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ORAL STATEMENT

ITEM 2: Interactive Dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation of Rohingya people

ENDING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION AND PERSECUTION OF MYANMAR'S ROHINGYA

UN Human Rights Council
Thirty-eighth session
18 June – 6 July 2018

Mr. President,

From August last year, the Myanmar security forces have engaged in a devastating campaign of violence against the Rohingya population in northern Rakhine State. Security forces have killed thousands, raped women and girls and burned hundreds of villages.

Our research shows that these crimes against humanity were not the actions of a few rogue soldiers or units, but part of a tightly controlled operation, involving members of the military and Border Guard Police at all levels. Responsibility for these crimes extends to the very top of the chain of command – so too must justice and accountability.

Mr President,

Attention has rightly focused on the military's violence. But crimes against humanity against the estimated 600,000 Rohingya still living in Rakhine State are ongoing, in the form of the systematic denial of their rights to equality, to a nationality, to freedom of movement, and access to adequate healthcare, education, and work opportunities. Their rights to participate in public life and to manifest religious beliefs are also violated.

On 6 June this year – just days before the Eid celebration – authorities in northern Rakhine State issued an order instructing local administrators not to allow the performance of collective prayers without permission. This is just one example of the abusive laws, policies and practices against the Rohingya in Rakhine State, which form part of a dehumanising regime of discrimination and segregation which legally constitutes apartheid, a crime against humanity under international law.

It is clear that there can be no voluntary, safe and dignified returns until this appalling system is dismantled and Rohingyas' rights are restored. Voluntary, safe and dignified returns will also require justice and accountability for the serious violations that have occurred.

We urge all members of this Council to support an immediate Security Council referral of the situation to the International Criminal Court.

During the next Council session in September, we also urge this Council to build on the work of the Fact-Finding Mission by establishing an international accountability mechanism to collect and preserve evidence and identify individuals responsible for crimes under international law with a view to bringing them to justice, and with an emphasis on Rakhine, Kachin and Shan States.

Thank you, Mr. President.