



الهيئة الدائمة المستقلة لحقوق الإنسان

Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission  
La Commission Permanente Indépendante  
des Droits de l'Homme

## Press Release on the Visit of OIC-IPHRC to Myanmar

Date: 1/5/2018

OIC-IPHRC urged the Myanmar Government to take firm steps to immediately end the violence against its Rohingya population; bring the perpetrators of violence to justice; revise and replace all discriminatory policies and practices against them; and ensure a sustainable and voluntary return of Rohingya refugees in safety, security, dignity and with ensured livelihood to their homeland in Rakhine State.



The OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) expressed its dismay at the plight of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, who continue to suffer severe and institutionalized human rights violations at a mass scale. Persecuted based on their race, religion and origin, the Rohingya minority of Myanmar represents one of the worst examples of victims of ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, it added. These comments were made at the end of a three-day fact-finding visit to Cox Bazar (Bangladesh), by the OIC-IPHRC, which was undertaken in compliance with the mandate given to it by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) to regularly monitor and report on the human rights situation of the Rohingya Muslim minority in Myanmar.

In the absence of any positive response from the Myanmar authorities on repeated IPHRC requests to undertake a fact-finding visit to Rakhine State to freely and objectively ascertain the human rights situation on the ground, the IPHRC undertook a visit to Cox Bazar to meet with the Rohingya refugees and other stakeholders to get first-hand information on the human rights situation faced by the Rohingya in Myanmar. IPHRC delegation included Dr. Rashid Al Balushi (Chairperson) and members Mr. Med Kaggwa, Dr. Raihanah Abdullah, Amb. Abdul Wahab, Mr. Mahmoud Afifi and Mr. Adama Nana, besides officials from the OIC General and IPHRC Secretariats.

During the visit, IPHRC delegation had the opportunity to meet and discuss in detail with the Rohingya refugees the sorry state of human rights situation faced by them in Myanmar. The horrifying tales of human rights violations narrated by the Rohingya refugees, included systematic and systemic discrimination in denying all sorts of their civil, political, economic and social rights in addition to widespread and indiscriminate violence resulting in torture, rape and extrajudicial killings that did not even spare women, children and elderly. Eye witnesses also counted details of dreadful events, which started in August last year, when in the garb of pursuing the attackers of two security posts, hundreds of Rohingya villages were torched and thousands of innocent civilians were tortured and brutalized by military gunfire, using helicopters and rocket propelled grenades, including those who were fleeing, that resulted in hundreds of extrajudicial killings and forced hundreds of thousands to flee their homeland to save their lives. Officials from relevant UN human rights and humanitarian agencies, representatives of international human rights organizations and local government / civil society actors met by the IPHRC delegation also confirmed receiving similar accounts from a wide range of victims who had fled their homes in Myanmar to save their lives.

IPHRC delegation squarely condemned the egregious human rights violations committed against the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and declared it a deplorable racist behavior, where a minority is abjectly discriminated on the basis of its race, religion and origin in all spheres of life including their socio-economic and political rights. Based on the testimonies received from a wide range of Rohingya victims, the Commission affirmed that the situation carries the hallmark of an organized campaign of ethnic cleansing, which is a crime against humanity under international law and must be stopped by all means.

The Commission reminded the Myanmar authorities that no amount of dragging its feet would help them get away with the denial of fundamental rights of its Rohingya population. It, accordingly, called upon the Government of Myanmar

to: a) take firm steps to immediately end the violence against Rohingya and bring the perpetrators of violence to justice; b) revise and replace all discriminatory policies and practices against its Rohingya population; c) ensure a sustainable and voluntary return of Rohingya refugees in safety, security, dignity and with ensured livelihood; d) ensure free and unfettered access to humanitarian aid agencies e) accept UN and OIC fact finding missions for independent investigations into all alleged violations of international human rights law; f) implement the recommendations of the Kofi Annan Advisory Commission; g) address the disinformation campaigns against Rohingya and foster reconciliation among affected communities through dialogue and greater integration; and h) take concrete steps to address root causes of deprivation and discrimination of the Rohingya, including the issues of citizenship and long-standing challenges to social and economic development through a human rights-based approach.

The Commission also called upon the international community in general and OIC Member States in particular to do all they can to urge Myanmar to fulfill its international human rights obligations towards its Rohingya minority in a concrete and time bound manner. It also urged them to extend all out humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya population both internally displaced in Myanmar and those living in refugee camps in neighbouring countries. On its part, the Commission vowed to continue to closely follow the human rights situation of Rohingya Muslims and would do all it can to mitigate their sufferings in cooperation with the regional and international stakeholders.

IPHRC delegation extended its sincere appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the unfettered access and full logistical support provided to undertake its mandated task with objectivity and neutrality. A detailed report of the findings of IPHRC delegation visit with concrete recommendations will be presented to the 45<sup>th</sup> session of the OIC CFM for its consideration.