

36th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council
Item-4: Interactive dialogue with the Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar

Statement of INGO's in Myanmar
19 September, 2017

As international NGOs working in Myanmar, we strongly condemn the attacks carried out on 25 August and subsequent violence across northern Rakhine State. We express our heartfelt sympathies for those who have lost loved ones and all those affected by the violence, and we urge all parties to exercise restraint and prevent the further escalation of conflict.

Many INGOs are working in Rakhine to provide humanitarian relief and development assistance to those in need. Recently, there have been public accusations of INGO involvement in the recent attacks and that humanitarian assistance is being provided as support to parties which have perpetrated violence. These allegations convey an untrue representation of INGOs and go against our common values and principles anchored in impartiality and humanity. We urge all stakeholders to cease the spread of misinformation which not only exacerbates tensions, but also invariably threatens the safety and security of humanitarian aid workers and hinders the provision of humanitarian and development services to all populations in Rakhine State.

INGOs providing humanitarian relief are operating with the approval of the Government of Myanmar and deliver aid based only on need and vulnerability. We offer and provide our assistance to the most vulnerable and needy in an independent, neutral and impartial way. We do not side with any party in a conflict, nor do we make any distinctions in our assistance with respect to race, religion or ethnicity. We deliver our services in coordination with the Union and state governments and in collaboration with civil society and local communities.

INGOs offer humanitarian assistance including the provision of shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene support, as well as the delivery of food, nutrition and health services for conflict affected and displaced people. INGOs have also assisted communities across the state during times of floods and cyclones, providing life-saving assistance and strengthening the ability of government and civil society to withstand disasters.

Many INGOs also work on long-term development programmes for all communities across Rakhine State. For many years, INGOs have worked with the Rakhine State Government to develop health infrastructure, support agricultural and economic development, and strengthen educational systems throughout the state. Achieving sustainable peace and development in Rakhine is only possible by meeting the complex and long-standing humanitarian and development needs of all communities in the state.

The INGO community recognizes the Government of Myanmar as the primary duty bearer to respect and protect the rights of all people in Myanmar. In this moment of crisis, we call on the Government to re-establish access to conflict-affected areas to ensure the delivery of life-saving services, and to safeguard the health and security of humanitarian workers providing assistance to affected communities.

1. Consortium Dutch NGOs
2. Danish Refugee Council
3. CARE International
4. International Rescue Committee
5. Action Contre La Faim
6. Lutheran World Federation
7. Malteser International
8. Mercy Corps
9. Action Aid Myanmar
10. Norwegian Refugee Council
11. Oxfam
12. Plan International
13. Relief International
14. Save the Children
15. Solidarites International
16. World Vision International
17. Church of Sweden
18. People In Need