

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## **Myanmar: Amnesty International calls on Myanmar to protect the rights of Rohingya and to release all prisoners of conscience**

### ***Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Myanmar***

Amnesty International wishes to express its profound regret at Myanmar's rejection of all 27 recommendations relating specifically to the human rights and humanitarian situation of the persecuted Rohingya minority.<sup>1</sup> Almost four years after violence erupted in Rakhine State, some 140,000 individuals, mainly Rohingya, remain in IDP camps without sustained access to essential humanitarian assistance. In Rakhine state, Rohingya continue to face severe restrictions on their right to freedom of movement and have only limited access to health care, education and equal employment opportunities.<sup>2</sup> The authorities' refusal to acknowledge the entrenched human rights violations faced by the Rohingya remains a serious obstacle to resolving the situation in Rakhine State.

While Amnesty International notes Myanmar's acceptance of one recommendation to "continue to release" prisoners of conscience,<sup>3</sup> it is disappointed that it rejected seven other recommendations calling for the release of all remaining prisoners of conscience.<sup>4</sup> Nearly one hundred prisoners of conscience remain behind bars despite recent amnesties

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Myanmar*, A/HRC/31/13, 20 November 2015, recommendations 145.8. (Guatemala); 145.27 (Saudi Arabia); 145.30 (Slovenia); 145.39-145.53 (Sudan, Luxembourg, Pakistan, Sudan, Senegal, Costa Rica, Argentina, Libya, Oman, Belgium, Malaysia, Djibouti, Egypt, Luxembourg, Saudi Arabia), 145.55-145.56 (Iceland, Saudi Arabia), 145.60-145.66 (Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Netherlands, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Sweden, United States of America).

<sup>2</sup> Amnesty International, *Stalled reforms: Impunity, discrimination and ongoing human rights abuses: Amnesty International submission to the Universal Periodic Review*, (Index: [ASA 16/2276/2015](#)).

<sup>3</sup> A/HRC/31/13 recommendation 143.65 (France).

<sup>4</sup> A/HRC/31/13 recommendations 144.65-144.71 (Germany, Greece, Spain, Czech Republic, United States of America, Croatia, Norway).

and hundreds of human rights activists are currently on trial, charged solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights.<sup>5</sup> As long as the authorities continue to monitor and harass human rights activists and while repressive laws remain on the book, any prisoner releases will remain symbolic. Amnesty International is therefore concerned by Myanmar's rejection of multiple recommendations to amend laws which restrict the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. It is a chilling reminder of the authorities' commitment to those rights.<sup>6</sup>

While Amnesty International welcomes Myanmar's acceptance of recommendations to provide redress to victims of land confiscations,<sup>7</sup> these commitments do not go far enough. The authorities must enact and enforce legislation to prohibit forced evictions and to strengthen environmental safeguards to protect against any infringements of human rights caused by the extractive and manufacturing industries.

## Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Myanmar on 17 March 2016 during its 31<sup>st</sup> session. Prior to the adoption of the UPR outcome, Amnesty International delivered the above oral statement. Amnesty International also submitted information in advance of the review in November 2015:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa16/2276/2015/en/>

Public Document

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<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International, *'Going back to the old ways': A new generation of prisoners of conscience in Myanmar* (Index: [ASA 165/2457/2015](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa16/2457/2015/en/)).

<sup>6</sup> A/HRC/31/13 recommendations 145.31-145.36 (Austria, Latvia, France, Sweden, Luxembourg, Estonia).

<sup>7</sup> A/HRC/31/13, recommendations 143.123 (Germany) and 143.124 (Czech Republic).