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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Maarij Foundation for Peace and Development (MFPD), 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.

[15 August 2012]

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

Slaughter of Muslims in Myanmar

In June 2012, hundreds Burmese Muslims have been butchered, and many more injured and made homeless in Myanmar as a result religious intolerance by the Buddhist majority. The military government, far from trying to resolve the problem and protect the minority, has been silently conniving with the rioters by creating greater hardships for the Muslim minority.

The reason of this June 2012 riot is unknown except for the periodical outbursts of the Myanmar Military Forces to show their might and vent their anger on the helpless minority. It is commonly accepted that the June 2012 massacre of Burmese Muslims was intentionally orchestrated by the rioters in collaboration with the government. Yet the world, including the UN, is conveniently silent. Aung San Suu Kyi, is very prompt at accusing the Myanmar military of human rights violations when she is under house arrest. But she finds nothing wrong when the military helps the Buddhist mobs to murder the innocent Muslim minority of her country.

Violence in Myanmar against Muslims have been erupting periodically since the 1920s based simply on religious intolerance by the Buddhist majority.

The Muslims of Myanmar mainly belong to the Arakan state in western Myanmar. They are known as Rohingya or Burmese Muslims. The term "Rohingya" has been derived from the Arabic word "Raham" meaning sympathy. Muslim settlements began being established in the Arakan province of Myanmar since the arrival of the Arabs in the 8th century. Presently about 800,000 Rohingya live in Myanmar. The United Nations describes them as "one of the world's most persecuted minorities." Yet it has never bothered to help them.

Religious freedom for Muslims in Myanmar has been systematically curbed. In the post 9/11 era, random accusations of "terrorism" against Muslims have become a common form of persecution and harassment by Myanmar Military Forces. The Government of Myanmar does not consider Rohingya Muslims as citizens and they are hated by the Buddhist majority. Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar have long demanded recognition as an indigenous ethnic group with full citizenship by birthright. But the Government regards them as illegal immigrants from neighboring Bangladesh and denies them citizenship.

"Nobel Prize winner," Aung San Suu Kyi, does not consider Muslims as citizens. Speaking at London School of Economics meeting on June 2012 during her visit to the UK, she said "Rohingya Muslims should not be considered citizens." Later during her press conference at Downing Street, she did not condemn the killings of Rohingya Muslims taking place in Myanmar. Instead, she simply said that this "ethnic conflict should be investigated and dealt with wisdom." It wasn't just an insufficient response but a very shocking one from someone supposed to have won a "Noble Peace Prize."

Asked why she did not condemn the military junta in Myanmar, she explained that "resolving conflict is not about condemnation", but about discovering and solving the roots of conflict. Link: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-18493008>

On June 3rd 2012, eight Muslims returning to Rangoon in a bus after visiting a Masjid in the Arakan province were attacked by a mob of hundreds of Buddhists and slaughtered brutally. An eye-witness reported that after the mass murder "the culprits were celebrating triumph spitting and tossing wine and alcohol on the dead bodies lying on the road."

The Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar have continued to suffer from human rights violations since 1970s. Over the years thousands of Rohingya refugees have fled to neighboring countries like Thailand, Indonesia and Bangladesh etc. Even as refugees they have been facing hardships and have suffered persecution by the Thai government. In February 2009,

a group of 5 boats packed with Burmese Rohingya Muslims were taken out and abandoned in the open sea by the Thai army. Four of these boats sank in a storm and one was washed ashore near the Indonesian islands. The few survivors who were rescued by Indonesian authorities told horrific stories of being captured and beaten by the Thai military and then abandoned at open sea.

The Myanmar Military Forces., waiting to use even the most insignificant occurrence as an excuse to perpetrate violence on Burmese Muslims. At any time, if there's some ethnic disturbance between Muslims and Buddhists/Hindus in any other country, the Myanmar Military Forces waste no time going on a murderous spree killing the Muslim minority in Myanmar. If there is the slightest of trouble between Muslims and non-Muslims in Indonesia, it's taken as a pretext to kill Muslims in Myanmar by Buddhist mobs. The destruction of the statues in Bamiyan (Afghanistan), created an immediate excuse to commit violence against Muslims in Myanmar in 2001. The firebrand Buddhist monks demanded a Muslim masjid to be destroyed in retaliation. Mobs of Buddhists led by monks, vandalized Muslim-owned businesses and property in Myanmar, and attacked and killed Muslims in Muslim communities.

Gruesome images of murdered Rohingya Muslims in the recent June 2012 riots in Myanmar have been circulated on websites, resulting in protests in several Muslim countries and by various human rights activists around the world demanding justice & protection in Myanmar for the minority, but has fallen on deaf ears as usual, getting little or no coverage from mainstream news channels.
