

Press release: Minister Field Statement on the Anniversary of the Rohingya Crisis

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“Today marks the anniversary of the Kofi Annan Commission recommendations for Rakhine. It is tragic that this was so closely followed by the brutal, disproportionate response of the Burmese military to a series of coordinated attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army. We have been clear in our condemnation of both the initial attacks and the appalling military operations that followed, which we have consistently described as ethnic cleansing. Violence will not solve the long-standing issues in Rakhine.

“During his life, Kofi Annan was a constant advocate for human rights, international development and the rule of law. His vision of long-lasting peace for Burma was supported by investing time and energy into making sure every community in Rakhine State had a voice in their future. It is through implementing the recommendations outlined in his report we can ensure that Annan’s legacy and commitment to peace in Rakhine are honoured. We continue to believe this sets out the most viable path for resolving a decades-long conflict, ensuring stability and security for all.

“The underlying issues need to be addressed too if there is to be sustainable progress. The Memorandum of Understanding between Burma and the UN is a step in the right direction. It should now be put into action. Most immediately, this means ensuring unfettered and effective access for the UN to northern Rakhine State. Without it, hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people remain without the aid and development assistance they urgently need. Over the border in Bangladesh, the desperate flight of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya has created a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions.

“The UK Government has led the international response, both diplomatically and in terms of humanitarian support. We are one of the largest donors supporting the delivery of much needed humanitarian assistance, providing over £129 million to date. We remain steadfast in putting pressure on the Burmese authorities through direct discussions and at the UN Security Council, where we are using our Presidency to call a session on Burma on 28 August.

“We will continue to work towards bringing to justice the perpetrators of human rights violations, including sexual violence, through a transparent, independent and credible process.”

Further information

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