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Persecution of Rohingya Muslims in Burma-Myanmar

Greens/EFA motion for resolution

The European Parliament,

-having regard to its previous resolutions on Burma/Myanmar, in particular that of 20 April 2012;

-having regard to the Council Decision of 16 August 2011 (2011/504/CFSP) amending Council Decision 2010/232/CFSP regarding restrictive measures against Burma/Myanmar;

- having regard to the EU Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on Burma/Myanmar of 23 January 2012;

- having regard to the Council Conclusions on Burma/Myanmar of 23 April 2012;

- having regard to the Statement by the spokesperson of the High Representative Catherine Ashton of 13 June 2012 on the crisis in Northern Rakhine State in Myanmar (Burma);

- having regard to the exchange of views on the Rohingya issue in the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights on 11 July 2012

- having regard to the Statement by EU Commissioner Georgieva on humanitarian access to Rohingya and other affected communities of 9 August 2012;

- having regard to the decision that Myanmar will host the South East Asia Games in 2013 and will take over the chairmanship of ASEAN in 2014

- having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas since the new government of President Thein Sein took office in March 2011, it has taken numerous steps to expand civil liberties in the country, the majority of political prisoners have been released and a number have been elected to Parliament in the by-elections, preliminary ceasefires have come into force with most armed ethnic groups and many political dissidents in exile have returned to Myanmar in promise of re-conciliation,

B. Whereas in stark contrast to these achievements, the longstanding policies of discrimination against the Rohingya minority have intensified

C. Whereas on 28 May 2012 sectarian violence broke out in Rakhine state between the majority Rakhine Buddhist population and the minority Muslim Rohingya after reports spread that a Buddhist women had been raped and murdered by Muslim men

D. Whereas on June 3 in retaliation, a Buddhist crowd attacked a bus and lynched 10 Muslim men reportedly in front of security forces who did not intervene

E. Whereas in the following weeks anti-Rohingya violence, reportedly committed by Buddhist mobs and Buddhist dominated security forces, carrying the characteristics of a pogrom, left dozens of people dead, thousands of homes destroyed and over 70000 people internally displaced

F. Whereas in response to the violence, a state of emergency was declared in Rakhine state, and President Thein Sein called on the Rohingya to be internated in camps and urged the UNHCR to resettle the estimated 800 000 Rohingyas still living in Myanmar outside of the country

G. Whereas the Rohingya, who have settled in Rhakhine state for centuries have been denied an identity as one of Burma's 135 national groups and thus citizenship under the 1982 citizenship law, are by many Burmese believed to be illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and have been subject to systematic, severe discrimination such as forced labor, police harassment, land confiscation, restriction on freedom of movement, marriage, education, healthcare and work

H. Whereas, in the face of persistent persecution, an estimated 300,000 Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh over the years where their long-term situation remains unresolved and where the Bangladeshi authorities have recently instructed the international NGOs working with the refugees to stop their activities as part of a government attempt to stop Rohingya people fleeing current human rights abuses and the latest oppression in Burma/Myanmar and whereas there are also reports of those fleeing now being turned back at the border

I. Whereas the EU humanitarian and civil protection department ECHO has allocated 10 million EURO in support of Rohingya refugees and the local host population in Bangladesh for 2012

J. Whereas on 17 August the Burmese government has appointed an independent Investigation Commission, composed of 27 representatives from civil society and political and religious organizations in order to inquire into the causes of the outbreak of sectarian violence and to make suggestions

1. Expresses its grave concern over the violent ethnic clashes in Rakhine state and the continuing persecution and discrimination of the Muslim Rohingya minority,

2. Notes that neither the government nor the political opposition have taken a clear public stance in defense of the victims and expresses its appreciation for those Burmese citizens who have raised their voice in support of the Muslim minority and a pluralist society

3. Calls on the Burmese authorities to stop arbitrary arrests of Rohingya and to provide information about the whereabouts of hundreds of people detained since security operations in Rakhine state began in June and to immediately release those arbitrarily arrested,

