

The Lost Generation of Myanmar Muslim Children

Tuesday the 23rd of August 2022 marks the anniversary of the persecution of the Myanmar Muslims that began in 2017. For the last 5 years a mass exodus of Muslim families have fled former Burma, many of them children. The Myanmar Muslims are recognised as being the largest “stateless” group of people on the planet.

Since the start of the genocidal campaign under the leadership of so called “human rights champion” Aung San Suu Kyi thousands of Myanmar Muslims have lived in fear of their lives. The murder and expulsion of some of the world’s most vulnerable and poor people was conducted under the partial Democracy System that was the governmental structure at that time.

The 2021 military coup that removed the female leader and replaced her with the current military Junta has not changed the suffering of the Muslim population. This political example allows us to question the repeated assumption that having a female leader is better for human rights circumstances. The credibility of this false idea is given further support when we look at the horrific treatment given to the refugees who sought help from the female leader of neighbouring Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina.

The UNHCR have recorded over 700.000 displaced Myanmar citizens. Many of them inhabit the world’s largest concentration camp in Bangladesh known as Cox Bazar. In the most squalid and dangerous conditions, the desperate Muslim men women and children are 100% reliant upon external aid for survival. However there is insufficient resources arriving into the camps that grow in number every week.

While international support has is crucial in delivering lifesaving protection and assistance services for Rohingya refugees, funding is well short of needs.

The latest UNHCR 2022 response plan, which seeks over \$881 million for more than 1.4 million people, including Rohingya refugees and more than half a million most affected host communities, is only 49 per cent funded, with \$426.2 million received, according to UNHCR.

“The international community must do more to ensure that the Rohingya do not continue to languish in displacement,” stressed Ms. Mantoo, asking that efforts be “redoubled” for increased political dialogue and diplomatic engagement to create conditions for a voluntary, safe, dignified and return sustainable return.

What Ms Mantoo fails to understand and address is that voluntary return has no meaning when the lives and futures of the Muslims have no stability and everything they have known has been completely destroyed.

The UNHCR spokesperson Shabia Mantoo told journalists at a regular press briefing in Geneva on Tuesday that “The latest exodus from Myanmar is now officially defined as being a protracted situation, with decreased funding, they face many challenges in their daily lives,” Ms. Mantoo, cited multiple humanitarian assessment surveys that found proper nutrition, shelter materials, sanitation facilities and livelihood opportunities to be among the most commonly unmet needs. Some have resorted to dangerous boat journeys to seek a better future”.

From these comments we can see how the Muslims of Myanmar have jumps out of the flames of their burning homes and into the fire of inhumane liberal democratic negligence.

The Bangladesh government has been pushing for Rohingya Muslims to return to Myanmar. Thousands of refugees have been moved to a remote island called Bhasan Char, which refugees describe as an “island prison”. Neighbouring India had promised the refugees housing and assistance and then the government refused to honour their words and denied any assistance.

The terrifying instability of having zero citizenship and living with the threat of being thrown out of Bangladesh at any moment means that thousands of this Ummah exist in a state of static limbo. It is not possible for anyone to get a job and worse still, no child is allowed to enter the schooling system. Makeshift lessons take place for some of the youth, but without trained teachers, equipment and no formal curriculum to follow, the education is substandard and does not meet the development needs the children.

