Date : 20 December 2018

Rohingya Fleeing Rakhine By Boat are Part of Ongoing Genocide

20 December 2018 -- London -- The Burma Human Rights Network believes that the current exodus of Rohingya fleeing from Burma by boat is part of the ongoing genocide against the Rohingya by the Burmese authorities. The Rohingya who are fleeing from Rakhine State are mostly leaving IDP (Internally Displaced Person) camps in Sittwe, where they have been stuck in squalid conditions with no hope of resettlement since 2012. The Rohingya in Sittwe have no prospect of being returned to their own villages, no freedom of movement, limited access to medical treatment, and lack even the most basic of human rights.

“The Rohingya fleeing are doing so due to conditions implemented and maintained by the Burmese government and security forces. In creating these conditions they have made life unbearable for the Rohingya, forcing them to seek ways to leave the country as part of a broader campaign of genocide against the Rohingya,” Said BHRN Executive Director, Kyaw Win.

On November 27th the Burmese authorities intercepted a boat that had departed from Sittwe which was carrying 93 Rohingya. The boat was believed to be on its way to Malaysia. On December 4th a boat carrying 20 Rohingya arrived in Indonesia. At least 3 boats have been intercepted by the Burmese authorities and BHRN has documented a surge in Rohingya planning to flee Bangladesh.

Those Rohingya who were stopped by the Burmese authorities were returned to their IDP camps in Sittwe after being detained and then forced to accept National Verification Cards which do not allow them to self identify their ethnicity but instead refer to Rohingya as Bangladeshis. These Rohingya sold their ration cards and all of their belongings to pay the traffickers, returning them to their camps will bring them to a situation which is far worse than before. “Clearly the Burmese authorities do not want the Rohingya in Burma, and returning those who fled to a worse hell seems to be an intentional effort to make them suffer even more,” Kyaw Win said.

The international community must step up to address this issue before it further escalates. The Burmese Government must be held accountable for the conditions they have created in Sittwe and the actions they took to expel nearly 800,000 Rohingya in 2017. ASEAN nations should play a key role in addressing these issues, especially as they are most likely to suffer the burden created by an emerging refugee crisis.

Nations with strength in the UN, such as the US and UK, must support referring Burma to the International Criminal Court or *ad hoc* Tribunal for crimes committed against the Rohingya and other minorities living inside of the country. In doing so, the international community must support the newly mandated "Independent Mechanism" which will investigate and prepare trial ready cases. This support is needed for the mechanism to be fully funded to get to work. Fifth Committee negotiations in the General Assembly are crucial in this regard and the US, EU, OIC and others must stand strong in the face of any attempt to gut the mechanism of its proposed funding.

Background on the Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN)
Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN) is based in London and operates across Burma/Myanmar works for human rights, minority rights and religious freedom in Burma. BHRN has played a crucial role advocating for human rights and religious freedom with politicians and world leaders.

Media Enquiries
Please contact:

Kyaw Win
Executive Director
Burma Human Rights Network
+44 (0) 740 345 2378
kyawwin78@gmail.com
http://www.bhrn.org.uk