4. Urgently demands that the government of Burma provide the UN agencies and humanitarian nongovernmental organizations unhindered access to all areas of Rakhine State and guarantee unrestricted access to humanitarian aid for all affected populations,

5. Calls for an urgent and transparent inquiry into the reports of involvement of Burmese security forces in killings, rape and mass arrests against Rohingya Muslims after having failed to protect those persecuted by the mob

6. appeals to the government to treat all internally displaced persons (IDPs) in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, including by developing a long-term plan in consultation with affected communities to promote reconciliation and end discrimination in Rakhine state, including ensuring a return of IDPs to their home areas if they so desire and encouraging safe and effective re-integration to those areas.

7. Welcomes the creation of the independent Investigation Commission and expresses its hope that despite the absence of a Rohingya representative the Commission will deliver an objective analysis that can contribute to a de-escalation of the situation

8. Calls on the government of Myanmar to bring the perpetrators of the violent clashes in Rakhine state to justice and to reign in the extremist Buddhist groups who are instigating communal hatred and propagating a permanent segregation between the communities

9. Calls on the EEAS to support the Burmese government at best possible to stabilize the situation, to design a broader socio-economic development plan for Rakhine state and to continue Myanmar's path towards democracy

10. Insists that the Rohingya minority cannot be left out of the newly developing openness for a multicultural Burma and calls on the authorities to amend the 1982 Citizenship Act in order to grant Rohingyas citizens rights and equal treatment to other Burmese citizens ending discriminatory practices including restrictions on their right to movement, right to freely chosen employment, right to marry and to have a family, the denial of education, healthcare and other basic services

11. Is concerned about the arrest of a dozen international aid workers during the unrest and calls for the immediate release of the six who are still in prison;

12. Urges the Burmese government to allow the United Nations special rapporteur on human rights in Burma to conduct an independent investigation into abuses in Arakan state and the OHCHR to establish an office in Burma with a full protection, promotion, and technical assistance mandate, and sub-offices in states around the country, including Arakan state

13. Expresses its deep concern about the practice by Bangladesh and other neighboring countries of Myanmar of pushing boats with Rohingya asylum seekers back into the sea and calls for an end to this practice

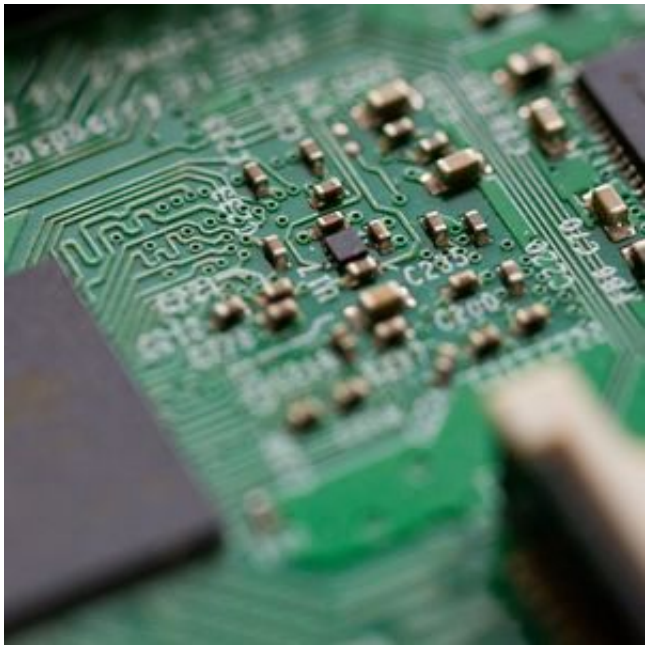
14. Urges Bangladesh to continue its acceptance of present donor support and any additional support measures in the interests of both its own population and that of the displaced Rohingya, not to return Rohingya fleeing violence in Burma and to continue its efforts to find a sustainable solution

15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the HR, the Commission, the Parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of Myanmar and the other ASEAN member states, the ASEAN Human Rights Commission, as well as the UN Secretary General.

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