

## **Statement of INGO's in Myanmar**

**27 September, 2017**

### **Humanitarian Organizations call for immediate humanitarian access to those in need:**

One month since the 25 August attacks and subsequent security response, INGOs in Myanmar are increasingly concerned about severe restrictions on humanitarian access and impediments to the delivery of critically needed humanitarian assistance throughout Rakhine State.

Almost no humanitarian assistance has been provided to populations in need in northern Rakhine and assistance to populations in central Rakhine has been restricted. This is due to the lack of authorizations for humanitarian staff to travel to affected areas, increased tensions affecting national staff and contractors, and an insecure operating environment, particularly in northern Rakhine State where an active military operation has been taking place.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been affected by the violence in northern Rakhine State. This includes 480,000 refugees who have sought safety in Bangladesh since late August, 27,000 people who have been internally displaced and are now in relief centers in central and southern Rakhine and an unknown number of displaced persons still in the area of military operations in northern Rakhine who have been unable to leave. In addition to those displaced, hundreds of thousands of civilians remain in northern Rakhine State with insufficient access to life-saving food, nutrition, shelter and medical services. INGOs remain ready to provide whatever assistance is needed to all communities.

Humanitarian organizations are very worried about the well-being of all those affected by the recent violence in northern Rakhine State – in particular, extremely vulnerable individuals including children, pregnant and lactating women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities – many of whom were already experiencing acute food insecurity and malnutrition and not receiving treatment before the crisis began.

Although the government has announced that the delivery of humanitarian assistance in northern Rakhine will be led by the Myanmar Red Cross Society, assisted by the International Committee of the Red Cross, we are very concerned that this will not be sufficient to meet the enormous humanitarian needs across this region. International NGOs stand ready to act on the invitation made by the State Counsellor in her speech on 19 September to assist in the provision of life-saving humanitarian assistance to all communities in need of aid.

In addition, to those recently displaced by the violence in northern Rakhine State, the delivery of humanitarian aid to 120,000 internally displaced persons who have been in camps in central Rakhine State since 2012 and are heavily dependent on assistance due to restrictions on their freedom of movement, has also been severely curtailed.

Threats, allegations, misinformation and public accusations against humanitarian staff have led to genuine fears amongst humanitarian workers, in particular national staff, and have contributed to an environment where targeted attacks on humanitarian staff have taken place. This makes it very difficult for organizations to provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance and undermines the central principles of neutrality and impartiality that guide all humanitarian action. It also threatens the safety and protection of humanitarian workers.

We urge the government and authorities of Myanmar to ensure that all people in need in Rakhine State have full, free and unimpeded access to life-saving humanitarian assistance. This must include lifting all movement restrictions and ensuring that humanitarian actors can carry out their work in safety. We repeat our call to all actors to cease the spread of misinformation and unfounded accusations against humanitarian organizations that risks the safety of our staff and hinders the provision of life-saving assistance. We stand ready to provide assistance impartially and neutrally to all people in need in all communities throughout Rakhine State and to fully resume our operations.

Care International  
Danish Refugee Council  
Consortium of Dutch NGOs  
International Rescue Committee  
Action Contre La Faim  
World Vision International  
Malteser International  
Mercy Corps  
ADRA Myanmar

Norwegian Refugee Council  
Oxfam  
Plan International  
Relief International  
Save the Children  
Solidarités International  
People In Need  
Luther World Federation  
DCA-NCA