Myanmar to take immediate measures to put an end to all acts of violence and all violations of human rights against Muslims, and calls upon political and religious leaders in the country to give precedence to peaceful resolution through dialogue;
- (e) Calls upon the Government of Myanmar to take all necessary measures to ensure accountability and to end impunity for all violations of \* Non-member State of the Human Rights Council. (ENDED)

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