



Legal Analysis Statement on 70 Years Anniversary of Emergence of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights

On December 10, 2018, it will already have been 70 years since the emergence of the UDHR. In today's world, human rights, as a crucial component of globalization, have been gaining momentum on one hand. On the other, in a number of fields, as well as countries, human rights have clearly regressed. In Burma, the influence of the extreme Buddhist nationalist movement -- primarily led by the religious organization known as MaBaTha or the Buddha Dhamma Parahita Foundation -- has caused blatant infringement of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; the rule of law is being totally obstructed; and social stability has been under constant threat, to an alarming extent. .

In this regard, Paragraph 73 of the comprehensive report submitted by the UN Independent International Fact Finding Mission on August 24, 2018 is worthy of consideration:

The Government's response to hate speech has been inadequate. The Mission is deeply disturbed by the prevalence of hate speech, offline and online, often including advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. This has accompanied outbreaks of violence, especially in Rakhine State. Dehumanising and stigmatising language against the Rohingya, and Muslims in general, has for many years been a key component of the campaign to "protect race and religion", spearheaded by extremist Buddhist groups like MaBaTha.

Within the MaBaTha, there may be a number of sincere, venerable monks who believe in Buddhism and the peaceful spread of its religious concepts. However, they should also take responsibility for overseeing, monitoring and taking action against U Wirathu and his disciples for their extremist activities, as highlighted by the UN FFM. These extremist activities include:

1. Establishment of pagodas within the compound of churches and temples and also in remote areas and territories in Karen, Kachin, Chin and Rakhine States – where other religious believers normally predominate;
2. Under cover of teaching of Buddhism, they commonly spread religious and racial hatred, instigating hate speech against other religions, particularly against Muslims;
3. Publication of a number of bulletins, journals and booklets with the aforementioned extremist concepts;

4. Rallying public support of the Myanmar Army, particularly immediately after its commission of Genocide against Rohingyas in Rakhine State;
5. Practicing discrimination by designating villages where Muslims are not allowed to enter;
6. Whenever there are religious conflicts, rather than providing social assistance to victims of conflicts on both sides, they take care of Buddhist victims and ignore other religious believers, which is against the teaching of Buddha;
7. Protection of the 1982 Citizenship Law which is against the right to a nationality enshrined in Article 15 of the UDHR; and,
8. Planning and initiating efforts for the emergence of the four national protection laws, refuting Article 20 of the UDHR, which guarantees freedom to change someone's religion or belief.

Our organization demands that the government authorities and Myanmar military leaders, particularly Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, stop all types of material, financial and moral support – public or otherwise – provided to U Wirathu and his group, who are initiating and carrying out the abovementioned negative measures, that have tarnished Buddhism.

Our organization requests all nationalities in Burma, in the interests of religious freedom, to collectively exert efforts for implementation of Article 20 of the UDHR, while dissociating from U Wirathu and his disciples.

Legal Aid Network

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