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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by the 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.

[10 February 2013]

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

Rohingya: The story of a people without a homeland

The Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar have continued to suffer from human rights violations under the Burmese junta since 1970s. Over the years thousands of Rohingya refugees have fled to neighbouring 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 Burmese 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 Burmese 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

The Rohingya are a Muslim ethnic minority living in northern Rakhine state in Western Myanmar facing a religious and ethnic discrimination by Myanmar's military Government, which refuses to recognize the Rohingya as Myanmar citizens. The Rohingya people are not considered one of legally recognized ethnic minority groups in Myanmar. Myanmar considers them illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, but they have lived in Myanmar for centuries, and Bangladesh will not accept them as its citizens.

Because of the Myanmar military Government's denial of legal recognition, the Rohingya are denied fundamental human rights and freedom, and the military Government consistently perpetrates human rights violations against this vulnerable population.

The Myanmar 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.

Among the crimes against humanity the Myanmar military regime is committing against the Rohingya are: denial of citizenship, imprisonment in displaced persons camps, widespread murder of civilians, denial of the right to travel, denial of education rights for children, and denial of food and medicines.

The Myanmar Parliament should pass legislation that grants full citizenship to the Rohingya, with all rights of citizens of Myanmar, including the right to hold land titles, travel, and other rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Myanmar authorities should cease human rights violations against the Rohingya.

Bangladesh should adhere to its obligations under the UN Convention on the Protection of Refugees, by accepting boats of Rohingya refugees, permitting them to settle in refugee camps until they can be repatriated with full citizenship rights in Myanmar.
