

## Statement at the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council

18 September 2018

### Item 3: Interactive Dialogue

Speaker: **Daniel Webb**

Mr President,

The Human Rights Law Centre, together with the Australian Council for International Development, thanks the Fact Finding Mission for its report.

The findings are harrowing. The gang rape of women. The murder of children. The burning to the ground of entire villages. All as part of a coordinated, military-led genocide.

As Australian civil society organisations, we welcome the Australian Government's indication that it will support an independent accountability mechanism.

However, we call on our Government – as a Government with significant regional influence and as a member of this Council – to support all of the Fact Finding Mission's recommendations, not just some of them.

The Mission recommends ending operational support for the Myanmar military, which it describes as having “contempt for human life”. But while the US, the UK, and the EU have all taken steps to sever ties with the Myanmar military, the Australian Government last year spent close to \$400,000 on defence cooperation in the country.

The Mission also calls for targeted sanctions against those responsible. But again, while the US, Canada, and the EU have all imposed financial sanctions and travel restrictions on Myanmar military commanders, the Australian Government has refused to do so.

And finally, while the Fact Finding Mission says that the victims of these atrocities deserve a future free of danger and insecurity, the Australian Government continues to imprison them indefinitely in remote, offshore, refugee detention camps.

So Mr President, we thank the Fact Finding Mission once again for its recommendations. We call on our Government to follow them by immediately severing its ties with Myanmar's military and by imposing targeted sanctions on abusive military generals.

Because if genocide is not cause for decisive and principled action, then what on earth is?

Thank you.