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ANNEX D

Canada's strategy to respond to Rohingya crisis

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Ottawa, Ontario - May 23, 2018

The grave humanitarian and security crisis in Myanmar is a global tragedy, which has led more than 717,000 Rohingya to flee their homes in Rakhine State and seek refuge in neighbouring Bangladesh.

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today unveiled Canada's strategy to step up its response and meet the needs of those displaced and most vulnerable. This comprehensive strategy is based on recommendations highlighted in the final report (http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/response_conflict-reponse_conflits/crisis-crisis/rep_sem-rap_esm.aspx?lang=eng) from the Prime Minister's Special Envoy to Myanmar, the Honourable Bob Rae.

Guided by the Feminist International Assistance Policy, the strategy places a central emphasis on the needs of women and girls, and puts forward concrete and timely initiatives to promote human rights, gender equality, human dignity, and peace and security in the region.

Canada will lead on several initiatives, including those to improve living conditions of Rohingya refugees in camps and settlements. We will support efforts to bring perpetrators of gross human rights violations to account, and to achieve a political solution to the plight of the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities in Myanmar. We will also help coordinate international efforts to address the crisis.

Canada will dedicate significant funding – \$300 million over three years – to address the region's humanitarian, development, and stabilization needs in a coordinated and timely way.

Canada was one of the first countries to respond to the crisis, and remains one of the top humanitarian donors. This strategy builds on our current efforts, and represents our commitment to do more while continuing to work closely with the international community and the United Nations on a path forward.

Quote

“Canada will not stand idle while hundreds of thousands of people – Rohingya communities and other minorities – suffer gross human rights violations. We share a global responsibility to respond to this crisis. We commend others who have acted in a compassionate and generous way, especially the Government of Bangladesh and host communities in the region who continue to provide safe refuge to their neighbours in need. We will continue to step up to protect human rights, and promote inclusion, respect for diversity, and security for all, while working towards sustainable peace and true reconciliation in Myanmar.”

— *The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada*

Quick Facts

- The Government of Canada's strategy addresses the four areas of action of Mr. Rae's final report:
 1. The humanitarian crisis in Bangladesh and Myanmar
 2. The political situation in Myanmar
 3. The question of accountability and impunity
 4. Effective coordination and cooperation
- The Government of Canada is providing assistance to the region through humanitarian partners, including United Nations agencies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and other non-governmental organizations.
- Since the beginning of 2017, Canada has provided \$45.9 million for aid partners to deliver life-saving and gender-responsive support for refugees, displaced people, and the communities who are hosting them. This includes \$12.5 million for the Myanmar Crisis Relief Fund that matched the generous contributions Canadians made to charities last year between August and November 2017.
- On October 23, 2017, Prime Minister Trudeau named Mr. Rae as his Special Envoy to Myanmar. Mr. Rae was asked to engage in diplomatic efforts to address the crisis, and to advise the Prime Minister on how Canada could best support efforts to respond to the needs of those affected and displaced by violence.
- Mr. Rae has made two trips to Myanmar and three to Bangladesh. He has met with officials, leaders and non-governmental organizations in those countries and others, including Indonesia, Vietnam, and the United Kingdom, to assess the crisis and identify what Canada could do to address it. He has also visited the United Nations in New York to meet with senior officials and member states, and travelled to Geneva to engage with Kofi Annan – Chair of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State – and others working to address the crisis and promote peace and reconciliation in Myanmar.
- Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland and Minister of International Development and La Francophonie Marie-Claude Bibeau have each visited Bangladesh once since August 2017.
- The Prime Minister also continues to engage with other world leaders on the crisis in Myanmar and Bangladesh, expressing his deep concerns over the situation in Rakhine State for Rohingya and other minorities.
- The Prime Minister has spoken directly with Her Excellency Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, to highlight the need for Myanmar to accelerate efforts to uphold human rights and protect ethnic and religious minorities, and the importance of ensuring the safety of civilians and people returning voluntarily. During all exchanges, he confirmed Canada's support for ongoing reforms in Myanmar and Canada's readiness to help.

