

Contrast VR and Amnesty International immerse viewers in Rohingya crisis with *Forced to Flee*

Virtual reality documentary highlights harrowing tales from survivors of ethnic cleansing

DOHA, SAN FRANCISCO, LONDON (December 12, 2017) – A man forced to bury his son after watching Myanmar’s military kill him, a woman who was gang-raped by soldiers, and another woman who had her family murdered and house burnt down – these are only three of the Rohingya refugees who share their harrowing stories in a hard-hitting new virtual reality documentary released today.

Forced to Flee, launched jointly by Contrast VR, Al Jazeera Media Network’s new immersive studio and Amnesty International was directed and produced by Contrast VR Editorial Lead Zahra Rasool, co-produced by Viktorija Mickute and edited by Maria Fernanda Lauret. It was shot in late October in Kutupalong camp, Bangladesh, which is now home to more than 620,000 Rohingya refugees who fled ethnic cleansing in neighbouring Myanmar’s Rakhine State since late August.

In the immersive film, Rohingya women and men recount the horrors of fleeing systematic and widespread violations and urge the world to secure their basic rights.

“One of the most powerful things about telling this story in 360 video is getting a glimpse at the scale of the crisis,” said Zahra Rasool, Contrast VR’s editorial lead. “You hear three people’s stories, but then you can turn around and see hundreds, if not, thousands more people throughout the film and you can imagine that they each have their own awful experiences, just not told to us.”

In addition to testimonies of Rohingya survivors, *Forced to Flee* features Amnesty International’s satellite imagery analysis of village burnings as well as original drone footage showing the immense scale of Kutupalong camp.

The film is being released on the same day the UN Security Council in New York meets again to discuss the situation of the Rohingya, and a week after the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva adopted a resolution condemning abuses against them and Myanmar’s other minorities.

More than 620,000 people have fled into Bangladesh in a matter of months as Myanmar’s security forces unleashed a [targeted campaign of violence](#) against the Rohingya: killing an unknown number of women, men and children; raping women and girls; laying [landmines](#); and [burning entire Rohingya villages](#).

Amnesty International has documented how Rohingya people who remain in Myanmar’s Rakhine State are trapped in [a dehumanizing state-sponsored system of apartheid](#), where

virtually every aspect of their lives is severely restricted. Dismantling this system of apartheid is essential to ensure the safe, voluntary and dignified return of the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya who have fled Myanmar.

“The sheer scale, speed and intensity of the Myanmar security forces’ crimes against humanity targeting the Rohingya are mind-boggling. From massacres to mass rapes to entire villages being burnt to the ground, it is hard to truly grasp the horror that sparked well over half a million people to flee to Bangladesh in the space of three months,” said Tirana Hassan, Crisis Response Director at Amnesty International.

“We hope this film will reach people still unaware of this crisis, immersing viewers in the refugees’ stories, helping them to understand what they have endured on a much deeper level. We also hope it will drive home to world leaders the urgency of acting now to stop the violence and lay the groundwork for accountability.”

The film follows the release of Contrast VR’s ground-breaking virtual reality documentary, [I am Rohingya](#), in September, which gave a glimpse into the life of a Rohingya Muslim, Jamalida Begum, and her two children in Kutupalong camp before the latest influx of refugees.

Forced to Flee will be released on [AJ+](#) and [Vimeo](#) and shared across Al Jazeera English (AJE) online, Contrast VR, and Amnesty International channels.

More information is available at [contrastvr.com](#), and extensive background on the crisis is available from [Amnesty International](#).

About Contrast VR

Contrast VR is Al Jazeera’s immersive media studio, specializing in the production of compelling 360-degree video, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR) content. The studio also collaborates with existing departments across Al Jazeera Media Network to produce best-in-class 2D and 3D content. Contrast VR produces unique documentaries, videos, and live streams that push the boundaries of narrative storytelling while taking viewers directly to the front lines of the biggest news events in the world. Learn more about the studio at [contrastvr.com](#).

About Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a Nobel Peace Prize-winning global movement of more than 7 million people who campaign for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all. The organization investigates and exposes abuses, educates and mobilizes the public, and works to protect people wherever justice, freedom, truth and dignity are denied.

Find out more at [www.amnesty.org](#)

Al Jazeera Digital

Amanda Shareghi (in San Francisco), +1-831-818-2893

shareghia@aljazeera.net

Amnesty International

Conor Fortune (in London), +44 20 7413 5566 or +44 (0)7432633678

conor.fortune@amnesty.org