

## The UN's Failure to Protect the Rohingya Muslims Holds Haunting Echoes of Srebrenica

### News:

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of October, *The Guardian* published an article based on information from sources inside the UN and aid community that detailed how the UN commissioned and then reportedly 'suppressed' a report that criticized its strategy in Myanmar and warned that it was ill-prepared to deal with the impending Rohingya Crisis. The report, entitled "*The Role of the UN in Rakhine State*" which was written by an independent consultant, Richard Horsey, and submitted this May, warned of an imminent major crisis in Rakhine State and predicted a "*serious deterioration*" in the treatment of the Rohingya Muslims in the six months following its submission and urged the UN to undertake immediate "*serious contingency planning*" which the organization failed to do. It stated that Myanmar security forces would be "*heavy-handed*" and "*indiscriminate*" in dealing with the Rohingya. This indeed materialized, with a campaign of genocide that led to hundreds of deaths and more than half a million Rohingya Muslims fleeing to Bangladesh within a few weeks. The study was commissioned by Renata Lok-Dessallien, the UN resident coordinator and the organisation's most senior official in Myanmar, who has been accused of suppressing its contents. Aid workers also said that the UN prioritized good relations with the Myanmar government and development initiatives in the Rakhine state over humanitarian and human rights advocacy. The report echoed this view, stating that there was a "*widely-held perception*" that there had been "*trade-offs between advocacy and access that have in practice de-prioritised human rights and humanitarian action, which are seen as complicating and undermining relations with government*". The *BBC* also reported that according to sources in the UN and other aid workers, in the four years before the current crisis, the UN leadership in Myanmar tried to stop the Rohingya rights issue from being raised to the government, had tried to stop human rights activists travelling to Rohingya areas, attempted to shut down attempts to publicly promote the rights of the Rohingya and isolated staff who tried to warn that ethnic cleansing might be on its way. A senior staff member of the UN told the *BBC*, "*We've been pandering to the Rakhine community at the expense of the Rohingya.*" Phil Robertson, Deputy Asia Director at Human Rights Watch stated, "*The UN must acknowledge a significant share of blame in letting this situation descend this far, this fast.*"

### Comment:

The UN's failure to protect the Rohingya Muslims from massacres and ethnic cleansing by the Burmese army holds echoes of the Srebrenica genocide in July 1995 during the Bosnian War, where UN peacekeepers who were vested with the responsibility of safeguarding Muslim civilians in the town, allowed the massacre of

8000 Muslim men and boys by the Serb army to unfold under their watch. They failed to prevent the capture of the town by Serb forces, even though the UN had labelled it as a 'safe area' under its protection. Following these tragedies, the international community and UN say, "Never Again", and yet history repeats itself again and again. This is because the United Nations, which so many still regard as the body which has the capability to prevent such acts of genocide, was never in truth established for this purpose. Rather, it was founded as a tool to simply facilitate the capitalist foreign policy agendas of the major world powers, such as the US, Britain, and France who have absolutely no interest in safeguarding human life unless there are political or economic gains to be made by doing so. This is further reflected by the UN Security Council's response to the Rohingya crisis in its session this September. Despite knowing about the torching of entire villages, the indiscriminate killing of men, women, children and babies, and the 'textbook case of ethnic cleansing' and subsequent exodus of hundreds of thousands of desperate Rohingya Muslims, the UN Security Council failed to even impose a comprehensive arms embargo on the murderous Myanmar regime.

As Muslims, we should also say, "Never Again!"...."Never Again!" to putting our hopes in an impotent organization to protect the blood of this Ummah! "Never Again" to having trust in a body that failed to safeguard the lives and rights of Muslims in countless lands – including in Gaza, Kashmir, Syria, and Central Africa! And "Never Again" to backing a path of action which distracts from the true solution to ending these tragedies against our Ummah. Indeed, the Prophet (saw) said, «لَا يُدْعُ الْمُؤْمِنُ مِنْ جُحْرٍ مَرَّتَيْنِ» **"The believer should not be stung from the same hole twice."**

The only solution to end the bloodshed against our Ummah is to put our full efforts into the establishment of the Khilafah (Caliphate) based upon the method of the Prophethood which truly represents the interests of the Muslims and is obliged by Allah (swt) to defend their blood. Placing our hopes and trust in any non-Islamic government, body or organization to protect the Believers, is doomed to failure! Allah (swt) says,

﴿مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ اتَّخَذَتْ بَيْتًا وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

***"The example of those who take allies other than Allah is like that of the spider who takes a home. And indeed, the weakest of homes is the home of the spider, if they only knew."*** [29:41]

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