



Foreign &  
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### **Burma: Human rights and the Rohingya community**

The Foreign Secretary has received many campaign emails in recent weeks from members of the public about the situation of the Rohingya community in Burma. I am replying both as Minister responsible for our relations with Asia and as someone who shares the concerns expressed about the persecution of the Rohingya in Rakhine State.

When I last visited Rakhine in July I again saw for myself the deplorable conditions faced by the Rohingya, not least for the 140,000 still living in 'temporary' and inadequate camps some three years since the violence of 2012. Across the community basic rights are denied such as freedom of movement and religion. Many are denied access to basic healthcare or education, and employment, which is unacceptable.

The emails called for the UK to support a UN investigation into whether genocide or other international crimes have been committed in Rakhine following recent reports from the Yale Law School, Queen Mary University and others. As has been stated repeatedly, such an investigation would require high level international support for which we assess there is little prospect of agreement at this stage.

The Government's priority in Rakhine is to seek an end to all violations – irrespective of whether or not they fit the definition of specific international crimes. We will continue to press the Burmese government to guarantee security, ensure full humanitarian access, remove restrictions on freedom of movement, and establish a pathway to citizenship. I and other British Government Ministers take every appropriate opportunity, both publicly and in private, to press the Burmese authorities to take urgent steps to address the situation of the Rohingya people. I did so with the Burmese Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin in September.

The UK is also one of the most vocal advocates for the Rohingya on the international stage. Within the UN we traditionally co-sponsor two annual Resolutions, one at the General Assembly, the other at the Human Rights Council, which send a strong message to Burma on the need to protect the rights of the Rohingya and resolve the fundamental issue of citizenship.

The historic elections in Burma on 8 November represent a significant opportunity to consolidate the reform process begun in 2011 and to make real progress on

Rakhine. The Prime Minister called Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 10 November to offer our continued support for the people of Burma. Whatever the shape of the new government which will form in March 2016, human rights will remain at the heart of the UK's policy in Burma.

If you require any further information, please consult [www.gov.uk/world/burma](http://www.gov.uk/world/burma), follow us on [www.facebook.com/fcoburma](https://www.facebook.com/fcoburma) or Twitter: [@UKinBurma](https://twitter.com/UKinBurma). The text of the 4 June Rohingya debate in the House of Commons is available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm150604/debtext/150604-0004.htm#15060451000001>

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Hugo Swire'.

**THE RT HON HUGO SWIRE MP**  
**Minister of State**