

For Immediate Release

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Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi should speak out against ethnic cleansing of the Rohingyas



(Photo Credit: Reuters/Mohammad Ponir Hossain)

(Seoul, 30 November 2016) The Asia Democracy Network (ADN) calls on Aung San Suu Kyi, the icon of democracy for Myanmar and Nobel peace prize laureate, to unequivocally condemn the ongoing ethnic cleansing of the Rohingyas in the Rakhine state.

It is no longer tenable for Aung San Suu Kyi, who is virtually the “head” of the government as state counsellor and leader of the National League for Democracy, to remain silent following new reports of the United Nations (UN) recently accusing the Myanmar government of seeking to ethnically cleanse the country of the Rohingyas.

According to the latest report by a senior UN official, John McKissick, who accused on November 24 the Myanmar government of seeking to ethnically cleanse the country of the Rohingyas, said the Myanmar troops were "killing men, shooting them, slaughtering children, raping women, burning and looting houses, forcing these people to cross the river" into Bangladesh.

According to the report by the Guardian, thousands of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar have reportedly fled to neighboring Bangladesh to escape military operations that have left scores of people dead and as many as 30,000 displaced.

Democratization in Myanmar is an illusion if the ongoing ethnic cleansing in Myanmar cannot be stopped. Aung San Suu Kyi must use her political power and influence to halt immediately the current military operations targeting the Rohingyas following the killing of nine police officers by unidentified armed men. Humanity must not be sacrificed at the altar of political expediency.

The ADN also calls on international NGOs working in Myanmar to voice out against the international crime of ethnic cleansing before it is too late.

The United Nations Security Council must not sit idly and watch the impending genocide of the Rohingyas – the most persecuted people in the world – a term used by the United Nations itself to describe the tragic fate of the Rohingyas in 2013 unfolds before its eyes without doing anything to stop it.

The ADN urges the Security Council to call an emergency meeting to discuss possible actions in stopping the genocide. This should include an urgent resolution for the Myanmar government to immediately stop all its military operations in the state of Rakhine and to send an international fact-finding mission to review the actual situations on the ground.

We call on the Myanmar government to provide unhindered access in the state of Rakhine for the international fact-finding mission. The Rakhine state must be open immediately to the international media and aid agencies.

We further urge the government of Bangladesh, on humanitarian ground, to open its borders and allow the Rohingyas to cross the borders into Bangladesh to seek refuge.

The obligation of protecting the Rohingyas must not be shouldered by the Bangladesh government alone. The United Nations and other countries in the world must share the burden by providing international aid and resettlement of the Rohingyas.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) should immediately send a high-level envoy to Myanmar to stop the genocide and find a durable and long-term solution for the Rohingyas. The genocide operations of Myanmar are already posing a serious threat to the regional security of the Southeast Asian region.

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