

Statement by Bangladesh Representative at the Third Committee under Agenda Item 72 on the report of Professor Yanghee Lee on Human Rights Situation in Myanmar, 25 October 2017, CR 1, UNHQ

Thank you Mr. Chair.

Bangladesh thanks Professor Lee for presenting her updated Report. The report is a grim reminder of the early warning signs for the atrocity crimes the world witnessed in northern Rakhine State since 25th August. The international community's scant attention to those signs paved the way for what the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights termed as a 'text-book example of ethnic cleansing'.

The symptoms of simmering tension that Professor Lee captured in her report once again erupted into indiscriminate violence, extra-judicial killing, widespread arson and systematic sexual violence and rape by Myanmar security forces and vigilante groups. The OHCHR Rapid Response Mission's Report carries harrowing testimonies by only a few among those who fled into Bangladesh since 25th August.

The grave and systematic human rights violation in Rakhine State demands a strong response by the international community. This is not about 'politicising' the Rohingya issue, but a matter of reaffirming the credibility of international human rights standards and mechanisms.

The General Assembly must send a strong message against such serious human rights violation by adopting the draft Resolution steered by OIC. The Assembly cannot deny its responsibility to the most persecuted minority in the world, and should allow the UN Secretary General to use the dedicated services of a Special Envoy to speak for the Rohingya till they are allowed to voluntarily return home in safety and dignity from their camps and confinements in Myanmar and temporary shelters in Bangladesh.

The Fact-Finding Mission mandated by the Human Rights Council must be given access to ascertain the extent and impact of the atrocity crimes committed against the Rohingya. This would be a critical first step in ensuring accountability.

With the human rights situation deteriorating further - even amid international outcry - there is an urgent need for convening a Special Session of the Human Rights Council. The Council should take stock of the prevailing situation, and find ways to create a peaceful and viable environment so that the Rohingya become entitled to the full enjoyment of their human rights as Myanmar nationals with the ethnic identity they claim for themselves.

We thank Professor Lee for trying to do justice to the Rakhine State situation within the broad scope of her mandate. We deeply value her work since her mandate is perhaps the only mechanism at the UN's disposal to ensure monitoring of promotion and protection of human rights in Myanmar. The Kofi Annan Advisory Commission's recommendations, backed by the practical ones offered by Professor Lee, can serve as a roadmap for Myanmar to seek peaceful, just and viable solution to the Rohingya crisis. We know from experience that this can only happen if the international community remains fully committed and engaged.

I thank you.