



**Special Advisory Council for
MYANMAR**

Remembering the Rohingya Genocide

25 August 2021: Four years ago, decades of state persecution of Rohingya in Myanmar culminated in a campaign of genocidal atrocities committed against Rohingya by the Myanmar military. Today, the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (SAC-M) remembers the victims, those still facing persecution in Rakhine state, and the refugees in Cox's Bazar and around the world.

The 25th of August marks the day in 2017 when the Myanmar military and security forces descended upon Rohingya villages in northern Rakhine state and unleashed a campaign of horror against Rohingya girls, boys, women and men. Thousands were killed, thousands more were raped and tortured, and three quarters of a million people were forced to flee to Bangladesh, where they remain. Those who fled joined a quarter of a million earlier Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

“We three have all been profoundly changed by our investigations into what was done to the Rohingya in August 2017, by meeting with survivors and hearing your stories,” the members of SAC-M said to the survivors. **“Today, we remember the victims, we encourage you in your struggle and we reaffirm our commitment to the continuing fight for justice, reparation and the reinstatement of your rights.”**

The one million Rohingya refugees confined to camps in Bangladesh continue to endure dire conditions. Deadly fires swept through the camps earlier in the year and now serious flooding has caused further destruction.

The coup launched by the Myanmar military in February has created further uncertainty around the prospects for establishing conditions in Myanmar conducive to the voluntary, safe, dignified and durable return of Rohingya refugees.

The Rohingya who remain in northern and central Rakhine face deteriorating conditions and ongoing discrimination. Their access to COVID-19 vaccination programmes is reported to be restricted or prevented entirely. Meanwhile, the threat of more military rule – the same military responsible for the atrocities remembered today – threatens to entrench the military’s impunity for its crimes and render justice ever more remote.

“The fourth anniversary of the atrocities also serves as a moment for us all to recall the lessons of history, and what may come if racism, exclusion, persecution and impunity for human rights violations are allowed to prevail,” said SAC-M. **“Those lessons must inspire the people of Myanmar as they rise up against the military and look to a future of peace, pluralism and a new democracy in which the Rohingya are full, equal participants in Myanmar society.”**

Should the tragedy of such magnitude that fatefully befell the Rohingyas, which is veritably a national tragedy, were ever to recur, that would spell the demise of the idea of the Myanmar nation. On this day of remembrance SAC-M calls on the people of Myanmar and the international community not to forget. Not to forget what the Myanmar military has done. Not to forget what it continues to do. Not to forget what is at stake for *all* those striving to resist military rule. Not to forget the Rohingya.