



# ARAKAN ROHINGYA UNION

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## **TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION BRIEFING BY DR. WAKAR UDDIN, DIRECTOR GENERAL, ARAKAN ROHINGYA UNION**

Co-Chairmen Congressmen McGovern and Hultgren and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit a written statement for today's hearing on the Human Rights of the Rohingya People.

Arakan Rohingya Union has been monitoring the situation in Rakhine state for the past several years through a number of sources, including sources on the ground in various Townships in Rakhine state, media, and personnel from state agencies and NGOs. The persecution of Rohingya ethnic minority by the Government of Myanmar has caused waves of humanitarian and political crises in Rakhine (Arakan) state during the past several years. Most recently, the assaults on Rohingya villages by Myanmar Government armed forces (army, BGP paramilitary police, and local police) have brought the crises to a new level with tens of thousands of Rohingya men, women, and children displaced internally and externally. Mass killings of Rohingya civilian population and atrocities by the Myanmar armed forces have been widespread in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships in Northern Rakhine state.

On October 9, 2016, an armed clash between a group of Rohingya insurgents and Myanmar paramilitary border police (BGP) took place in Maungdaw in Northern Rakhine state. According to sources from Rakhine state, the Rohingya insurgent group was trapped by the Myanmar military as a pretext for creating instability in Northern Rakhine state that has been relatively trouble free since the violence broke out in 2012. The ultra-nationalists in the Government of Myanmar have been evidently eying the heavily Rohingya populated Northern Rakhine state since the 2012 violence; thus, launching the campaign against Rohingya civilian population with the aim of Rohingya population displacement again, internally and externally, particularly to force them out to neighboring countries.

Since October 9, 2016, Myanmar Government forces have torched over 30 villages in Maungdaw township in Northern Rakhine state, and 7 villages have been obliterated. Eye witnesses have described summary execution of Rohingya civilian, indiscriminate killing of women, elderly, and children, gang rapes, throwing children into fire, confining people inside the burning homes, and a number of brutal killings. Several hundred people are still missing, and over 500 Rohingya men are languishing in the military's detention camps under horrifying conditions. Escapees from one detention camp in Kyigan Pyin have described the treatments of Rohingya detainees by the Myanmar armed forces that are humanly unthinkable. Some detainee were so severely beaten by the military interrogators that they bled to death and some others went unconscious. Witnesses have also described several dead bodies from the camp taken to the wooded areas behind the camps by the armed forces. Mass graves have been discovered in certain locations in Maungdaw North. Since October 9, 2016, over a thousand Rohingya have died, 73,000 have been forced out to Bangladesh, and over 45,000 have been displaced internally. These are in addition to over 250,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and over 140,000 in IDP camps in Rakhine state in Myanmar.

United Nations Special Rapporteur Yanghee Lee has visited Northern Rakhine state, with limited access given by the Government of Myanmar, and to Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh very recently. She has spoken to the victims of rapes, sexual violence, and other crimes. In her oral report to the 34<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Commissions, the Special Rapporteurs has described the crimes committed by the Myanmar Government forces against Rohingya as "crimes against humanity". Humanitarian aid workers who have treated the victims of rape and other atrocities in camps in Bangladesh described the crimes against Rohingya also as "crime against humanity". Numerous testimonies and authenticated audio, video, and still images from Rakhine state have provided overwhelming evidence of crimes against humanity committed by the armed forces of the Government of Myanmar.

We appeal to the Government of the United States to fully support the establishment of Commission of Inquiry by the United Nation to probe the violence against Rohingya in Northern Rakhine state, and to strongly urge the European Union and all the OIC member states to stand by the Rohingya victims of the crimes committed by Myanmar armed forces. Further, we appeal the United States to pressure the Government of Myanmar to permanently cease all the human right violations and the flawed national verification campaign, restore the full citizenship of Rohingya, immediately release all the Rohingya detainees, repatriate all the internally externally displaced Rohingya population, and give international relief groups and the media full access to all Rakhine state.



**The Burmese Rohingya Association of North America**  
A Signatory of Arakan Rohingya Union