

JOINT STATEMENT

Religions for Peace Myanmar and Bangladesh

(23 August 2019 | Lindau, Germany) We, *Religions for Peace* leaders from Myanmar and Bangladesh held Track II Consultations on the refugee problem affecting our two countries at the *RfP* 10th World Assembly held in Lindau, Germany 20-23 August 2019. We expressed serious concern over this tragedy fallen upon our fellow human beings and firm determination to build confidence and strive to find a peaceful and just solution to this tragedy of the refugees compelled to flee to Bangladesh and sheltered in different refugee camps there.

We sincerely appreciate the humanitarian services rendered thus far by Bangladesh and the International community to this suffering people.

We view the implementation of the bilateral agreement signed between the governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh on the return of the refugees, and the tripartite agreements with UNHCR and UNDP respectively as fundamentals for a peaceful and just resolution of the problem. The recommendations of the Kofi Annan Commission Report are considered vital for resolving this humanitarian issue.

The *RfP* leaders of both countries recognize that it is necessary to create conditions needed for the voluntary return of the refugees. We reiterated our support that returnees be settled in the places of origin or nearby places, be given access to basic services, freedom of movement and sustainable livelihood conditions. We also support the planned, dignified, voluntary and safe return of the refugees from Bangladesh with due protection and accompaniment by reputable agencies such as ICRC and UNHCR.

We, the *RfP* leaders of Myanmar recognized the need to consider and address the complex issues of citizenship.

We express our sincere appreciation to *RfP* and the Foundation Peace Dialogue for jointly convening the Assembly with the support of the German Federal Foreign Office. Furthermore, we appeal to these organizations to continue rendering the invaluable support towards the resolution of this humanitarian crisis. We further earnestly appeal to the leaders of *RfP* International to play, in response to this “people to people dialogue,” its positive role for permanent peacebuilding through conflict transformation in this region.

In order to prevent such a tragedy from recurring, we firmly commit to continue our endeavors to combat hate speech, misperceptions, prejudices so as to reach sustainable reconciliation and peace.