Related product

- Canada's strategy to respond to the crisis in Myanmar and Bangladesh (http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_developpement-enjeux_developpement/response_conflict-reponse_conflits/crisis-crisis/strat-rohingya.aspx?lang=eng)

Associated Links

- Canada and the crisis in Myanmar's Rakhine State (http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/response_conflict-reponse_conflits/crisis-crisis/myanmar.aspx?lang=eng)
 - Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (<http://www.international.gc.ca/gac-amc/campaign-campagne/iap-pai/index.aspx?lang=eng>)
 - Prime Minister appoints the Honourable Bob Rae as Special Envoy to Myanmar (<https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2017/10/23/prime-minister-appoints-honourable-bob-rae-special-envoy-myanmar>)
 - Prime Minister announces support for peace process and humanitarian assistance in Myanmar (<https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2017/06/07/prime-minister-announces-support-peace-process-and-humanitarian-assistance-myanmar>)
 - Prime Minister welcomes final report from Special Envoy to Myanmar (<https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2018/04/03/prime-minister-welcomes-final-report-special-envoy-myanmar>)
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Canada's Strategy to Respond to the Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar and Bangladesh

Introduction

The grave crisis in Myanmar is a global tragedy that demands an urgent and concerted international response. The perpetration of crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing has led more than 717,000 Rohingya to flee their homes in Myanmar's Rakhine State and seek refuge in neighbouring Bangladesh. The situation continues to get worse – with more Rohingya crossing the border into Bangladesh every day.

The massive influx of Rohingya refugees has added to the hundreds of thousands of refugees already in the region. Local communities are under intense strain in one of the poorest and most disaster-prone areas of Bangladesh. The humanitarian situation is precarious, especially as the camps and settlements are vulnerable to flooding and landslides during the monsoon season. Congested living conditions continue to increase the risk of outbreaks of disease. Providing life-saving assistance remains a priority.

The situation in Myanmar is also dire. More than 450,000 Rohingya living in camps and villages in central and northern Rakhine State, already one of Myanmar's poorest states, face restrictions on their human rights and limitations on their freedom of movement. The recent violence has heightened intercommunal tensions and distrust among ethnic Rakhine, the Rohingya, and other ethnic communities. Significantly diminished access to food, services, and the ability to generate income is adding to the vulnerability of these marginalized populations. Security in Myanmar is another ongoing concern for Rohingya and other ethnic minorities. Access to the region remains severely restricted and allegations of serious human rights abuses – including sexual and gender-based violence – are of deep concern.

Canada's position is clear: no population, group, or community should ever face persecution or discrimination based on their identity. Canada will not stand idly by as people are denied their most basic human rights simply because of who they are. We have a moral obligation to act. Failing to address the crisis would also have negative long-term consequences – creating an enduring humanitarian crisis with the potential to become a persistent source of political instability in the region.

Canada's Strategy

In October 2017, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appointed the Honourable Bob Rae as Special Envoy to Myanmar. On April 3, 2018, Mr. Rae submitted his final report outlining 17 recommendations for

Canadian action. This strategy outlines how the Government of Canada will implement Mr. Rae's recommendations. The Rohingya crisis is an extraordinary situation that demands a comprehensive response. Canada will take bold steps to address the crisis in areas where we can make a difference. This response will focus on four core objectives:

- i. Alleviating the humanitarian crisis;
- ii. Encouraging positive political developments in Myanmar;
- iii. Ensuring accountability for the crimes committed; and
- iv. Enhancing international cooperation.

These objectives are complementary and mutually reinforcing. The current crisis does not have an immediate solution. It will require sustained engagement to address urgent needs in Bangladesh and Myanmar, to help set conditions conducive to the safe and dignified return of refugees, and to help lay the foundations for a lasting political solution within Myanmar.

Canada will dedicate \$300 million of international assistance funding over the next three years to support a coordinated response.

Humanitarian Crisis

Canada's assistance will help improve the living conditions for Rohingya refugees in camps and settlements, support host communities in Bangladesh to mitigate the impact of the crisis, and address the needs of displaced and other vulnerable and conflict-affected populations in Myanmar. Canada will also work toward building support for the resettlement of Rohingya refugees to Canada and other countries. Guided by Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, the strategy will put women and girls at the centre of our efforts to protect human rights, advance human dignity, and promote peace and security. Canada's ongoing bilateral assistance to Bangladesh will not be diverted to respond to this crisis.

Canada's response will build on our current humanitarian and development assistance, and will continue to address the particular needs of women and girls. Canada was one of the first countries to respond to the humanitarian crisis and is supporting gender-responsive, life-saving humanitarian programming. Almost every woman and girl in the camps and settlements in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh has survived or witnessed sexual and gender-based violence – including sexual assault. Knowing that the crisis has a disproportionate impact on women and girls, Canada will immediately support additional programming to deliver services that meet their specific needs, and work to ensure that women and girls meaningfully participate in all aspects of program planning, delivery and decision making processes.

We will also continue to support sexual and reproductive health programming. As Ministers Freeland and Bibeau, and Special Envoy Rae observed on their visits to Bangladesh, this assistance has already provided critical support to individuals who have been affected and forcibly displaced by the crisis. This gender-responsive approach has helped provide vital resources to women and girls who have experienced sexual and gender-based violence, and has provided access to safe spaces, psychosocial support for survivors and services specific to their needs. Canada will continue to advocate with other donor countries for the importance of funding sexual and reproductive health and rights programming as a key component of humanitarian response.

