

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission's Position Statement on SEANF proposed review

1. On 1 September 2026, the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia, in its capacity as Chair of the Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF) for 2026, sent a letter to the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC). The letter included proposals to conduct a formal review of the MNHRC's continued eligibility for membership in the Forum and to reconsider the arrangement under which the MNHRC would assume the Chairmanship of the Forum for 2027 in accordance with the alphabetical rotation system. In response to the said letter, the Commission, on 24 September 2026, sent a reply to all member National Human Rights Institutions of the Forum, stating that it could not accept the Forum's proposal to conduct such a review, as it was inconsistent with the Forum's Rules of Procedure (RoP), and that the Commission would not submit itself to such a review.
2. Although the Commission had already clearly responded to all member National Human Rights Institutions of the Forum, the Commission has noted that the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia issued a media statement on 25 September 2026 entitled **"SEANF commences formal review of MNHRC's continued eligibility for membership."**
3. The Forum was established with National Human Rights Institutions from Southeast Asian countries, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Myanmar, as members, pursuant to Rules of Procedure that govern the conduct of its members. The Forum's Rules of Procedure contain no provision authorizing a review of the membership of any member Commission. Furthermore, since the establishment of the Forum up to the present, there has been no precedent of conducting such a review.

4. On 14 August 2026, a special meeting of the Forum's Governing Board was held without notifying the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, at which the other five member institutions unilaterally discussed and decided to conduct a review of the Commission's membership in the Forum. Such action is inconsistent with Articles 11(2), 11(7) and 17(4) of the Forum's Rules of Procedure, which provide that decisions of the Forum shall be made by consensus of all members. The decision made at the special meeting of the Forum's Governing Board, while excluding the Commission, is not only inconsistent with the Forum's Rules of Procedure, but is also contrary to fundamental human rights principles, including non-discrimination, fairness and equal treatment.
5. The arrangements to conduct a review of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission's membership in the Forum are inconsistent with the Forum's Rules of Procedure and amount to actions beyond the provisions prescribed therein. Therefore, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission hereby declares that we will categorically reject and dissociate in the review initiated by the Forum.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

Date: 26 September 2026