



Council Member Report

For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 25, 2019

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** April 17, 2018
From: Mayor Helps
Subject: City of Montreal – Motion for International Accountability against the government of Myanmar

BACKGROUND

The attached correspondence from the City of Montreal notes Parliament's designation of April 23 each year as a national day of commemoration and action against genocide. It also includes a motion and a request that Victoria Council pass a similar motion calling for action to invoke the Genocide Convention against the Government of Myanmar.

MOTION:

MOTION TO CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MYANMAR FOR ITS CRIMES OF GENOCIDE AGAINST THE ROHINGYA AND OTHER MINORITIES

WHEREAS the Parliament of Canada unanimously adopted M.P. Andrew Leslie's motion on September 20, 2018 recognizing that the crimes committed by Myanmar against the Rohingya constitute genocide;

AND WHEREAS the "cleansing operation" by Myanmar's military caused the exodus of over 725,000 people to flee to Bangladesh creating the world's largest refugee camp and one of the world's worst humanitarian crises;

AND WHEREAS the genocide is on-going with Myanmar continuing its persecution of the remaining Rohingya in Rakhine State,

AND WHEREAS the Government of Myanmar is defiant in its blatant disregard of international norms and standards, imprisoning journalists, denying access to the United Nations Special Rapporteur, and burning down villages of other ethnic groups such as the Kachin, Karen, Shan, and Chin minorities;

AND WHEREAS following the end of World War II and the Holocaust, both Canada as well as Myanmar signed and ratified the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the 'Genocide Convention');

AND WHEREAS Canadian human rights think tanks such as the Montreal Institute of Genocide Studies at Concordia University, the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, and the Human Rights Research and Education Centre at the University of Ottawa have called for Canada to invoke the Genocide Convention;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT City Council urge the Government of Canada without further delay to invoke the Genocide Convention and specifically to engage with like-minded States to pursue the matter before the International Court of Justice in order to hold Myanmar to its obligations and to seek provisional measures and ultimately reparations for the Rohingya people;

THAT City Council urge Canada to exert pressure on Myanmar to release the jailed Reuters journalists, and to allow for unobstructed access to Rakhine State by independent monitors in order to investigate the international crimes committed and to afford protection to remaining Rohingya;

THAT City Council urge the Government of Canada to continue to assist the Government of Bangladesh through multilateral aid in addressing the humanitarian needs of the Rohingya refugees, with particular focus on the needs of women and children, including education.

THAT the City Clerk provide a copy of this motion to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Justice of the Government of Canada.

Respectfully submitted,



Mayor Lisa Helps



Councillor Sharmarke Dubow

**Borough Mayor and
City Councillors' office**
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BY E-MAIL
BY MAIL



March 20, 2019

Lisa Helps
Mayor - City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, B.C. V8W 1P6

Dear Mayor Helps,

Parliament has designated every April 23 as the national day for commemoration and action against genocide.

I have been working with the Rohingya Support Network, the Montreal Institute of Genocide Studies at Concordia University, the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, and the Human Rights Research and Education Centre at the University of Ottawa to craft a motion that municipal Councils could adopt to urge the Federal Government to invoke the Genocide Convention against Myanmar and to pursue the matter before the International Court of Justice.

The situation of the Rohingya remains grave and their plight constitutes an enormous humanitarian crisis.

The Rohingya Support Network is urging municipalities across Canada to adopt this motion at their April Council meetings so as to alert the Government of Canada of the need for further efforts to assist those who have been victimized and remain in an extreme precarious situation.

Attached please find the proposed text recommended by the stakeholders. My role is limited to circulating the proposal to Councillors in various cities and tabling the same at Montreal's Council.

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Please alert me if you will accept to move this motion in Victoria City Council for your April session. Permit me to thank you on behalf of the Rohingya for your efforts on their behalf. I can be reached at 514 774 1073 should you wish to discuss further.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marvin Rotrand', with a stylized, wavy flourish at the end.

Marvin Rotrand
City Councillor - Snowdon
City of Montreal

Encl.

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Whereas the "cleansing operation" by Myanmar's military caused the exodus of over 725,000 people to flee to Bangladesh creating the world's largest refugee camp and one of the world's worst humanitarian crises;

Whereas the genocide is on-going with Myanmar continuing its persecution of the remaining Rohingya in Rakhine State,

Whereas the Government of Myanmar is defiant in its blatant disregard of international norms and standards, imprisoning journalists, denying access to the United Nations Special Rapporteur, and burning down villages of other ethnic groups such as the Kachin, Karen, Shan, and Chin minorities;

Whereas following the end of World War II and the Holocaust, both Canada as well as Myanmar signed and ratified the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the 'Genocide Convention');

Whereas Canadian human rights think tanks such as the Montreal Institute of Genocide Studies at Concordia University, the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, and the Human Rights Research and Education Centre at the University of Ottawa have called for Canada to invoke the Genocide Convention;

It is moved by

Seconded by

That City Council urge the Government of Canada without further delay to invoke the Genocide Convention and specifically to engage with like-minded States to pursue the matter before the International Court of Justice in order to hold Myanmar to its obligations and to seek provisional measures and ultimately reparations for the Rohingya people;

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