



## **Additional background on the 2030 Agenda and human rights**

**With the adoption of the transformative and universally applicable 2030 Agenda, Member States challenged themselves to ensure that the SDGs are implemented in accordance with international law (para. 18), through an integrated and universal approach (para. 5). They further committed to “leave no one behind” and to “reach the furthest behind first” (para. 4).**

**Moreover, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets out a vision for sustainable development grounded in international human rights standards (paras. 10, 18, 19, 67, 74), putting equality and non-discrimination at the centre of its efforts (paras. 3, 4, 48, 74) and encompassing not only economic and social rights but also civil, political, and cultural rights, as well as the right to development (paras. 13, 18, 55, 74).**



## Section A: Background

A1. Name of institution responding to the survey

Justice for All



**A2. Name of the respondent and contact email address of the respondent**

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## Section B: Integrated approaches to promote and protect human rights and implement the 2030 Agenda

**B1. In your view, have we made progress in ensuring that national level SDG action is guided by human rights norms and standards including with regard to fighting discrimination and inequality and leaving no one behind? Please explain and share promising practices, lessons learned and remaining challenges.**

Our NGO advocates for the human rights of persecuted minority populations, with a focus on Muslims impacted by institutionalized Islamophobia, oppression and even genocide. These populations include Rohingya, Uyghur and Indian Muslims. From our viewpoint, governmental plans are only worth considering if they are effectively implemented. To ensure social acceptance, implementation requires "whole of government" message discipline that, at the very least, avoids divisive rhetoric, hate speech and vilification.

Unfortunately, the crisis situations in Myanmar (Burma), Xinjiang (East Turkestan) and India do not satisfy this basic criteria. While these governments may submit claims to be integrating human rights into the work of various sectors, what reality does this rather theoretical architecture have for marginalized communities?

THIS SURVEY LIMITS THE LENGTH OF RESPONSES. I will be sending a more detailed response via email.

**B2. Faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, countries have adopted economic and financial policies and measures to limit human rights setbacks and to bring countries back on track to achieve the SDGs? Can you share examples of promising practices where COVID-19 responses and recovery plans aimed at resuming SDG progress have been linked with human rights? What are key challenges and lessons learnt?**

There have been many challenges in this period during which numerous governments have used the pandemic as an excuse by which to increase their hold on power, threatening progress on SDGs.

In Malaysia and India, for example, there have been increased xenophobic attacks on migrants with little to no government intervention (and oftentimes apparent government approval). The nationalist "Hindutva" movement even promotes the false notion of a "corona-jihad" plot among Indian Muslims.

In Burma, we see military efforts to control vaccine distribution whilst the military junta continues to bomb vulnerable minorities. In China, the pandemic has become an excuse to increasingly limit freedom of movement as seen in excessive lockdown measures and forceful removal from homes into abysmal quarantine centers, almost mimicking their treatment of Uyghurs.

It is also concerning that China has used the pandemic as an excuse to limit access to a Commissioner Bachelet in Xinjiang. Clearly the pandemic has also resulted in widely divergent and imperfect policies, with lockdowns continuing under a "zero tolerance" approach in China, but not in most of the rest of the world. Access to vaccines varies enormously, as does compliance with masking and other protocols. (MORE IN EMAIL)

**B3. In your view, is progress being made to secure more meaningful and active participation of civil society and other stakeholders in SDG national level action (design, implementation and reporting)? Please share examples of promising practices as well as lessons learned and remaining challenges.**

We cannot speak to SDG national level design, as we are not aware of any consultation between the governments in India, China and Myanmar and their civil societies on the SDGs. Burmese civil society overwhelmingly opposes the current junta and dialogue is impossible. In China, institutions are dominated by the Chinese Communist Party. In India, such consultations are possible despite the divisions fostered by the Modi Government, but we will leave it to Indian NGOs to speak to this.

We also note that we have never heard of a consultation between our own (USA) government and civil society on the SDG issue. The Trump Administration was highly selective in which NGOs it interacted with. Unfortunately, however, all administrations tend to deal with civil society as a PR exercise rather than a meaningful exchange of ideas. Before the pandemic, there was more access and more opportunity to engage on this issue at the UN in New York, but, two years on, the pandemic has evidently become a pretext to limit such discussions.

There has been significant backsliding in effective action on social justice issues impacting US minorities. With the current political and media climate, it may be difficult to achieve consensus on human rights in enacting social policies. (More in email)



**B4. Is there any other information on integrated approaches to achieve the SDGs and the protection and promotion of human rights that you would like to share with us? Have you issued any recent publications on the issue that you would like to draw our attention to?**

Justice for All has a variety of reports on our website: <https://www.justiceforall.org/category/resources/reports/>

Our NGO currently focuses its program Burma Task Force on the right to education, as access to education naturally integrates with many other SDGs, chiefly; No Poverty, Good Health and Well-being, Reduced Inequalities, and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. The Rohingya minority has been excluded from education both in their home country of Myanmar (Burma) but also as refugees in host nations including Bangladesh. Despite signing the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Bangladesh betrays its own principles by making an exception for the Rohingya. Please note our recent publication on this issue, Let Rohingya Learn

Integration might be better achieved if we conceptualize these SDGs in broader terms. Donor nations should integrate the right to education into humanitarian aid. Donors should also recognize the educational needs of the host nation. This education provided for the Bangladeshi children can be education in cultural tolerance, etc. which would improve the situation of the Rohingya in Bangladesh. As we can see, expanding the scope of some of the SDGs may make other SDG goals more easily attainable.

**Thank you for your contribution!**