



# AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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## UNGA THIRD COMMITTEE

23 October 2018

### Item 74: Independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar

#### Statement by H.E. Ambassador Gillian Bird Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

*(Check against delivery)*

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Australia thanks the Fact-Finding Mission for its update and reiterates its deep concern at the Mission's conclusions of crimes against humanity, war crimes and possibly genocide.

We use this opportunity, also, to thank the government and people of Bangladesh for their ongoing generosity and compassion in hosting such a large number of displaced persons.

Noting the recommendations of the Fact-Finding Mission, Australia has imposed targeted financial sanctions and travel bans against five Myanmar military officers cited as responsible for human rights violations committed by units under their command.

Australia has consistently stressed the importance of accountability — to bring justice to victims, to deter future atrocities and, by extension, to encourage returns.

We encourage Myanmar to engage with the Fact-Finding Mission and other bodies that have documented abuses. We also note that Myanmar has appointed a Commission of Enquiry comprising members from Japan and the Philippines

as well as Myanmar. We further strongly encourage the Commission to examine the facts and circumstances outlined in the UN Fact-Finding Mission's report.

Given the gravity of the Fact-Finding Mission's conclusions, Australia also supports new international accountability efforts.

We supported efforts at the United Nations Human Rights Council to establish an ongoing independent mechanism to pursue accountability for serious international crimes.

Australia reiterates its call on the Myanmar authorities to create conditions conducive to the safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable return of the Rohingya. We acknowledge the partial access granted to UNHCR and UNDP in northern Rakhine State under the tripartite MoU on repatriation, and urge progress toward full and effective access.

Likewise, Australia acknowledges Myanmar's ongoing efforts to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. These provide a pathway to addressing the root causes of instability in Rakhine State.

We recognise the significant development, security and human rights challenges in Rakhine State. Addressing these challenges in a comprehensive manner will be a complex undertaking and require regional and international collaboration.

Australia will continue to support the humanitarian needs of those affected, and to work with Myanmar, Bangladesh, and our partners in the region to encourage efforts towards a long term and durable solution to the crisis in Rakhine State, and, more broadly, to consolidate democracy and secure national peace and reconciliation.