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The Rt. Hon. William Hague MP
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Dear William,

We are writing in relation to the decision announced following the meeting of EU Foreign Ministers yesterday on the lifting of all but an arms embargo against Myanmar/Burma.

The decision to lift trade, economic and individual sanctions against Burma in order to show European support for its democratic reforms programme is, in our view, poorly timed and morally dubious.

The decision has come on the eve of the publication by Human Rights Watch of a report which categorically denounces the Burmese security agencies and politicians for their dereliction of duty in failing to curb the 'ethnic cleansing' of Rohingya Muslim communities throughout the country.

The report, *All You Can Do is Pray*, is a severe indictment of the crimes against humanity inflicted upon the Rohingya Muslims since June 2012 when ethnic violence first erupted. The active involvement of politicians through dissemination of materials inciting hatred and violence towards the Rohingya and the failure of police forces to stop mobs terrorising Rohingya townships is a grave matter indeed.

The BBC this week published footage sourced from within the Burmese police force showing officers standing idly by as Muslims were attacked, their shops plundered and their villages burned down.

It is a strange reaction indeed for the foreign ministers of EU nations to respond to the crimes brought to light by lifting sanctions. The act not only betrays our moral responsibility to seek justice for the Rohingyas who have been killed or displaced in the last 10 months, it rewards state complicity in ethnic violence. Further, it gives recourse to the presumption of impunity on the part of Burmese officials, including opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who have done little to address the problems of ethnic violence, displacement and inciteful rhetoric from Buddhist groups in the country.

On your visit of January 2012 you spoke of the further reforms required before lifting sanctions could be contemplated. Among conditions you cited then was the release of political prisoners if Burma wished to join nations that are "free and democratic". You stated then that "much more needed to be done".

Would it not be fair to say that a country's democratic credentials rest also on its treatment of minority communities and that in this regard Burma still has some way to go?

We hope you will agree that sanctions ought to remain and their lifting be made conditional to progress on pursuing those who have engaged in ethnic violence. The EU possesses a moral mandate and significant economic and political leverage over the Burmese administration. It is

unacceptable that these should be discarded while continuing evidence of atrocities against the Rohingya is unearthed.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet to discuss these matters and look forward to your reply.

Best wishes,

Sir Iqbal Sacranie,
Trustee