

## **Oregon's Rohingya Community and Never Again Coalition Welcome the U.S. Genocide Determination for Crimes Committed Against the Rohingya**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 20, 2022 - Oregon's Rohingya community and the Never Again Coalition welcome the announcement of a U.S. determination that crimes committed against the Rohingya of Myanmar amount to genocide and crimes against humanity. This determination is long overdue and is a step in the right direction for accountability, justice and an end to the ongoing genocide.

By making this genocide determination, the U.S. government recognizes what we have known for generations. The lived experiences of the Rohingya are testimony to the systemic persecution that has been perpetrated against us in an attempt to erase us as a people. The impunity that the Myanmar military has enjoyed has led to the persecution of other communities as well and emboldened the military to forcibly take power in a coup on February 1, 2021. For a genocide determination to have meaning, it must be followed by actions.

The actions by the U.S. in response to the persecution of the Rohingya and other ethnic groups as well as in response to the military coup, have been appreciated but are not enough. What we need to see now are concrete actions by the U.S. to address the root causes of the Rohingya genocide and the junta's relentless attacks on civilians in Burma. This requires targeted sanctions on the junta's finances, in particular Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprises. It also means supporting international justice mechanisms including the cases before the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice, to address the crimes against us and bring about justice and accountability.

For the United States to truly "walk alongside the Rohingya", as Secretary Blinken stated in his remarks, the U.S. must make concerted efforts to improve the conditions for Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh and other parts of the world, as well as Rohingya that remain in Rakhine State. The conditions are not conducive for repatriation for Rohingya and will not be until their safety, freedom and citizenship can be guaranteed. Knowing this, the U.S. must prioritize resettlement to Rohingya refugees.

Following the U.S. genocide determination in Darfur in 2004, there was little action taken to address the situation and its root causes. Eighteen years later, little has improved for the people of Darfur and the situation in Sudan as a whole has become protracted. This cannot be the case for the Rohingya. It should not be the case for the people of Darfur, or for persecuted communities anywhere in the world.

The U.S. is standing on the right side of history by making this determination today. The question now is, will the United States use this moment to commit to taking action to help change the trajectory of the situation for the Rohingya and for all people of Myanmar? We hope so.