

## **Determination by US Secretary of State Blinken on Genocide**

On 21 March 2022 US Secretary of State Anthony J Blinken **issued a formal determination** that the Myanmar Armed Forces, known as the Tatmadaw, were responsible for genocide against the Rohingya minority population in Rakhine State. The determination is a political statement and has no international legal authority. The evidence adduced in the determination (unless a fuller formal statement is intended) is open to discussion. Its timing may well have been influenced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and allegations of genocide made in this context.

The pages on this website concerning Citizenship and the Exodus in 1978 and 1991-92 provide a more nuanced and detailed explanation of these events than appears in Secretary Blinken's statement. Some of the evidence presented by Secretary Blinken, seemingly taken from exhibits at the US Holocaust Museum in Washington, is factually incorrect, for example, the statement that: "In 1962, when the military staged its first coup, it canceled all Rohingya-language programming on the state-run broadcasting service". A Rohingya-language programme of ten minutes only twice a week existed between 15 May 1961 and 30 October 1965 when it was terminated, along with other broadcasts in such minority languages as Lahu and Pa-O, on **the closure of the Frontier Areas Administration Programme** set up by General Ne Win during his 1958 caretaker administration, with the support of the Rohingya community in the Mayu Frontier District which existed from 1960-64 - **see Footnote 65 at this link**.

The reference by Secretary Blinken to remarks by C-in-C Min Aung Hlaing about an "unfinished job" needs to be considered in the context of the "Alethankyaw" incident of 1942. See especially in this context paragraph 1336 **of the Final Report on the UN Fact-Finding Mission** and Page 16 of **the treatise "Killing Fields of Alethankyaw"** by the (Rohingya) Kaladan Press. I am personally doubtful that this evidence is conclusive of genocidal intent, any more than are the excerpts from social media accounts presented by Secretary Blinken, but I would welcome this evidence being subject to detailed examination in a properly appointed national or international court of law. There is unfortunately little prospect that the US would be successful in persuading the UN Security Council to refer the matter to the International Criminal Court. However Secretary Blinken noted that the US has been sharing information with The Gambia in the context of their case at the International Court of Justice.

**Derek Tonkin - 24 March 2022**