We will work with partners to improve living conditions of Rohingya refugees in the camps and settlements, and support host communities in Bangladesh to help mitigate the impact of the crisis. Canada will continue to support their evolving needs by providing funding to improve access to

health, food assistance, treatment for acute malnutrition, water and sanitation programming, essential non-food items, and learning and income-generating opportunities.

In advance of the monsoon season, Canada announced \$8.15 million in funding focused on emergency preparedness and assistance for Rohingya refugees and host communities. This brought the Government of Canada's total humanitarian assistance contribution in Bangladesh and Myanmar to \$45.9 million since the beginning of 2017. This includes \$12.5 million for the Myanmar Crisis Relief Fund that matched the generous contributions Canadians made to registered charities between August and November 2017.

In Myanmar, Canada will continue to advocate for full, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access to vulnerable populations in this region and will work with the United Nations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and other non-governmental organizations to address the acute needs of displaced and vulnerable populations, and provide assistance in other conflict-affected regions such as Kachin and Shan States.

Canada stands ready to welcome Rohingya refugees when conditions in the region permit their resettlement. This will require international cooperation and depends on the ability of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to identify and refer cases, as well as working with the Government of Bangladesh to secure exit permits. Canada will work with key international partners, including the Government of Bangladesh and the UNHCR, to determine the potential for resettlement from within Bangladesh. Canada will lead discussions with like-minded countries to encourage a broad international resettlement response. Once resettlement is possible, Canada will work with the UNHCR to determine the appropriate timing and to identify the most vulnerable families and individuals. When conditions allow, Canada will also expedite cases of privately sponsored refugees. In the interim, we will expedite family class sponsorship cases of Rohingya identified by family members in Canada.

The Political Situation in Myanmar

Canada will support efforts to achieve a political solution to the plight of the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities in Myanmar. Through sustained diplomatic engagement and targeted programming, Canada will promote human rights, inclusion, respect for diversity, inclusive democracy and security for all in Myanmar. Canada will work with regional partners to build the conditions necessary for the voluntary, dignified, sustainable, and safe return of Rohingya refugees. Canada will advocate for the UNHCR, the agency mandated to work and protect refugees, to play a central role in the return process on both sides of the Bangladesh-Myanmar border and will support its efforts to protect and provide assistance to refugees.

Canadian assistance will seek to advance development and improve peace and security in Myanmar, with a view to supporting implementation of the recommendations made by the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State and fostering long-term reconciliation. The root causes of conflict must be addressed through initiatives that support inclusion, counter discrimination, and encourage peacebuilding and reconciliation. Canada will support conflict-sensitive and gender-sensitive inter-communal dialogue, income-generating activities, and nutrition activities for Rohingya and other communities in Rakhine that contribute to building peace and improving conditions for eventual returnees. Our programming will support the improvement of inter-communal relations, inclusive local governance, and the role of civil society organizations to conduct inclusive and meaningful interventions and to address conflict in Rakhine State.

Guided by Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, our engagement in Myanmar will focus on the promotion of human rights, justice, gender equality, human dignity, and peace and security – particularly for women and girls who have been disproportionately affected by the crisis. Canadian assistance will support local women's rights organizations to strengthen women's voices and leadership, and build inclusive networks. These efforts will promote inclusive governance that enhances the meaningful participation of women and marginalized groups in decision-making and democratic processes, including efforts to decentralize governance.

Canada will continue to support the peace process. We will sustain engagement through the Joint Peace Fund and its coordination work, which includes the meaningful participation of women in the peace process, support for civil society organizations, and engagement with all levels of government. Canada will engage civil society to promote human rights and religious harmony, combat hate speech, and advance the women, peace, and security agenda in line with Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Canada will work to contribute to a future where peace, diversity, inclusion, and human rights are respected.

Accountability and Impunity

Canada will work with international partners to end impunity. Those responsible for human rights abuses and violations, including sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, must be brought to justice. Canada will enhance our diplomatic engagement and leadership with United Nations Member States and key bodies such as the Human Rights Council, the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar. This engagement will be crucial to identify gaps, avoid duplication, and coordinate efforts by Canada and other partners to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable. This will also include strong support for international accountability mechanisms and international human rights institutions, as well as independent fact-finding efforts and initiatives seeking to collect and preserve evidence of the crimes committed. These efforts will pay special attention to preventing re-victimization and the protection of those collecting and storing the evidence.

