



# THE EUROPEAN ROHINGYA COUNCIL (ERC)

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**The Government of Bangladesh should immediately reverse its decision to close thousands of home-based and community-led schools for Rohingya refugee students**

Press Release  
January 24, 2022

On the occasion of International Day of Education, the European Rohingya Council asks for the reversal of the decision of the Bangladeshi authorities to close over 3000 Rohingya-run community-led and home-based schools. The decision was issued on December 13, 2021 by the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner of the government of Bangladesh. The Commissioner is responsible for education policy in the refugee camps and his decision puts at stake the future of over 400,000 school-age Rohingya children.

Home-based and community-led schools are the main means for the Rohingya refugee children to gain informal education, which is important as these children are unable to access the government-run official schools. It is estimated that around 85% of students at home-based schools are girls. This month the government of Bangladesh started demolishing the schools. On January 6, a community-led school run by Arakan Altruism and Educational Network (AASEN-1) was demolished in Kutupalong Refugee Camp.

These actions of the government of Bangladesh are in complete violation of their domestic and international law obligations. The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees compulsory education to all children irrespective of nationality or ethnicity. This is also guaranteed by Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which has been signed and ratified by the State of Bangladesh. In light of this we request the government of Bangladesh to put an end to this discriminatory and illegal policy that puts at risk the future of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya children and of the Rohingya community at large.

Our views have also been reiterated by the United Nations and major international civil society bodies. UN special rapporteur Tom Andrews has said that the privately run schools played a critical role in educating Rohingya children. "I am deeply concerned to have learned of a new policy, promulgated while I was here, that would close all private schools in the camps," he told reporters. Additionally, Human Rights Watch has reiterated that the Bangladesh government should urgently reverse its decision to close these schools. The Rohingyas are an extremely vulnerable group that have survived genocide, persecution and immense trauma. It is imperative that the international community and the government of Bangladesh does its best to protect the right to education of Rohingya children.

For more information on this topic, please contact:

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