

Short Biography of Myo Win

U Myo Win is a husband, father, human rights activist and founder and Executive Director of a non-governmental organization working to raise silent and moderate voices and ensure social justice for ethnic and religious minorities in Myanmar. He also serves as the team leader of the Interfaith Council of Myanmar and voluntary deputy head of mission of Al-Azhar Islamic Institute of Myanmar. He is a prominent member of the Yangon education and human rights community and has been recognized for his leadership in the facilitation of significant community pursuits.

Experience

Born in Yangon in 1978 to a Muslim family, Myo Win was raised in an era of community fear due to the military junta's policies and personally experienced the injustice of discrimination towards minorities. Persevering restrictions on his own educational restrictions, Myo Win has served as a private tutor for matriculation students and has worked as a facilitator for peace and conflict situations, mediation, team-building, leadership, organizational development, social entrepreneurship, trauma healing, and post-traumatic stress (PTSD) for nearly two decades.

In 2007, Myo Win founded SMILE and has served as its Executive Director and CEO since its inception. Believing that youth are the key to sustaining long-term social and economic development, SMILE invests in the younger generation to become leaders of change by undertaking civic initiatives in their respective communities. Since 2009, SMILE has expanded its reach to youth outside of the education system, women, and human rights defenders and broadened its scope of work to include:

- Legal reform, including drafting and advocating for the inter-faith Harmony Bill, which focuses on religious freedom and combatting hate speech and hate crime;
- Research and evidence creation on the challenges faced by religious and ethnic minorities regarding access to housing, citizenship, and education, which included a Gap Analysis of the 1982 Citizenship Law;
- Supporting documentary film-making on spotlight issues in Myanmar (e.g. gender-based violence) and raising awareness on them internally and externally
- Initiating and strengthening numerous consortiums and civil society groups at national, regional, and global levels. Including Metta Circle Consortium, Myanmar Civil Society Forum for Peace, Myanmar Peace and Human Rights Consortium, the Regional Consultation Body of the Freedom of Religion or Belief in ASEAN.

Myo Win has long been outspoken about the human rights situation in Myanmar and has been invited to speak on these issues on numerous panels across the US and Europe. Most recently, Mo Win spoke alongside the Special Rapporteur in Myanmar, Dr. Yanghee Lee, at Forum Asia's side event on Human Rights in Myanmar at the UN's 38th Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Since 2009, Myo Win has also conducted research on the challenges faced by religious and ethnic minorities, especially regarding access to housing, citizenship, and education. He is an experienced speaker having addressed audiences at universities such as Harvard, UC Berkeley, and Purdue explaining the situation in Myanmar, and most recently speaking on the identity crisis

of ethnic minorities in Myanmar. He has a forthcoming article titled “Citizenship Documentation of Myanmar and the Discrimination of Religious and Ethnic Minorities” to be published in the edited volume

Ethnic and Religious Diversity in Myanmar: Contested Identities, published by Bloomsbury Academic to be released in December 2021: <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/ethnic-and-religious-diversity-in-myanmar-9781350187429/>.

Education

Myo Win studied at a government school in Tharkayta Township, a suburb of Yangon, and obtained his Bachelor’s degree in Islamic Theological Science and Bachelor’s in Psychology of the University of East Yangon. He studied about Conflict Resolution at the University of York, England as a Chevening Fellow.

Accomplishments & Awards

- 2008 Chevening Fellowship on Conflict Resolution from York University
- 2009 Crown of Peace Award from Universal Peace Federation of USA
- 2010 – 2012 Director of English Access Micro-Scholarship Program of the US State Department
- 2012 Australia Leadership Award
- 2018 Clyde Snow Social Justice award from Oklahoma University
- 2021 Article titled “Citizenship Documentation of Myanmar and the discrimination of Religion and Ethnic Minorities to be publish the edited volume Ethnic and Religious Diversity in Myanmar: contested identities, published by Bloomsbury Academic to be released in December 2021.

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