Canada strongly supports the ongoing work of the United Nations Human Rights Council's Fact-finding Mission on Myanmar, which will report back to the Council this September. Canada will lead and support initiatives that ensure the proper collection, organization, maintenance, and protection of evidence for legal proceedings. We are exploring all avenues to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice. Canada has begun consultations with partners to consider several specific actions and initiatives, including advocating for the establishment, or extension, of appropriate types of accountability mechanisms, such as or akin to the International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism on international crimes committed in the Syrian Arab Republic. Finally, Canada will support a referral of the situation in Myanmar by the United Nations Security Council to the International Criminal Court.

Working with like-minded partners, Canada is determined to enhance the effectiveness of targeted sanctions against those who have committed gross human rights violations in the course of the current crisis. Canada's current sanctions regime under the *Special Economic Measures (Burma) Regulations* of 2007 maintains an arms embargo against Myanmar and targets designated entities and individuals of the Government of Myanmar. Canada has in place some of the most comprehensive sanctions related to Myanmar compared to like-minded countries.

The Government of Canada sanctioned a senior military official in February 2018 under the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act*. Canada will continue to work to identify additional

individuals from Myanmar as further information becomes available. Canada continues to call on the Security Council to systematically incorporate sexual and gender-based violence as a specific designation criterion in United Nations sanctions regimes.

International Cooperation

Canada will encourage expanded international cooperation in response to the crisis in order to better coordinate assistance, align advocacy efforts, and encourage increased action. As part of this strategy, Canada will work to establish an international working group to address the crisis together with other countries. Canada will also spearhead efforts at the United Nations and in other multilateral institutions to build political will and coordinate international efforts to address this worsening crisis. We will leverage Canada's 2018 G7 Presidency to garner and sustain international engagement on the situation, and to raise the issue at G7 ministerial meetings and the G7 Leaders' Summit.

Canada will continue to advocate for the human rights of the Rohingya and on the need to bring perpetrators of violence to account. When Minister Freeland and Minister Bibeau visited the region, they both engaged directly with survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and women leaders. As Special Envoy Bob Rae has underscored, listening to the voices of the Rohingya themselves is crucial to Canada's effort.

The voices of the Rohingya and other affected communities will continue to inform our actions going forward. All partners working with the Government of Canada are expected to consult affected communities, particularly women and girls, to ensure their meaningful participation in the design of initiatives, and to empower them to participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. We encourage others to take concerted collective action and to reaffirm their support for a sustainable resolution to this crisis. Canada is committed to working with domestic, regional, and international partners to address the impact of this continuing human tragedy.

Conclusion

Rohingyas wanted the world to know that they are human. Special Envoy Bob Rae has reminded Canadians of the importance and the need to listen to and amplify Rohingya voices.

Canada shares a global responsibility to respond to this crisis and address the needs of those displaced and most vulnerable, particularly women and girls who have been disproportionately affected. This strategy represents Canada's commitment to do more while continuing to work closely with the international community and the United Nations on a path forward.

Canadians have shown remarkable generosity towards the Rohingya people, exemplified by their donations of \$12.5 million as part of the government's Myanmar Crisis Relief Fund initiative. The government of Canada also benefits from the involvement and leadership of Canadian civil society, which has been mobilized on this issue and has developed global networks of advocacy and support. Canadian leadership on the Rohingya crisis also comes from Canadians across the country who refuse to be passive witnesses to the crisis unfolding before their eyes.

All human beings should be treated with respect and dignity, no matter their religion, ethnicity, or where they come from. Canada will continue to step up and act. We are putting forward concrete and timely initiatives that will have an impact on the lives and futures of the Rohingya. These initiatives blend continuity and innovation, and reflect a strategy rooted in proven, scalable, and transformative actions: humanitarian support to save lives; sustained and active international advocacy; and

enhanced development assistance in Myanmar and for host communities in Bangladesh.

We will protect human rights, and promote inclusion, respect for diversity, and security for all, while working toward reconciliation in Myanmar and putting women and girls at the centre of our response. We will advocate for the voluntary, dignified, safe, and sustainable return of the Rohingya, and help implement the recommendations of the Kofi Annan-chaired Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. The gravity and scale of this crisis demands a bold and comprehensive response. Canada is determined to take a greater leadership role, and help meet the needs of those displaced and most vulnerable. Over the coming months, we will announce further elements of the strategy, keeping Canadians informed of our actions and providing support to the courageous individuals working on the front lines of this crisis. Canada recognizes the urgency with which focused and collective action must be taken to address this deepening crisis. We will work with our allies and partners to hold perpetrators accountable, help bring an end to the violence and build lasting peace.

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