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**DECLARATION
OF THE
CONTACT GROUP ON ROHINGYA MUSLIMS OF MYANMAR
HELD ON THE SIDELINES OF THE
ANNUAL COORDINATION MEETING**

NEW YORK, UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS

19 SEPTEMBER 2017

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1. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Contact Group on Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar held their meeting on the sidelines of the Annual Coordination Meeting on 19 September 2017 in New York under the Chairmanship of His Excellency the Secretary General, Yousef A. Al-Othaimen.
2. The Meeting expressed grave concern over the recent systematic brutal acts perpetrated by security forces against the Rohingya Muslim Community in Myanmar that has reached the level of ethnic cleansing, which constitute a serious and blatant violation of international law, and which has affected over 370,000 Rohingya who have been forcibly displaced to Bangladesh and other countries across the region, in addition to the burning of their houses and places of worship.
3. The meeting also called upon the Government of Myanmar to make an official statement about the casualties and internally displaced Rohingya muslim people since the outbreak of violence.
4. The Meeting called upon the Government of Myanmar to accept the UN Human Rights Council's fact finding mission to conduct a thorough and independent investigation into all alleged violations of international human rights law and to bring the perpetrators to justice.
5. The Meeting urged the Government of Myanmar to honour its obligations under international law and human rights covenants, and to take all measures to immediately stop the violence, prevent excessive use of force against civilians, halt acts of dispersion and discriminatory practices against Rohingya Muslims, as well as the continuous attempts to obliterate their Islamic culture and identity, including delisting them from household lists and demolition of places of worship, institutions and houses of Muslim minorities.
6. The Meeting urged the Government of Myanmar to eliminate the root causes, including the denial of citizenship based on the 1982 Citizenship Act which has led to statelessness and deprivation of their rights, and the continued dispossession and discrimination affecting the Rohingya Muslim Minorities, and work towards a just and sustainable solution to this issue.
7. The Meeting urged the Government of Myanmar to refrain from creating new IDP camps in northern Rakhine state and take urgent measures for a sustainable return of Rohingya refugees, internally and externally displaced Rohingya Muslims to their homelands in Rakhine State in safety, security, dignity and with ensured livelihood.
8. The Meeting welcomed the report of the Rakhine State Commission, Chaired by Mr Kofi Annan, issued on 24 August 2017 and urged the Government of Myanmar to fully implement its recommendations in a swift and timely manner for stability, peace and prosperity in Rakhine State, in full consultation with all

the communities concerned. The Meeting called on Member States to provide support for the implementation of these recommendations with a view to finding a comprehensive and inclusive solution to the challenges in Rakhine State.

9. The Meeting reiterated its call to the Government of Myanmar to revive the agreement to open an OIC Office for humanitarian affairs in Yangon after signing a Memorandum of Cooperation with the OIC to that effect. The purpose of the OIC office is to provide pure humanitarian assistance without distinction between the victims of violence.
10. The Meeting called upon the Government of Myanmar to introduce immediate and strict measures against any incitement to religious and ethnic violence at societal level in the country for preventing the spread of radicalization on the ground and take all necessary measures to restore peace and inter-communal harmony through dialogue and a comprehensive reconciliation process concerning all segments of the Myanmar society. This includes tackling the rise of hate speech and the spread of propaganda by right wing extremists against the Rohingya population.
11. The Meeting urged the authorities of Myanmar to take concrete steps to prevent the further deterioration of the humanitarian crisis in Rakhine state and to ensure the right of each individual to live and move without fear and persecution based on their religion or ethnicity.
12. The Meeting invited OIC member states to join the efforts of the international community towards lifting all restrictions on freedom of movement in Rakhine state and ensuring an inclusive and transparent citizenship verification process that leaves no individual unregistered nor hinders their access to essential social services, including education and health care.
13. The Meeting called upon OIC Member States and the international community to continue their efforts in conjunction with those of the United Nations to ensure the return of all Myanmar refugees displaced from their homes in Rakhine State. States should intensify their efforts in international fora with a view to realizing restoration of the nationality and citizenship rights of Rohingya of Myanmar.
14. The Meeting called upon the international community to continue working with the Government of Myanmar for protecting Muslim minorities in its territories.
15. The Meeting welcomed the statements by different religious and community leaders who have called for calm and disapproved of the use of violence against civilians in the name of Buddhism.
16. The Meeting supported expansive interfaith dialogue efforts and encouraged the Myanmar government to support ground-up initiatives to promote inter-ethnic and communal harmony. Member States were called upon to facilitate such projects in cooperation with authorities on the ground.
17. The Meeting took note that infrastructure development assistance and community engagement would be more effective in bringing peace in the affected areas. In this regard, IDB and ISF should take a more active role in this area.

18. The Meeting expressed concern over the huge Rohingya influx towards Bangladesh and its humanitarian and security consequences for the Government of Bangladesh. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the member states who have taken immediate action and deliver humanitarian aid to the camps in Bangladesh. The Meeting further urged all member states to extend the necessary support to Bangladesh to enable it to face the flow of refugees into its territories.
19. Meeting expressed appreciation for the efforts by Member States that had provided humanitarian and development assistance for the Rohingya people and encouraged all States to formulate development projects that will provide education and health services, vocational training that will benefit all persons in Rakhine state, regardless of ethnicity or religion.
20. The Meeting also called on the Member States, OIC institutions and Islamic NGOs to continue to extend generously humanitarian assistance in order to alleviate the suffering of Rohingya IDPs and refugees including supporting the efforts of the host countries. In that regard the Meeting agreed to continue efforts to coordinate and dispatch humanitarian life-saving aid especially medical and nutrition supply to the affected areas in Myanmar. In addition, the Meeting urged all States to continue to extend all possible forms of humanitarian aid and assistance to Rohingya Muslims, and particularly to IDPs and the refugees living outside their homeland. This includes raising funds for humanitarian relief.
21. The Meeting emphasized its readiness in principle to undertake comprehensive cooperation with the Government of Myanmar for developing political, economic and commercial relations.

In particular, the meeting also stated its willingness to cooperate with the Government of Myanmar in its efforts for improving the humanitarian and social conditions in Rakhine State while stressing the critical importance of finding a solution to citizenship status of Rohingya Muslim minority.

Consequently the meeting requested all member states to consider restricting economic relations with Myanmar and called upon all countries to consider suspending agreements granting preferential trade status to Myanmar in goods and services based on their assessment as regards safe and dignified return of IDPs and refugees as well as ceasing of violence and persecution of the Rohingya Muslim minority.

22. The Meeting urged UN Security Council to take immediate action on the issue of the Rohingya.
23. The Meeting also urged the adoption of a Resolution by the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly on the plight of the Rohingya minority of Myanmar.
24. Meeting requested the OIC Secretary General to make arrangements for a high level delegation to visit Myanmar to discuss mutual concerns and the crises facing the Rohingya people. In this regard the Meeting called upon the Government of Myanmar to receive the delegation and facilitate the visit.
25. The Meeting requested the OIC Secretary-General to continue to explore initiatives with the UN Secretary-General and ASEAN Secretary-General to engage with the Government of Myanmar in resolving the plight of the Rohingya.

26. The Meeting requested the OIC Contact Groups in New York, Geneva and Brussels to convene meetings to review the evolving situation of the Rohingya Muslim minority and explore all possible strategies, in the United Nations, the European Union, and other international organizations to end the suffering of the Rohingya Muslim minority and report to the OIC Secretary General.
27. The Meeting requested the OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) to continue to raise the situation of the Rohingya Muslim Minority as a priority issue on its agenda and particularly during the upcoming sessions of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.
