

## No assurance from Centre on Rohingya

Listing the case for hearing on September 11, a Bench led by Chief Justice Dipak Misra asked advocate Prashant Bhushan, who appears for Mohammad Salimullah and Mohammad Shaqir, the two Rohingyas, to first serve the copy of their petition to the Centre. The court then asked Mr. Mehta to take instructions from the Centre.

“The 40,000 Rohingyas are the world’s most wretched people. They have been persecuted everywhere. Protect them,” Mr. Bhushan, assisted by advocate Pranav Sachdeva, said in an emotional opening statement before the Bench.

But, the court refused to commit to anything.

The petition by the Rohingyas contended that any move to deport them would violate the constitutional guarantee of the Indian state to “protect the life and liberty of every human being, whether citizen or not.”

Their deportation, the petition said, would violate India’s commitment to international conventions which recognise the ‘Principle of Non-Refoulement.’ This principle of customary international law prohibits the deportation of refugees to a country where they face threat to their lives.

The UNHRC Report of 2016 has noted successive patterns of serious violations to the right to life, liberty and security of the Rohingyas by state security forces and other officials in Myanmar.

Violations, the report said, included summary executions, enforced disappearance, torture and ill-treatment, forced labour, arbitrary arrest and detention of hundreds, including women and children.

Recently, the NHRC had also issued notice to the government on the proposed deportation.

Panic struck the refugee community following media reports of a statement by Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju in Parliament in early August that the Central government had directed States to identify and deport illegal immigrants, including Rohingyas.

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