

#Black4Rohingya 11th Annual Campaign Press Release

Now more than ever it is imperative that you join the movement, on the 11th annual #Black4Rohingya by wearing black and sharing your photos and messages of solidarity on Thursday 13 June 2024, across social media platforms.

The military coup in Myanmar in 2021, led to a manufactured humanitarian and human rights disaster, with evidence of crimes against humanity and war crimes increasing daily. Of the 600 000 Rohingya currently living in Rakhine State, 130 000 were forced into the IDP camps in 2012.

Since February hundreds of Rohingya have been murdered, over 200 000 have been displaced and more than 2000 Rohingya men have been forcibly conscripted by the Myanmar military, when it announced the implementation of its military service law.

At the hands of the military junta the Rohingya have been subjected to airstrikes, forced displacement, village burnings and the destruction of critical humanitarian infrastructure, especially medical facilities. Rohingya men have been arrested and disappeared, or used as human shields. Mosques and schools have been destroyed or occupied and used to launch strikes. The military continues to block, telecommunication services, roads, waterways and urgently needed humanitarian aid to civilians in conflict areas. Non-military supplies are being destroyed and severe restrictions are being imposed on aid workers. The junta is abducting Rohingya during nighttime raids, threatening them with arrest and torture or giving them false promises of citizenship before deploying them to the frontlines with only two weeks of training.

Most of northern Rakhine State is under the control of the Arakan Army (AA).

Which is an ethno-nationalist, supremacist Rakhine armed group, that is also forcefully conscripting the Rohingya. The leader of the AA has openly made racist, anti-Rohingya remarks. There are allegations of artillery fire, torching of homes, arson attacks, the razing of over 35 villages, drone attacks, extortion, targeted killings, and beheadings of Rohingya by the AA forces.

Often Rohingya are ordered to fight for the party controlling the area and anyone refusing conscription is arrested.

According to the UNHCR, the Myanmar military and Arakan Army often take up positions on either side of Rohingya villages, trapping civilians in the middle and forcing them to suffer the consequences of the ensuing combat. If Rohingya are seen working with the military, the AA will kill them and if they support the AA, the military will kill them. The shocking irony of it all is that the very military which has denied the Rohingya citizenship since 1982 and has been perpetrating a genocide against them, is now forcing the Rohingya to fight on its side, despite the conscription law only applying to Myanmar citizens. Activists are of the opinion, that the junta is hoping renewed tensions between the Rohingya and the Rakhine, caused in part by the conscription, will divert attention from the military's losses. Meanwhile the UN has warned that the pitting of the Rohingya and Rakhine against each other could inflame inter-communal tensions and lead to retaliatory violence and has expressed concern about the potential impact of forced conscription on human rights and on the social fabric of communities in Myanmar.

The Rohingya are "trapped between two armed factions who have a track record of killing them", and this is why it is imperative that:

- The delivery and distribution of all humanitarian aid must occur without any hindrance or threats.

- All armed groups — including the Myanmar military, the Arakan Army (AA), and those using the name "Rohingya" — must cease forced conscription. No one should be compelled into service, and coercing underage individuals into conscription constitutes a war crime.

- Rohingya villages must not serve as battlefields and groups must refrain from arson attacks on ethnic villages
- All armed groups must stop perpetrating crimes against the Rohingya.

Background

The Rohingya are the world's most persecuted minority. Natives of Rakhine State, they have suffered decades of institutionalised apartheid, been denied their citizenship rights, freedom of movement, access to education, health services and land rights. They are subjected to arbitrary arrests, sexual violence, forced labour, extortion, and collective punishment.

In 2017, the Myanmar military perpetrated a genocide against them forcing a million Rohingya to flee to Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, where they now inhabit the world's largest refugee camp. This is currently the subject matter of cases at the International Court of Justice, International Criminal Court, and the Argentine courts.

By not recognising them as refugees, Bangladesh and other states have found a means to evade affording the Rohingya the bouquet of rights which accrue to refugees. Practically, this means that they often have no freedom of movement, access to education or health services, freedom from torture and degrading treatment or the right to provide for themselves and their families. The international community MUST do everything in its power to stop the genocide.

#Black4Rohingya is a Protect the Rohingya initiative, initially held on 5 July 2013 and thereafter on the 13 June to commemorate those Rohingya who were massacred in Arakan State in the second week of June 2012.

For interviews & information:

+49 176 62139138 - Nay San Lwin
+44 7956 966313 - Rahima Begum
+27 721786102 - Shabnam Mayet

 /groups/308153155947556/

 @protecttherohingya

 @ProtectRohingya

PROTECT THE
ROHINGYA
www.protecttherohingya.org

JOIN THE MOVEMENT
#BLACK4ROHINGYA
ON JUNE 13TH