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Rt. Hon Boris Johnson MP,  
Foreign Secretary,  
Foreign Commonwealth Office,  
Kings Charles Street,  
London,  
SW1A 2AH

6<sup>th</sup> September 2017,

Dear Foreign Secretary,

**RE: Violence against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar**

We are writing to you today regarding our serious concerns over the unfolding crisis in Rakhine State, Myanmar and the indiscriminate targeting of Rohingya Muslims.

The government of Myanmar has every right to take action to defend itself against violence, however, it appears that rather than seeking to arrest militants from the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) involved in attacks against government buildings on 25<sup>th</sup> of August, the military is using the attacks as a pretext for the mass clearance of the Rohingya population from large parts of northern Rakhine State.

Based on reports from the United Nations, human rights organisations and Rohingya organisations, we are witnessing human rights violations on a scale extreme even by the standards of Myanmar's history. Estimates of people killed range from official figures of hundreds dead, to estimates by reliable Rohingya organisations of between 2,000-3,000 killed. Eye witnesses describe civilians being shot indiscriminately, people forced to lie down in rows and then shot in the back of the head, beheadings, rape, rounding people up into buildings which are then set fire to, and deliberate shooting of children.

At the same time, ARSA appears to have been targeting ethnic Rakhine, the Mro minority and people of other races and religions, exacerbating communal tensions and violence. More than 10,000 people have been displaced by such attacks, with more than 140,000 Rohingya having arrived in Bangladesh and it is estimated at least as many again are displaced in Myanmar. A major humanitarian crisis therefore currently exists in Myanmar and in neighbouring Bangladesh.

The twin priorities are to do whatever we can to halt the military offensive against Rohingya civilians, and address the urgent humanitarian needs. While we welcome the statement the Foreign Secretary made earlier this week calling on Aung Sang Sui Kyi to use her position to stop the violence, we believe it is vital that greater pressure is brought to bear on Min Aung Hlaing, commander in chief of the military in Myanmar. It is he, not Aung San Suu Kyi, who has the power to

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order the military to halt their attacks. While there is no single measure which can persuade the military to halt its attacks, any leverage that can be used must be used.

We also request that the government review its current approach towards the Burmese military in light of the serious human rights violations which they are committing now and have been committed in recent years. We request that the current training programme being provided to the Burmese military is suspended and an evaluation is carried out to assess its effectiveness and value for money. Any resumption should be conditioned on commitments from the military to abide by international law and the government should halt the export of any kind of equipment to the military.

Furthermore, the government should support an urgent resolution on the situation at the new session of the Human Rights Council, and support a resumption of the annual resolution on Myanmar at the United Nations General Assembly.

Additional funding must be provided to meet urgent new humanitarian needs, rather than coming from the existing budget allocated to Myanmar.

Longer term solutions to address the root causes of the problems in Rakhine State will be hard to implement as long as this current crisis continues. In this regard, we welcome the recommendations of the Rakhine Commission led by Kofi Annan and urge the British government to work with the government of Myanmar, providing both financial resources and expertise, to ensure they are implemented as swiftly as possible.

The scale of the human rights and humanitarian crisis unfolding in Myanmar is unprecedented in its recent history. It requires the attention of the British government at the highest level. We hope that as in the past, the government will show global leadership in support of the people of Myanmar as they face this new crisis.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Rushanara Ali'.

Rushanara Ali MP

Co-Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Democracy in Burma

CC: Rt Hon. Theresa May, Prime Minister



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