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"A NEW CREATION"

A Revived Church and a Renewed Nation

DEPORTATION OF MYANMAR NATIONALS ASYLUM SEEKERS

It is reported that on 23rd February, Malaysia plans to deport 1,200 detained Myanmar nationals, in coordination with the Myanmar military. Those set to be deported include refugees and asylum seekers who are at risk if they are forcibly returned to their homeland.

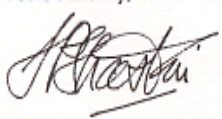
In this time of political insecurity in Myanmar, sending these Myanmar nationals back is to send them to an uncertain fate. The system of checks and balances, transparency and accountability have all but disappeared and the fate of these people to repatriate from our shores is to send them into a hostile and very dangerous situation.

We, therefore, call on the government of Malaysia not to participate in the disavowing of refugees as it is an act contrary to international law and norms. Instead, the Prime Minister should grant UNHCR full access to detention centers to identify refugees and asylum seekers and ensure their protection and safety. Until such time when law and order is restored in Myanmar, and a democratically-elected government is firmly in place, chosen by the popular vote of its citizens, we should not cast the lives of these 1,200 detained Myanmar nationals into an undesired and dangerous territory.

In our Christian faith tradition, God instructs his people to show mercy and compassion to others. He calls us to care “for the widows, the fatherless, and the foreigners among us” (Deuteronomy 10: 18)

Since this is the season of Lent we are called to spiritual introspection and to engage in acts of charity, and what better way to affirm it then to uphold the principle of the sanctity of life and the dignity of all persons, created and loved and endowed with rights by God.

Note a single asylum seeker, refugee and anyone else whose life is under threat should be forced to return to Myanmar or any other country where they may face persecution, and even death in a situation of conflict.



REV. DR. HERMEN SHASTRI
General Secretary
Date: 23RD February 2021

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