

Joint Statement

Date: 11th December 2020

The British government must join ICJ Rohingya genocide case against Myanmar

We, the undersigned Rohingya organisations, are calling on the British government to urgently join the genocide case against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. It is now clear that the Myanmar government has no intention of following the Provisional Measures set out by the court. More pressure from the international community is needed to end the ongoing genocide, and to assure accountability for the gravest of international crimes.

It is just over a year since the historic proceedings against Myanmar at the ICJ started. The case is brought by the Gambia, and Myanmar stands accused of breaching the Genocide Convention. It is the first time ever that Myanmar has been held accountable for its crimes. The proceedings at ICJ have been welcomed by many groups who have long suffered under Myanmar government oppression and Myanmar army attacks, not just us Rohingya. We all know that there is no justice for us under the national judicial system in Myanmar.

On 23 January 2020, 17 judges unanimously decided to impose provisional measures on Myanmar, in order to halt the ongoing abuses against the Rohingya and to preserve evidence, while the court proceedings continue. These proceedings can take years to conclude. Since then, the Myanmar government has been requested to report to the court twice, to show that they are complying with these provisional measures. These reports have not been made public.

The Myanmar government is not implementing or following the provisional measures, and that the genocide against the Rohingya is ongoing. If the international community does not urgently increase its pressure on the Myanmar government, more Rohingya lives will be lost.

In September, the Netherlands and Canada said they were planning to make a formal intervention in the case. We now urge the British government to also throw its weight behind the case. We are convinced, due to the history of British government support for human rights in Myanmar and the position of the United Kingdom internationally, that this would substantially add pressure on the Myanmar government, help ensure accountability and prevent new crimes in Myanmar.

The British government also has specific expertise to offer, not least its expertise through the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) programme. As the “penholder” on Myanmar at the UN Security Council, an intervention by the British government would add significant weight to the case.

The United Kingdom has long led the world in promoting and defending human rights in Myanmar. Now is not the time to abandon that position. It is time to step up.

Additional Information:

BROUK report, Dereliction of Duty, November 23 2020:

<https://www.brouk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BROUK-Briefing-on-ICJ-case-Nov-2020-.pdf>

BROUK report, A Continuing Genocide, May 24 2020: <https://www.brouk.org.uk/a-continuing-genocide-myanmars-failure-to-implement-the-international-court-of-justice-provisional-measures-order/>

Signatories

1. Arakan Rohingya Development Association - Australia
2. Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO)
3. Arakan Rohingya National Union (ARNU)
4. Arakan Rohingya Society and Peace and Human Rights (ARSPH)
5. Australian Burmese Rohingya Organisation
6. British Rohingya Community in UK
7. Burmese Rohingya Association in Queensland-Australia (BRAQA)
8. Burmese Rohingya Association Japan (BRAJ)
9. Burmese Rohingya Community Australia (BRCA)
10. Burmese Rohingya Community in Denmark
11. Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK)
12. Canadian Burmese Rohingya Organisation
13. Canadian Rohingya Development Initiative
14. European Rohingya Council (ERC)
15. Free Rohingya Coalition (FRC)
16. Los Angeles Rohingya Association
17. Myanmar Ethnic Rohingya Human Rights Organisation in Malaysia
18. Rohingya Action Ireland
19. Rohingya American Society
20. Rohingya Arakanese Refugee Committee
21. Rohingya Association of Canada
22. Rohingya Community in Netherlands

23. Rohingya Community in Norway
24. Rohingya Culture Centre Chicago
25. Rohingya Human Rights Initiative
26. Rohingya Organisation Norway
27. Rohingya Refugee Network
28. Rohingya Student Network
29. Rohingya Student Union
30. Rohingya Women Development Network (RDWN)
31. Rohingya Women for Justice and Peace (RWJP)
32. Rohingya Women Welfare Association (RWWS)
33. Rohingya Women's Empowerment and Advocacy Network (RWEAN)
34. Rohingya Youth Association
35. Rohingya Youth for Legal Action
36. Swedish Rohingya Association

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