

Five steps the UK can take now to start to address the Rohingya crisis

Briefing by Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK,
Burma Campaign UK and Justice4Rohingya UK

The British government has not done all it can to ensure justice and accountability for the violations of international law against the Rohingya and other ethnic groups in Burma.

The British government has not done all it can to support the humanitarian needs of Rohingya in Burma and of Rohingya refugees.

The British government has not done all it can to promote the rights of the Rohingya, both in Burma and in host countries such as Bangladesh.

Nor has the British government committed itself to implementing the recommendations of the Independent United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, available here:
<https://burmacampaign.org.uk/media/International-Fact-Finding-Report-on-Myanmar.pdf>

There is no single measure that can be taken to address the Rohingya crisis, it will take a combination of a wide range of measures. Here are five things the British government can do immediately to start that process of helping to address the Rohingya crisis.



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1. Impose sanctions on military companies

The Burmese military earns hundreds of millions of dollars a year through its vast range of military-owned companies. Burma Campaign UK has published a 'Dirty List' exposing international companies linked to military-owned companies.

The British government should immediately impose sanctions to stop British companies doing business with the military and helping to fund genocide. The Independent United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, and Burmese human rights activists, including Justice For Myanmar, have called for such sanctions.



2. Join the genocide case at the International Court of Justice

Gambia has brought a case against Burma at the International Court of Justice that Burma is in breach of the Genocide Convention. Gambia is supported in the case by 56 other members of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation, the Maldives, Canada and the Netherlands. The British government has refused to join.



3. Stop supporting the Union Election Commission

The Union Election Commission (UEC) is responsible for the administration of elections in Burma. Its members are appointed by the government. The UEC discriminates against Rohingya seeking to be candidates in Burma's elections, banning them from standing. It has also acted in a discriminatory way against Muslim and other potential ethnic candidates. The UEC receives funding from the British government, as well as from the European Union, Norway and other countries.



4. Protect and increase funding for refugees and IDPs

International donors, including the UK, do not prioritise the need of refugees and IDPs from Burma when making aid spending decisions. In recent years, aid to refugees in Thailand has even been cut, causing immense suffering to vulnerable populations.

With significant cuts in the UK aid budget on the way, the funding for IDPs and refugees should not only be ring-fenced, but actually increased. These populations are aid dependent and as the British government and others are unwilling to take steps to help them return home safely, we have a special responsibility for their wellbeing.



5. Citizenship is essential for safe return of Rohingya refugees and addressing root causes. Real pressure is needed on Aung San Suu Kyi's government

Just as the military must be held accountable for their crimes against the Rohingya and other ethnic groups, so must Aung San Suu Kyi's government.

Aung San Suu Kyi is breaking international law by denying the Rohingya citizenship, restricting international aid to the Rohingya and implementing a range of laws and policies which are designed to make life unbearable for the Rohingya, and which are part of the genocide against them.

Years of attempting quiet diplomacy to persuade Aung San Suu Kyi to change her discriminatory policies against the Rohingya have completely failed. During the first five years of her government, the situation of the Rohingya has deteriorated on every level, and elections in November 2020 again exclude Rohingya from voting and standing as candidates.

The British government and others must now recognise that Aung San Suu Kyi is part of the problem and that as with the military, talk of pathways to citizenship are nothing more than a delaying tactic which has been used to dupe the international community for 8 years and counting.

The British government should publicly advocate for an immediate change to the Citizenship Law in Burma to ensure that the Rohingya's right to citizenship is recognised. The British government should review whether it should continue to provide development and humanitarian support to and through the government, in light of the appalling human rights record of Aung San Suu Kyi's government.



Write to Nigel Adams MP, Minister for Asia at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, and ask the UK Government to take these five steps:

Nigel Adams MP
Minister for Asia at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

Email: fcdo.correspondence@fcdo.gov.uk

Links

Compilation of the recommendations of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/FFM-Myanmar/20190916/A_HRC_42_CRP.6.pdf

Burma Campaign UK 'Dirty List' of companies linked to the military or human rights violations in Burma.

<https://burmacampaign.org.uk/take-action/dirty-list/>

Justice for Myanmar website: www.justiceformyanmar.org

Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK

www.brouk.org.uk

Burma Campaign UK

www.burmacampaign.org.uk

Justice 4 Rohingya UK

www.justice4rohingya.org

