



**ACHEH-SUMATRA NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
(ASNLF)**

**Eleventh Session of Human Rights Council Forum on Minority Issues:
Statelessness: A Minority Issue
29-30 November 2018
Room XVII, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland**

**Root causes and consequences of statelessness affecting minorities:
Preventing statelessness through a human rights approach
(Item 2, 29 November 2018, 3-6 p.m.)**

Thank you, Madam Chair,
Ladies and Gentleman,

Acheh-Sumatra National Liberation Front or ASNLF would like to thank the Forum for this opportunity. We are pleased that this year the forum decided to address the question of statelessness. It is indeed one of the key issues of our time.

Speaking on item 2 **“Root causes and consequences of statelessness affecting minorities”**, I would like to draw your attention to the situations of ethnic minorities and statelessness in Indonesia.

As a sprawling archipelago and a former Dutch East Indies colony, with a territory as large as continental Europe, Indonesia consists of dozens of different ethnic and linguistic minorities. To understand and address the issue of statelessness one must go back to root causes as why and how a minority have been stateless and the consequences thereafter.

Madam Chair,

Unlike in many parts of the world, more particularly in Africa, many ethnic minorities have become stateless mostly due to border disputes designed by former colonial powers. But Indonesia has a different story, a paradox as it really is, that can be compared to the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. As a colonial power, the entire Dutch East Indies has been kept intact and brought under one single administration, called Indonesia, regardless of how and from whom this huge territory had been confiscated.

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Due to this succession and transfer of power, some minorities/peoples such as Aceh, West Papua, South Moluccas etc. have become stateless when their states of nationality ceased to exist, or when their separate territories, all of sudden, came under the control of another state.

Aceh is such an example. The territory was an independent, internationally recognized country for centuries. The Dutch took it by force and later, After World War Two, Aceh was incorporated into Indonesia and lost its status as a sovereign state.

As the natural consequences of these historical discrepancies, Aceh has been hit by a prolonged conflict with Indonesia, most of the time has been violent. The latest one is a thirty-year-armed conflict which ended with a Helsinki peace deal in August 2005.

Thirteen years have gone since the deal; attempts to implement it through human rights approach have also failed, despite several provisions in the deal include the establishment of two human rights institutions: Human Rights Court (HRC) and Trust and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Gross violations of human rights during the conflict have been silenced, not a single perpetrator has been brought to justice, signalling that such atrocities are allowed to be violated in Aceh with impunity. In the post Helsinki accord, nothing has changed regarding the protection of human rights and resolving the past abuses by military. In the word of Amnesty International (Time to face the past, 2013) in this regard, I quote:

"The conflict remains an open wound — the fate of many of those killed is still unknown, perpetrators of human rights abuses walk free"

As human rights are universal and have been the foundation of human existence, international community including the United Nations should not ignore about the current situations in Aceh. The grievances and injustices suffered by Acehnese are real, not imagined.

We, therefore, believe that a larger portion of the root causes to statelessness and violent conflicts occur as the result of years and decades of oppression of minorities by larger groups and their authoritarian governments. In this regard, again, the international community, and even the UN, also bears some responsibility for ignoring this oppression and violations of human rights.

Thank you, Madam Chair.