Montréal, April 3rd 2019 – Councillors Lionel Perez and Marvin Rotrand today announced they have tabled a motion for the April 15 City Council meeting demanding that the Government of Myanmar be held accountable for its crimes of genocide against the Rohingya and other minorities in that country.

The motion is part of a national campaign launched by the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, the Montreal Institute of Genocide and Human Rights Studies (MIGS) at Concordia University and the Human Rights Research and Education Centre at the University of Ottawa in conjunction with the Rohingya Human Rights Network.

The motion has been circulated to major municipalities coast to coast for adoption in April and urges the Government of Canada to invoke the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (“Genocide Convention”) and specifically to engage with like-minded States to pursue the matter before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in order to hold Myanmar to its obligations and to seek provisional measures and ultimately reparations for the Rohingya people. In Canada, the motion will be tabled at the Toronto City Council meeting on April 16th by Councillor Shelley Carroll, seconded by her colleague, Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam.

Speaking for the sponsoring organizations, the Honourable Irwin Cotler, a former Canadian Minister of Justice, said that the House of Commons' decision in October 2018 to officially recognize the Rohingya genocide — the "first parliament in the world to do so" — and to revoke Suu Kyi's honorary Canadian citizenship both sent a clear message.

However Mr. Cotler also urges Canada to invoke the Genocide Convention to hold Myanmar's civilian and military leaders to account.

“This treaty doesn't require cooperation with other countries. All it requires is one country to begin the process,” Mr. Cotler indicated.

Councillor Perez observes that 725,000 Rohingya refugees remain in make-shift camps in Bangladesh, making this one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

“We should note Canada's leadership in resettling Syrian refugees. It is time for Canada to do more in leading the international community to provide on-going humanitarian aid to the refugees and work toward an ultimate settlement of this crisis.” said Councillor Perez.
For his part Councillor Rotrand called on Canada to work toward assuring conditions on the ground in Myanmar allow for a full investigation of the crimes committed.

“Myanmar must release the jailed Reuters journalists who reported on the violence against the Rohingya. Myanmar must also allow unobstructed access to Rakhine State by independent monitors in order to investigate the international crimes committed and to afford protection to the remaining Rohingya;” said Councillor Rotrand.

In supporting the motion, Kyle Matthews, Chair, of MIGS at Concordia University, and Raees Ahmed Tinmaungau, of the Rohingya Human Rights Network, also called on the Government of Canada to continue to assist the Government of Bangladesh through multilateral aid in addressing the humanitarian needs of the Rohingya refugees.

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