

Press Release

The Scourge of Nationalism Is Hounding Rohingya Children in Malaysia Out of Their Schools and Homes

A surge in online hate speech, misinformation and dehumanizing narratives targeting Rohingya Muslim refugees in Malaysia in recent months has forced the closure of at least 9 Rohingya schools across the country. The schools were shut due to threats and harassment of Rohingya children, or by authorities after demands from the public on social media. This rise in anti-Rohingya sentiment has deprived many Rohingya children of an education and left many others afraid to attend classes or even leave their homes. Some online posts have been advocating violence against Rohingya, including their children, calling for Rohingya refugees to be “put in a room and set on fire,” to “rape them”, to “shoot them like crows”, and for “the women” to be “sterilized”. An online campaign which called for Rohingya refugees to be removed from Malaysia garnered nearly half a million signatures. All this holds echoes of the genocidal and dehumanizing vitriol that the Rohingya faced in Myanmar that caused thousands to be killed and hundreds of thousands to flee their homes.

It is the toxic concept of nationalism which drives and fuels such an intense and irrational hatred towards a persecuted Muslim community, whose only crime is to seek asylum in a neighbouring Muslim land from a genocide. This poisonous, noxious belief, which our Prophet (saw) said concerning it, «دَعُوَهَا» **“Leave it, it is rotten”**, causes oppressed Muslims with a different ethnicity or land of origin to be treated like pariahs and criminals, and their children harassed and threatened and chased out of their schools and homes by their own Muslim brothers and sisters, rather than afforded protection, support, decent housing, a good education and a dignified life. On July 27th, Malaysian authorities detained over 100 Rohingya Muslim refugees who were seeking shelter at the UNHCR office following eviction from their homes in Penang by local residents who declared the area a “Rohingya-free zone”. Malaysia, a Muslim majority country, does not even officially recognize the Rohingya as refugees, branding them illegal migrants, refusing them rights of citizenship, including the right to work and their children to attend government schools, and leaving the threat of arrest looming constantly over them. A similar heartbreaking plight is suffered by Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, Indonesia and other lands.

All this is shameful and criminal! Does Allah (swt) not say: «إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ» **“The believers are but one brotherhood...”** [Al-Hujurat: 10] and «إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ» **“This Ummah is one Ummah and I am your Lord, so worship Me.”** [Al-Anbiya: 92]?!! And did our Prophet (saw) not say: «الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ، لَا يَظْلِمُهُ وَلَا يَخْذُلُهُ وَلَا يَحْقِرُهُ» **“A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor humiliates him nor looks down upon him.”** (Sahih Muslim)?!! And did he (saw) not show us the manner by which Muslims treat their brothers and sisters who migrate to their lands when he paired the Ansar and Muhajireen in a bond of Muslim brotherhood in Madinah, with the Ansar offering half their wealth, homes and land to help the refugees from Makkah?

This sad state of affairs affecting the Rohingya Muslims, the Uyghur Muslims seeking refuge in Turkey, the Afghan refugees in Pakistan, and persecuted Muslims globally who are refused asylum and a dignified life in Muslim lands, will continue as long as we embrace the Haram concept of nationalism as an Ummah, and as long as we are ruled by nationalistic regimes and systems and maintain the colonial imposed nation-state model and national borders that divide our hearts and minds. The desperate plight of Muslim refugees will remain as long as the Khilafah (Caliphate) based upon the method of the Prophethood is absent from this world – the state which is a guardian of all Muslims regardless of their race, tribe, ethnicity or nationality; a state which rejects nationalism and that will unify the Muslim lands and open them to any oppressed people seeking refuge, providing them full rights of citizenship and a dignified life as obligated by Allah (swt) and demonstrated by the Khulifaa’ (caliphs) of the past, such as Sultan Bayezid II, who sent his navy to rescue the persecuted Muslims and Jews of Spain during the Spanish Inquisition and settled hundreds of thousands of them in the lands of the Khilafah.

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