



**Laureates:**

Mairead Maguire, Ireland (1976)  
Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Guatemala (1992)  
Jody Williams, USA (1997)  
Shirin Ebadi, Iran (2003)  
Leymah Gbowee, Liberia (2011)  
Tawakkol Karman, Yemen (2011)

**Nobel Women's Initiative Statement on the persecution of Rohingya women**  
International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination  
March 21, 2019 - Parliament Hill, Ottawa

In March 2018, Nobel Women's Initiative conducted a fact-finding delegation in partnership with Bangladeshi organizations, and met with over 100 Rohingya women in two refugee camps, in Kutapalong and Thyankhali. Sexual violence is one of the largest atrocities committed in Myanmar, and we were able to witness, firsthand, how women are systematically targeted by the Myanmar military.

The vast majority of women who testified to the delegation were rape survivors. They provided first-hand accounts of the high-levels of violence they endured. An alarming majority of these women identified their perpetrators as members of the Myanmar Army. They were raped openly, in broad daylight by men in military apparel, often in public or just outside their home.

One of our partners Razia Sultana, a lawyer and researcher with the Kaladan Press—a Rohingya press network—has documented over 300 cases of women and girls raped in August 2017 alone. This only represents a fraction of the total number raped at this time.

Women have been detained, tortured, mutilated and killed in military camps, with the clear authorization of camp commanders. Rape, as we know, is a common tool for genocide, and in Myanmar the mutilation of women's bodies, breasts and genitals was deliberately aimed to destroy the very means of reproduction of the Rohingya.

In 2018, the UN Fact-Finding mission on Myanmar, interviewed over 800 rape survivors and [concluded](#) there was a 'very clear chain of command' within the Myanmar Army. It called for the country's military leaders to be investigated and prosecuted for 'genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.'

The Myanmar Army's latest atrocities against the Rohingya are not new, and must not be seen in isolation. Nobel Women's Initiative has worked with multiple ethnic women's groups in Burma over the past ten years who have been documenting these patterns for decades.

*Advocating for peace, justice and equality*

These latest atrocities are a continuation of a decades-long policy to divide-and-rule, occupy and control the ethnic territories, and seize their rich natural resources and land. In fact, Myanmar has recently passed amendments to the VEV law, making it easier for villagers' lands to be confiscated.

To this date, Myanmar Army continues to harass and torture Rohingya villagers inside Rakhine State, and continues to launch attacks and commit war crimes—including sexual violence, in Northern and Eastern Myanmar, with impunity.

As the only country to have formally recognized the Rohingya genocide, Canada is in a unique position to lead the international community towards justice and meaningful support for Rohingya women.

We call on the Canadian Government to:

1. Increase humanitarian assistance to women refugee survivors in Bangladesh through local women's organizations who have been responding to their needs, and are best equipped to continue doing so;
2. Stop 'business as usual' with Myanmar. Canada should suspend all investments and direct aid, and redirect support to local civil society and women's groups who are the real agents of change;
3. Use all avenues available under international law to bring both individual perpetrators of the Rohingya genocide, and the State of Myanmar, to justice.