

Country Report (Myanmar)

Since the Military takes over the country, the vision and mission of *RfP-Myanmar* has to be implemented with new strategy and tactics for its very survival. One of the inevitable challenges is the newly amended registration law pertaining to CSOs stipulated by the junta, riddled with more restrictions and formalities. Most of the CSOs refused to abide by these repressive clauses which they regard it as measures to restrict their freedom of movement and activities. *RfP-M* has obtained the legal and lawful certificate of registration before the coup and has no choice but to renew the registration under the added rules and regulations. The impact was enormous, the chairman along with his Buddhist organization and the Hindu core member submitted their resignation. Of course, with the understanding that they will resume their participation when things are back to normal.

The encouraging development is that the Ministry of Religious Affairs has been closely in touch with *RfP-M* and is regularly asking for report on our activities in Rakhine State. The ministry clearly mentioned in its letter that our report will be used in ICJ court proceedings.

Under these unusual circumstances, *RfP-M* is to perform its obligation in a very low profile maneuver. At the moment, *RfP-M* has been involved in materializing three projects. They are:

- 1) Multi-religious humanitarian assistance and healthcare support, funded by *RfP* Japan
- 2) Culture for Peace (Consortium project with Helvetas and LRC) funded by EU
- 3) Protection of violation of the Rights of the Children through faith networks (CP project) funded by UNICEF (*Please find the details in the attached files*)

Needless to mention, these projects are being implemented amidst an ongoing civil war. The military has been crushing the revolution vigorously with might and main, using extravagant artillery, infantry, navy and air power. Noncombatant civilian targets are assaulted, including places of worship belonging to different faiths, schools, hospitals, civilian living quarters, etc. In order to make fair and just assessment, please refer to impartial, unbiased and balance statement issued by organizations such as UN security council, ASEAN, the Elders and other Human right organizations. *RfP-M* ultimate goal remains to help the country achieve positive and just peace national reconciliation and development. Nevertheless, the sad reality is that a lot of conditions need to be corrected before we could endeavor for that final destination.

On top of manmade disaster, our beloved country recently faced another natural disaster. I would like to quote a news report issued by a reliable agency,

Cyclone Mocha made landfall southwest of Sittwe town, Rakhine state around 12 noon on May 14. Despite efforts by many actors to prepare, the cyclone caused widespread destruction across Rakhine state and flooding has been reported in Magway and Sagaing regions. The SAC has reported casualties as a result of cyclone, but other reports put the death toll at 400. Aid efforts have not yet reached many affected communities and international organization report that they are still facing barriers to access. (*Vimutti Situation update, 2023, issue 19. May 11-17*) For more details please find it in the attached files.

The hardest hit was the Rohingya IDPs whose camps are located in Sittwe seashore. A number of them were washed away into the set along with their shelters and properties. They are not evacuated like other Rakhine citizens and are not allowed to leave their camps. The camps were described as prisons without roof and walls. Up till now, our 400 deaths and missing are reported, most of the victims are women, children, sick and elderly. Communications have been cut off and no rescue team has reached them till the time of filing this report.

RP-M has dedicated to do whatever we can within our limited meager means, we need a lot of assistance from our friends. We have a staff and Interreligious Working Committee in Sittwe and information are trickling in from our ground staff gradually. We will keep updating the latest development.

AL-HAJ KHALIFA U AYE LWIN
E. C. Member, Myanmar Chapter.