



February 6, 2018

Senator Bob Corker
Chairman
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6225

Senator Ben Cardin
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6225

Re: Amnesty International statement of support for Burma Human Rights and Freedom Act of 2017 (S. 2060)

Dear Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Amnesty International and our more than seven million members worldwide, we submit this statement of support for the [Burma Human Rights and Freedom Act of 2017 \(S. 2060\)](#). The bill is scheduled for markup at the business meeting on Wednesday, February 7, 2018.

Since late August 2017 the Myanmar military has executed an ethnic cleansing campaign that has resulted in the displacement of an estimated 688,000 Rohingya – approximately the population of Washington, D.C. The military’s systematic campaign has consisted of mass murder, scorched villages, and mass rape of women and girls – acts that amount to crimes against humanity. At the root of this crisis is the Myanmar military’s absolute grip on power and latitude to operate with impunity.

For over two decades Congress has taken the lead in shaping U.S. policy toward Myanmar, and the U.S. has been the lead donor providing humanitarian assistance to Rohingya refugees who have fled to Bangladesh as well as those internally displaced within Myanmar. At this pivotal moment Amnesty International urges Congress, the administration, and the international community to respond decisively and hold Myanmar authorities to [account for these gross violations of human rights](#). This is a crisis that demands not only immediate attention to meet the urgent humanitarian need but also requires solutions that tackle the roots causes of the crisis, protect human rights, and establish accountability for those responsible for heinous crimes.

A [two-year investigation undertaken by Amnesty International](#) reveals that the root causes of the current crisis in northern Rakhine state are a result of the Rohingya being trapped in a vicious system of state-sponsored, institutionalized discrimination that amounts to apartheid. As documented in an October 2017 Amnesty International report, “[Caged without a roof](#),” Myanmar authorities have imposed a systematic and state-sponsored system of segregation and discrimination on the Rohingya people. Amnesty International has consistently documented unconscionable crimes occurring against the Rohingya including murder, deportation and forcible displacement, torture, rape and other sexual violence, persecution, apartheid and other inhumane acts such as denying life-saving provisions.

Amnesty International is calling on the U.S. to recommit to being the international leader in providing humanitarian assistance to aid the Rohingya. Amnesty International is also urging the U.S., in concert with the international community, to impose a comprehensive arms embargo and targeted financial sanctions against senior Myanmar military officials responsible for crimes against humanity.

To this end, Amnesty International urges the Committee to approve S. 2060, and urges the Senate to pass the bill. If enacted, S. 2060 would:

- significantly increase pressure on Myanmar military officials to conduct prompt investigations and prosecutions of those who have committed heinous crimes;
- prohibit any military-to-military engagement between the U.S. and Myanmar including exchanges, training programs, and assistance;
- require Myanmar to cooperate with the U.N. fact-finding mission, including providing unfettered access to northern Rakhine state;
- require Myanmar to guarantee unfettered access to northern Rakhine state for all humanitarian aid groups.

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202/509-8151 or jlin@aiusa.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joanne Lin
National Director
Advocacy and Government Affairs