



Media Release from Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK)

For Immediate Release 12th February 2018

Myanmar's Genocide of Rohingya Is Not Over: Rohingya Need UN-Protected Safe Zones

Nayapara Camp, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh: The genocide of Rohingya in Myanmar is far from over, said the Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK) after a 4-day fact-finding trip to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

“The evidence is mounting that the Myanmar military, led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, and supported by the civilian government led by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, continues its genocidal campaign of the Rohingya people,” said BROUK President Tun Khin, who met with dozens of Rohingya who arrived in Bangladesh in late January and early February from villages in Buthidaung and Rathedaung Township.

The events that have unfolded and the evidence that has come to light proving that the government's claim of carrying out a security operation is a farce. The Myanmar military's actions clearly show an intent to destroy the Rohingya's homes, their livelihoods, and their very lives.

New arrivals spoke of ongoing military abuse, including arbitrary arrests, disappearances, forced starvation, extortion, denial of access to rice fields, denial of access to humanitarian assistance, prevention of access to markets, forced labour and increasing pressure to accept the National Verification Card (NVC), part of a government plan which effectively denies Rohingya identity and citizenship. New arrivals in Bangladesh also reported that movement restrictions, pressure from local Rakhine extremist groups and lack of aid had created major shortages which forced them to flee to Bangladesh.

“We were forced to leave our homes by security forces, who said we had to have our pictures taken for a family list, but when we returned to our

houses they had been burnt down by security forces and Rakhine extremists. Later we were accused of burning down our own homes and arrested. After paying bribes, we were released and fled the country,” Anuwar, 25 years old from Kyauk Phyu Taung village, Buthidaung Township, told BROUK.

Residents of Sin Daung say many Rohingya are still living in Buthidaung Township. The refugees told BROUK that soldiers have built a military camp in the village and are using Rohingya for forced labour. Villagers also report that military personnel have threatened the remaining residents with “clearance operations” and a repeat of the massacre in Gu Dar Pyin, where the Associated Press has uncovered evidence of five mass graves.

Recently arrived refugees also reported that pressure from local Rakhine groups had effectively buffered a policy of starvation. “Rakhine extremists threatened us if we left the village. We can’t get out to get food. We were without food for two to three days. Our village was surrounded by Rakhine people. Rakhine people have taken all our rice stock piles,” said Hameed Hussein, 29 years old from Anauk Pyin village, Rathedaung Township.

“It is clear that the Burmese military wants the remaining Rohingya to leave Rakhine State and are using different tactics to drive them out. Genocide does not have to be a military attack, these are genocidal policies and they are still getting away with it,” said Tun Khin.

Also adding to the evidence of genocide is the investigative report by Reuters: “Massacre in Myanmar” (<https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/myanmar-rakhine-events/>) published on 9 February, which draws for the first time on interviews with Buddhist villagers who confessed to torching Rohingya homes, burying bodies and killing Muslims.

The arrest of Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo while reporting this atrocity indicates the Myanmar government and military's attempt to cover up their crimes and muzzle those who speak against them.

“Almost six months after this brutal campaign began, the military operation against the Rohingya continues, only now they are using different tactics to drive our people out. The UN Security Council meeting on February 13th provides an opportunity for the international community to finally take steps to stop Myanmar’s genocide of the Rohingya and put in place UN protected safe zones for Rohingya communities in Myanmar,” said Tun Khin.

“Not a single country has taken any serious action against the Burmese military and this has sent the message that the military can simply carry on its operations, driving more Rohingya out of the country. At the same time, the army has stepped up attacks against other ethnic minorities, in particular, the Kachin. The international community's failure to respond has created a system of impunity. Rohingya have no means to defend themselves. The international community: the EU, USA, UK, Canada and OIC members have a responsibility to protect them and must take concrete steps to save this community, including the elderly, women and children, from Myanmar’s brutal campaign of killing, rape and destruction, and be given access to provide life-saving humanitarian aid and services. Furthermore, action should be taken to refer the situation in Burma to the International Criminal Court, impose a UN-mandated global arms embargo, and issue targeted sanctions on military companies.”

For more information, please contact Tun Khin [+44 7888714866](tel:+447888714866).