

Press Release

Miles2smile Foundation



02/09/2023

Ref No: M2S072301

The Miles2Smile Foundation, a registered non-profit organization committed to humanitarian work, vehemently denies and condemns the recent article titled “Was dubious NGO Miles2Smile building illegal structures for Rohingyas in Nuh? Cries after anti-encroachment drive by Haryana govt, Nuh violence and more” published by OpIndia about our organisation, which is rife with unfounded and misleading allegations. The organization is taking a stand against this irresponsible journalism and setting the record straight.

The OpIndia article falsely characterizes Miles2Smile Foundation as ‘dubious’ and questions the authenticity of its operations. Contrary to these claims, Miles2Smile is a legally registered entity under Section-8 of the Companies Act 2013 (18 of 2013) and Rule 8-Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014. The organization holds an 80(G) certificate from reputable authorities. Additionally, the foundation diligently files Income Tax Returns every year, transparently disclosing donations received and expenses incurred. Its office in New Delhi operates in full compliance with government regulations for non-profit organizations.

Additionally, OpIndia asserts that our founder, Aasif Mujtaba, accused the Government of Haryana of demolishing structures constructed over three years by our organization. We categorically deny making any such accusation on any platform. This claim is entirely baseless. None of the structures out of the 1,200 demolished structures (as confirmed by the administration) were constructed by the Miles2Smile Foundation. While we are not surprised by this unsubstantiated claim, it's worth noting that OpIndia has a track record of disseminating fake news.

The Rohingyas, fleeing persecution in their homeland, began arriving in India during the 1970s and are now dispersed across the country, often residing in impoverished camps. In 2017, due to a severe crackdown by Myanmar's military, hundreds of thousands sought refuge across the border. Human Rights Watch estimates that around 40,000 Rohingyas are in India, with at least 20,000 registered with the UN Human Rights Commission.

Most of the Rohingyas in the Nuh area arrived in 2017. Their settlement in Delhi was not sanctioned by UNHCR, leading them to seek assistance from the local Mewati community in Nuh. They built a settlement in the area. The temporary structures established were not constructed by Miles2Smile; we played no role in building this settlement.

It was only in December 2021 that Miles2Smile began its involvement with the Rohingyas, following a massive fire that razed a settlement. We rebuilt (made up by bamboo & asbestos sheets) a pre-existing settlement, reconstructing 7 out of 34 temporary settlements destroyed in the fire. In January 2022, we established the Fatima-al-Fahiri learning centre for Rohingya children, offering education in subjects like Hindi, English, Math, and Science. Article 21(A) the Indian Constitution which was inserted into the Constitution by means of the Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 ensures ‘Education for All’.

Furthermore, when faced with the partial demolition of another settlement in the Chandeni area due to land ownership issues, Miles2Smile assisted in the rebuilding of existing structures. These reconstruction efforts in Nuh are the cornerstone of our work. We also manage the Fatima Sheikh Learning Centre and support two local Madarasas, aiding them with ration for children.



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OpIndia's article continues by attributing statements to us regarding the Doodh Ghati situation, which we have never made on any platform. The claim that we accused the government of demolishing structures built by us is groundless, as we never constructed any such structures to begin with.

The government of India has a comprehensive data on the Rohingya population in Nuh, and all our activities are transparent and accessible to the government. We publish detailed reports of our work on our official website.

OpIndia also misconstrues our organization's purpose. While it credits us for providing relief to Muslim victims of the 2020 Delhi Pogrom, it falsely labels the pogrom as "anti-Hindu riot." It's important to note that out of the 53 people who tragically lost their lives, 38 were Muslims. Delhi Minorities commission, in its fact-finding report on Northeast Delhi riots submitted to Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has reported that 11 mosques, five madrasas, a dargah (shrine) and a graveyard were damaged. No religious place belonging to non-Muslims was damaged in Muslim-concentrated areas. This characterization as "anti-Hindu riot" is inconsistent with the conclusion reached by an independent fact-finding committee formed by the Delhi Minorities Commission (DMC). This committee, tasked with safeguarding religious minority rights, determined that the events of February 2020 constituted a "pogrom." This term, historically associated with anti-Jewish violence, is now used in the context of anti-minority violence across South Asia, given the religious hierarchies that contribute to such incidents. However, let's save this discussion for some other day.

OpIndia also places blame on Rohingyas for the violence in Nuh, despite ongoing investigations. Such accusations are premature and unfounded.

OpIndia deems Rohingyas as 'illegal' refugees. There are organizations that assist refugees from various corners of the world, including Hindus from Pakistan. However, OpIndia seems to take exception to anything remotely associated with Muslims. Their concerns don't seem to extend to refugees in general; instead, they exhibit a distinct bias against Muslim refugees, reflective of their inherent prejudice against the Muslim community.

We would like to emphasize that our relief work is not limited to any specific religion. We have provided assistance to Hindu families in Jahangirpuri, and this information is well-documented in our reports on our website. Our commitment to providing relief and support extends beyond religious boundaries.

At Miles2Smile, we firmly believe that no human is illegal, and every child deserves education. Our core values are rooted in humanity and co-existence, and we believe that every human being deserves a life of dignity.

Miles2Smile is exploring legal steps against these defamatory allegations made by OpIndia. We remain committed to our mission and stand against falsehoods that attempt to tarnish our efforts.

A copy of this statement has already been sent to OpIndia

Aasif Mujtaba
CEO, Miles2Smile Foundation

