

Statement on Buddhist-led violence against Muslims in Burma/Myanmar 2017

As a Buddhist, I am utterly opposed to the encouragement of violence and discrimination against Muslims in Burma and elsewhere in the name of Buddhism.

Violence and discrimination led by Buddhists against non-Buddhist minorities is also well documented in other countries, including Sri Lanka.

There can be no Buddhist justification for such violence. To engage in or incite violence motivated by hatred and prejudice goes against the teachings of the Buddha and is a fundamental breach of Buddhist ethical principles, including Buddhist monastic vows.

In particular, the five ethical precepts taught by the Buddha express the principle of *ahimsa*, or non-harming. They are an undertaking to train in compassion - in our actions, in our words and even in thought.

Furthermore, the Buddha urged his followers to cultivate loving kindness – not simply for one's family or ethnic group, but for strangers and those with whom we are in dispute.

Accordingly

- I urge all Buddhists, including my Burmese brothers and sisters, to join me in expressing abhorrence of violence led by Buddhists.
- I urge Burmese Buddhist leaders to do everything in their power to halt the anti-Muslim violence in their country.
- I also urge Burmese Buddhist leaders to take immediate action to call to account Buddhist monks who have encouraged or taken part in violence or discrimination, physical or verbal.
- I call upon the government of Myanmar (Burma) to allow: freedom of movement to all citizens including Muslims; unlimited access to humanitarian aid for all displaced citizens; and the immediate release of all detained Muslims unless charged with an internationally recognised crime.

Signed in a personal capacity,

Venerable Ugyen Sangharakshita, Founder of the Triratna Buddhist Order, UK

Dharmachari Amrutdeep, Member of the Triratna Buddhist Order, Public Preceptor & Order Convenor, India

Dharmachari Dhammarati, Member of the Triratna Buddhist Order, Public Preceptor, UK and North America

Dharmachari Mahamati, Member of the Triratna Buddhist Order, Public Preceptor, UK

Dharmacharini Parami, Member of the Triratna Buddhist Order, Public Preceptor, UK, Spain and Latin America

Dharmachari Saddhaloka, Member of the Triratna Buddhist Order, Public Preceptor, UK

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Dharmacharini Vijaya, Member of the Triratna Buddhist Order, Private Preceptor, India

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Note:

The Triratna Buddhist Order (formerly the Western Buddhist Order) was founded in London, UK in 1968 by the Venerable Ugyen Sangharakshita. It is a worldwide Buddhist order numbering over 2000 women and men in 28 countries including India. www.thebuddhistcentre.com