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HRW URGES BD GOVT TO LIFT ALL RESTRICTIONS ON EDUCATION FOR ROHINGYAS



The release read that US and other foreign donor cutbacks in humanitarian aid have worsened the existing education crisis for 437,000 school-age children in Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh, with schools that served hundreds of thousands of children shut down.

Human Rights Watch urged Bangladesh’s interim government to urgently lift restrictions on education for Rohingyas and permit Rohingya children to enroll in schools outside the camps. In a press, issued on Thursday, HRW also lack of education opportunities has also increased children’s vulnerability to spiraling violence by armed groups and criminal gangs in the Cox’s

Bazar camps, including abductions, recruitment, and trafficking. The release read that US and other foreign donor cutbacks in humanitarian aid have worsened the existing education crisis for 437,000 school-age children in Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh, with schools that served hundreds of thousands of children shut down. The cutbacks have closed learning

centers run by aid groups. Community-based schools are still operating and are considered better but lack government recognition and are therefore ineligible for donor support, and have to charge fees that many families cannot afford.

'The US and other donor governments are abandoning education for Rohingya children after the previous Bangladesh government long blocked it,' said Bill Van Esveld, associate children’s rights director at Human Rights Watch.

'The interim Bangladesh government should uphold everyone’s right to education, while donors should support the Rohingya community’s efforts to prevent a lost generation of students,' he added.

With increasing violence, abductions of children were so frequent in late 2024 that many parents stopped allowing their children to leave their shelters to go to school, refugees said.

Protection monitors reported 51 child abductions in the first quarter of 2025.

■ Source: amaderbarta.net

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RIGHTS GROUPS URGE MALAYSIA TO RECOGNIZE MYANMAR REFUGEES

Human rights groups in Malaysia have called on the Muslim-majority country's government to recognize refugees fleeing war and religion-based violence in Buddhist-majority Myanmar.

“Myanmar nationals are not coming to Malaysia by choice — they are coming out of necessity. People are fleeing persecution, political violence, and forced conscription,” said Heidi Quah, founder of rights group, Refuge for the Refugees.

Recognizing Myanmar nationals as refugees would offer immediate legal protection, stop deportations, and allow asylum seekers to access basic services without fear.

“Recognition offers them safety more than legal clarity,” she said. “It means a mother fleeing violence can go to a clinic without fear. It means a young boy won’t be deported back into a warzone,” she explained.

According to the United Nations’ High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Malaysia had 189,340 registered refugees and asylum seekers as of May 2024, with the majority, or 166,290, coming from Myanmar.

Most Myanmar refugees in Malaysia, or roughly 109,230,

are Rohingya refugees and asylum-seekers. Others include Chin and other ethnic groups from Myanmar, according to the UNHCR.

According to Quah, in chaos-stricken Myanmar, where a military junta seized power four years ago and is battling armed groups opposing it, “young men and even teenagers are taken from their homes and forced to fight in a war they don’t believe in.”

Those who refuse are hunted, imprisoned, or killed. Parents flee with their children because they’d rather risk the unknown than hand them over to a brutal regime,” she said.

On World Refugee Day, on June 20, Quah's organization, along with a few other human rights advocates, renewed calls for the government to recognize Myanmar nationals urgently.

One rights activist, Jerald Joseph, a former member of Malaysia's Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM), told UCA News that “a framework for protecting the rights of asylum seekers is lacking in Malaysia.” While we take pride in standing in solidarity with refugees from Palestine and other regions, we cannot

overlook the severe crisis happening right across our borders in Myanmar,” he added.

Malaysia, the current Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, has an opportunity to “blaze the way” and establish a standard for increased protection of Myanmar asylum seekers.

He acknowledged that governments often fear “a prima facie recognition system for asylum seekers might be abused,” but argued that “instead of shutting the door, the government should empower authorities to work hand-in-hand with the UNHCR.”

Public misunderstanding

Jerald said the Malaysian public needs to be educated “about our history of hosting temporary refugees like the Vietnamese boat people in the 1980s. We must not pick and choose refugees based on religion or identity.” He acknowledged that fear and misinformation about refugees “often shape public attitudes. That’s why humanizing these stories is so important.” Jerald said some parliamentarians “continue to spew hate and misinformation. Parliament must address this seriously,” he said.

■ Source: ucanews.com