



For Immediate Release
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Australian Government must push for an end to Myanmar's devastating Rohingya crisis

In the wake of a [UN report](#) documenting atrocities against the Rohingya people, a coalition of civil society organisations are calling for the Australian Government to urgently pressure the Myanmar authorities to condemn the human rights abuses and act immediately to protect Rohingyas.

The report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is based on interviews with Rohingya refugees who describe witnessing mass gang rape, brutal beatings, disappearances and killings, including of babies and young children.

Kate Lee, Executive Officer of Union Aid Abroad APHEDA said: "The recounts from Rohingya people fleeing Myanmar are horrific and truly devastating. They have seen their family members killed and more than half of the women interviewed said they had been raped or sexually violated."

Despite numerous reports of violence committed by the country's security forces, the new National League of Democracy (NLD) led Government in Myanmar has repeatedly denied any human rights abuses taking place in the area.

To date, the Australian Government's position has been to avoid openly criticising the new government.

Kate Lee continued: "The Australian Government has the potential to play a significant diplomatic role in resolving this escalating crisis. Australia has a history of diplomatic and political influence in the region and it should be used to pressure the Myanmar government to condemn the human rights abuses in Rakhine State being perpetrated by the military and immediately move to protect the Rohingya people".

Ged Kearney, President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions said: "The persecution of the Rohingya is a blight on Myanmar's global reputation. The Australian government must now intervene."

A [global statement](#) issued today by a coalition of civil society organisations has highlighted the assassination of prominent Muslim NLD legal advisor, U Ko Ni and calls on the NLD Government to "prohibit advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence". U Ko Ni had proposed an amendment to Myanmar's constitution which would have limited the powers of the country's military.

Marc Purcell, CEO of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) backed the statement, adding: "The Myanmar Government must assert the religious and ethnic equality of all people in Myanmar, including the persecuted Muslims in Rakhine State. Australia should use its international influence to push for an immediate end to the crisis and for a UN Commission of Inquiry".

ENDS



Notes to Editors

[UN News Centre – UN report details 'devastating cruelty' against Rohingya population in Myanmar's Rakhine province](#)

Link to Report of Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: [Mission to Bangladesh Interviews with Rohingyas fleeing from Myanmar since 9 October 2016](#)

[Link to global statement on the assassination of U Ko Ni and signatories](#)

Yanghee Lee, the UN special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar, has [told journalists that she will urge member states of the Human Rights Council to sponsor a resolution for a UN commission of inquiry](#).

Media Contacts

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