

**The Honourable Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, MP**  
Australian Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT

03 October 2017

**Re: Request to Lead International Initiative to Solve Myanmar's Rohingya Problem**

Respected Hon Julie Bishop:

Warmest greetings from Toowoomba, Queensland.

I thank you and the Australian Government for supporting the plight of Rohingyas in Myanmar and over half a million refugees in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, Australian Government was behind weakening the recent United Nations (UN) resolution in criticism of Myanmar. However, the UN has correctly referred the barbaric act of the Myanmar Government forces as a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing" and many world leaders have called it a genocide.

Like many Australians and others, I fully share your assessment of the grave situation in Rakhine state of Myanmar and fear of dangerous radicalization of humiliated, stateless and desperate Rohingyas. As reported by ABC, you have correctly said, "We are deeply concerned that the persecution of a significant group of Muslim Rohingyas will be used by ISIS and other terrorist groups as part of their narrative to take up arms and to fight against the West. That's why this Myanmar situation must be resolved. There's got to be a political resolution but in the meantime, the humanitarian disaster needs our full attention."

I hope you will translate your words in to actions, and as a regional leader and protector of Human Rights, Australia would now act to stop the humanitarian disaster and help solve the ongoing crisis in Myanmar by forcing Ms Aung San Suu Kyi's Government to comply with the Universal Charter of Human Rights and prevent "silent genocide" of Rohingya people.

Historically **Rohingyas** are the **Arakanese** locals who settled in the Arakan state of Burma (now called Rakhine state of Myanmar) as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century. In 2013 UN declared them as one of the most persecuted minorities in the world. Although the Rohingyas lived in Rakhine for many centuries they were deprived of the nationality under the 1982 Burmese citizenship law imposed by the military government. They were also restricted from freedom of movement, state education and civil service jobs.

Recently, UN officials and Human Rights Watch have described Myanmar's persecution of the Rohingya as ethnic cleansing and genocide. The Rohingyas have faced regular military crackdowns and large scale massacres in 1978, 1991–1992, 2012, 2015 and 2016–2017. The Burmese military also has a track record of massacring several other minorities in the south, bordering with Thailand.

Clearly the tension between the Rohingya Muslims and majority Buddhists has been an ongoing issue fueled by repeated Government attacks and intimidation to drive out all Rohingyas from Rakhine instead of genuine initiative to settle the matter peacefully. In the wake of 2016 Annan Commission recommendation for granting Myanmar citizenship to Rohingyas the current army crackdown is a vile attempt to defy the UN so that the question of citizenship is buried forever.

As a regional power Australia should take a key leadership role similar to that of successfully leading the international initiative for the creation of independent East Timor in 2002. The Australian Government also took the initiative, in 2012, to lift international sanction against Myanmar with the expectation that the Myanmar Government will improve its human rights record. The praiseworthy track record of Australian leadership in the region demands its moral obligation to play a leading role again in solving the problem of systematic ethnic cleansing and genocide of ethnic Rohingyas in Rakhine state of Myanmar.

Given the long history of brutal military rule in Myanmar, record of denial of its worst human rights violation, utter disrespect to UN resolutions and global leaders, and continuing massacre of Rohingyas for decades, Myanmar is unlikely to listen to any good words unless it is backed

by strong arms embargo, economic sanction and forceful implementation of programs of peace and justice for the Rohingyas by the UN and world leaders.

I request your honour to introduce the issue in the Australian Federal Parliament to get its approval to take the international leadership to solve the ongoing problem of ethnic cleansing in Myanmar and help resettle Rohingyas in their ancestral homes in Rakhine by considering the following steps:

**A. Immediate actions to save the refugees and displaced Rohingyas**

1. Force the Myanmar Government to stop killing of Rohingya people and burning their homes by the security forces and Buddhists vigilantes in the Rakhine state of Myanmar.
2. Provide urgent humanitarian supplies including shelter, food, medicine, sanitation and material support for the Rohingyas inside Myanmar and refugees in Bangladesh.
3. Register all the refugees in Bangladesh under UN supervision to ensure their genuine refugee status for resettlement in Myanmar with proper protection and potential humanitarian intake by developed nations.
4. Make sure that the Myanmar Government cover all the cost of humanitarian support provided by the UN and other aid organisations including shelter, food, clothing, healthcare, and education of the refugees, the displaced citizens of Myanmar.

**B. Permanent solution to avoid repetition of tragic history**

1. As a long term solution, the UN must find a way to resettle all Rohingya refugees in their ancestral homes in Rakhine with citizenship, dignity and compensation for lost properties and resources. Anything less than that would be rewarding the junta for their genocide and crime against humanity.
2. Australia and other developed countries must take increased number of Rohingya refugees for settlement under humanitarian intake as a very last resort, if required.
3. If diplomacy fails, and Myanmar Government does not agree to take Rohingyas back to Rakhine with citizenship and autonomy, the world would have no alternative other than creating an independent Rakhine state for Rohingyas under the UN supervision.

Australian leadership in succeeding to solve Rohingya problem will not only bring peace, security and prosperity to the most neglected and oppressed ethnic minority on the earth but also significantly weaken appeal to radicalism of Rohingyas, and improve relationship of leading Muslim nations with Australia and the West providing much needed mutual trust to combat terrorism in other parts of the world.

Looking forward to seeing your leadership, action and support for a bright future of the most persecuted ethnic Rohingya people.

Professor Shahjahan Khan, PhD  
Professor of Statistics, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba  
Founding President, Islamic Society of Toowoomba & Former VP, Islamic Council of Qld  
Email: [Prof.Shahjahan.Khan@gmail.com](mailto:Prof.Shahjahan.Khan@gmail.com), Phone 0421081048  
Address: 31 Ethan St, Middle Ridge, Q4350