6th 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 25th 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 Suu 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
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,

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

CC: Rt Hon. Theresa May, Prime Minister
Baroness Glenys Kinnock Co-Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Democracy in Burma
Adrian Bailey MP
Afzal Khan MP
Lord Bishop Alan Gregory Clayton Smith
Alex Cunningham MP
Alex Sobel MP
Alison McGovern MP
Lord David Alton
Andrew Rosindell MP
Angela Eagle MP
Ann Coffey MP
Ann Clwyd MP and Chair of APPG for Human Rights
Anna Turley MP
Anna McMorrin MP
Anneliese Dodds MP
Bambos Charalambous MP
Barbara Keeley MP
Ben Bradshaw MP
Ben Lake MP
Bill Esterson MP
Bob Blackman MP
Caroline Lucas MP
Catherine West MP
Catherine McKinnell MP
Chi Onwurah MP
Chris Elmore MP
Chris Matheson MP
Chris Leslie MP
Christine Jardine MP
Chuka Umunna MP
Clive Efford MP
Clive Lewis MP
Crispin Blunt MP
Dan Jarvis MP
Daniel Zeichner MP
David Drew MP
David Hanson MP
Diana Johnson MP
Baroness Dorothea Glenys Thornton
Eleanor Smith MP
Baroness Elizabeth Jean Barker
Baroness Elizabeth Rose Berridge
Emma Hardy MP
Faisal Rashid MP
Fiona Onasanya MP
Gareth Snell MP
Gareth Thomas MP
Gavin Shuker MP
George Howarth MP
Gerald Jones MP
Gill Furniss MP
Graham Jones MP
Grahame Morris MP
Graham Stringer MP
Harriet Harman MP
Heidi Alexander MP
Helen Hayes MP
Helen Jones MP
Holly Lynch MP
Ian Austin MP
Ian Murray MP
Ivan Lewis MP
Jack Dromey MP
James Frith MP
Jeff Smith MP
Lord James Robert Wallace
Jess Phillips MP
Jim Cunningham MP
Jim McMahon MP
Jo Stevens MP
John Grogan MP
John Mann MP
John Spellar MP
John Woodcock MP
Jonathan Ashworth MP
Jon Cruddas MP
Jonathan Reynolds MP
Julie Cooper MP
Julie Elliott MP
Baroness Julie Elizabeth Smith
Paula Sherriff MP
Preet Gill MP
Rachel Reeves MP
Lord Richard Balfe
Richard Burden MP
Rosena Allin-Khan MP
Rosie Cooper MP
Rosie Duffield MP
Rupa Huq MP
Ruth Cadbury MP
Ruth George MP
Ruth Smeeth MP
Sarah Champion MP
Sarah Jones MP
Seema Malhotra MP
Shabana Mahmood MP
Sharon Hodgson MP
Siobhain McDonagh MP
Stephen Morgan MP
Stephen Timms MP
Stephen Twigg MP
Steve Reed MP
Stephen Doughty MP
Sylvia Hermon MP
Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP
Thangam Debbonaire MP
Thelma Walker MP
Tommy Sheppard MP
Tony Lloyd MP
Tracy Brabin MP
Tulip Siddiq MP
Vernon Coaker MP
Virendra Sharma MP
Wes Streeting MP
Yasmin Qureshi MP
Yvette Cooper MP