

News story: Sexual violence abuses against the Rohingya in Burma

The PM's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

The harrowing reports of mass rape and sexual violence against the Rohingya community people in Burma are deeply disturbing.

As well as rape, gang rape, invasive body searches, and murder, the reports suggest that evidence of these crimes is being deliberately destroyed to stop those responsible being brought to justice. These abuses are a clear human rights violation and must cease immediately.

The Head of Team for the FCO's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) visited the region alongside the UN to meet with survivors, support workers, and government officials. We will also shortly be sending two experts to Bangladesh to provide further support on responding to sexual violence, including on investigating and documenting these abhorrent crimes.

The international community have united come together to deliver a global response to the dire humanitarian situation and human rights abuses. We also acknowledge the Bangladeshi government have been instrumental in helping those most in need.

Background

The Head of Team for the FCO's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative visited Bangladesh alongside the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten. They visited Dhaka and Cox's Bazar and met survivors, service providers and government officials.

The FCO is working with the Stabilisation Unit to deploy two Deployable Civilian Experts (DCE) to Bangladesh to conduct a needs assessment of the extent of reported sexual violence and service provision. The DCEs are experts in gender issues and criminal law, including sexual violence in conflict, they will look at the extent of reported incidents of sexual violence, services being provided to survivors and their families, identify gaps in service provision and make recommendations for the UK Government. Part of the assessment will be a deep dive on investigation and documentation of sexual violence.

The PSVI Team of Experts (ToE) was established in 2012 to strengthen the specialist capabilities that the UK is able to bring to bear on these issues.

The ToE is owned by the FCO and housed in the Stabilisation Unit, forming part of their wider Civilian Stabilisation Group, which is a roster of Deployable Civilian Experts. The ToE currently consists of criminal lawyers, policing advisers, gender based violence experts, international investigating officers, training experts, psychosocial experts, social workers, and sexual offences examiners. Each deployment is tailored to local needs and circumstances.

The ToE does not collect evidence or investigate sexual violence. Instead the deployments are designed to complement and reinforce the work of others, including governments UN and NGOs. Since November 2012 we have deployed 74 experts to 13 countries in support of 22 projects. Further information about the ToE can be found [here](#).

Burma is a priority country for PSVI and Women, Peace and Security including in the UK's National Action Plan and Implementation plan which runs from 2014-2017. The National Action Plan enables the Government to articulate our priorities on Women, Peace and Security and coordinate implementation of our work at the national level.