



# LAST MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

A summary of Burma-related issues  
in the British Parliament and Europe

JULY  
2012

## ANSWERS TO WRITTEN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

### *Rohingya*

**12 July 2012 Jo Swinson** : To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received of the rape of ethnic Rohingya woman by police and security services following recent communal violence in Burma.

**Jeremy Browne** : We are deeply concerned about reports of rape having been committed by members of security forces in Rakhine (Arakan) State.

We remain in regular contact with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on the ground there. Simmering tensions between the different communities remain and this presents risks to local volunteers. This is hampering not only the provision of humanitarian assistance, but is also making verification of reports of rape problematic.

In my statement of 10 June I called on all parties to act with restraint and urged the authorities and community leaders to open discussions to end the violence and to protect all members of the local population.

The UK continues to raise awareness of the issues affecting the Rohingya. We strongly supported a UN resolution at the Human Rights Council in March which called on the government of Burma to recognise the right of members of the Rohingya ethnic minority in Rakhine State to nationality, and to protect all of their human rights.

We will continue to highlight the need for the government of Burma to recognise the basic human rights of the Rohingya.

**13 July 2012 Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead** : To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimates they have made of the number of ethnic Rohingya arrested since inter-ethnic violence began in Rakhine State, Burma.

**Lord Howell of Guildford** : The recent inter-communal violence in Rakhine State in western Burma has highlighted the fragility of the situation in Burma and has drawn further and much needed attention to the plight of the Rohingya.

Reports vary on the precise number of deaths and numbers of those arrested from both the Rohingya and Rakhine communities. We are continuing to try and clarify these numbers, though given the difficulty in obtaining indicative figures, it would not be appropriate to comment further. We remain deeply concerned by the nature of the humanitarian situation in Rakhine State which we continue to monitor very closely, and our Embassy in Rangoon is in regular contact with members of the Rohingya community.

**4 July 2012 John Pugh** : To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment his Department has made of human rights abuses against the Rohingya people in Burma.

**David Lidington** : Despite the positive developments we have seen in Burma over the past year, the Rohingya continue to be denied citizenship and remain amongst the most discriminated against peoples in the world.

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The recent inter-communal violence in Rakhine State in western Burma has highlighted both the fragility of the situation in Burma, and has drawn further and much needed attention to the plight of the Rohingya. The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Mr Browne, issued a statement on 10 June, which expressed his deep concern about the ongoing violence. We remain concerned about the humanitarian situation in Rakhine state, which the UK and international community will continue to monitor very closely.

The Member for Richmond (Yorks) (Mr Hague), and the Prime Minister also raised this matter with senior members of the Burmese Government, and met with members of the Rohingya community to hear their concerns first hand, during their respective visits in January and April. Ministers also raised their concerns with Aung San Suu Kyi during her recent visit to the United Kingdom.

Our ambassador to Burma regularly raises the ongoing discrimination of the Rohingya with the Burmese Government, including most recently with the Home Minister. We regularly speak with Rohingya groups, and non-governmental organisations monitoring the situation, both inside and outside the country. At the Human Rights Council in March we secured a resolution which expressed the need to recognise the Rohingya's right to nationality, and the urgent need to respect their human rights. We will continue to raise this issue with the Burmese Government, with international partners and in international organisations, until the matter is resolved.

**12 July 2012 Rushanara Ali** : To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether HM ambassador to Burma has raised the oppression of the Rohingya ethnic groups from Burma in recent meetings with the Government of Burma.

**Jeremy Browne** : The UK continues to raise our concerns on issues affecting the Rohingya. On 12 June, following my statement on 10 June expressing our concern about the ongoing violence in Rakhine State, the British ambassador to Burma met the Burmese President Thein Sein, informed him of our concerns, and made clear that we stood ready to support the President's efforts to end the violence.

On 19 June, the British high commissioner in Bangladesh accompanied the EU's Head of Delegation in delivering a démarche to the Bangladeshi Foreign Ministry in Dhaka, which expressed our concern over the treatment of those fleeing the violence and called on the Bangladeshi Government to respect its international obligations.

During the visit of Aung San Suu Kyi from 18-26 June to the United Kingdom, both the Prime Minister and I raised with her the issues affecting the Rohingya community.

On 22 June, officials from the British embassy in Rangoon raised our concerns over the lack of humanitarian aid access to Rakhine State and the closure of the border with Bangladesh with the Burmese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The UK strongly supported a UN resolution at the Human Rights Council in March which called on the Government of Burma to recognise the right of members of the Rohingya ethnic minority in Rakhine State to nationality and to protect all of their human rights.

We will continue to highlight the need for the Government of Burma to recognise the basic human rights of the Rohingya, with them directly, with our international partners and within international institutions, until the issue is resolved.

**17 July 2012 Rushanara Ali**: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will urge the government of Burma to stop the violence and persecution of Rohingyas in Arakan State in that country.

**Mr Jeremy Browne**: The recent inter-communal violence in Rakhine State in western Burma has highlighted both the fragility of the situation in Burma, and drawn further and much needed attention to the plight of the Rohingya. I issued a statement on 10 June which expressed deep concern about the situation and urged all groups to open a dialogue to end the violence.

On 12 June our ambassador met Burmese President Thein Sein. The ambassador emphasised our deep

concern about the hostilities in Rakhine State, and urged him to make every effort to resolve the situation peacefully.

On 22 June officials from our embassy in Rangoon raised our concerns over the lack of regular humanitarian aid access to Rakhine State and the closure of the border with Bangladesh with the Burmese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We remain concerned about the humanitarian situation in Rakhine State and will continue to monitor this closely.

**24 July 2012 Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead** : To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Prime Minister met representatives of the Rohingya Muslim minority during his recent visit to Burma.

**Lord Howell of Guildford**: The Prime Minister, my right honourable friend the Member for Witney (Mr Cameron) did indeed meet representatives of the Rohingya community, along with other representatives from ethnic minority groups, during his visit to Burma in April and listened to their concerns first hand.

**13 July 2012 Lord Alton of Liverpool** : To ask Her Majesty's Government have held with Ko Ko Gyi from the 88 Generation Students regarding his comments on the ethnic Rohingya of Burma.

**Lord Howell of Guildford** : We are aware of the comments made by Ko Ko Gyi regarding the status of the ethnic Rohingya of Burma. Officials subsequently discussed these with him on 12 June. There are many people both within and outside of Burma who continue to question the Rohingya's right to live within Burma's borders. The UK continues to raise awareness of the issues affecting the Rohingya, and strongly supported a United Nations resolution at the Human Rights Council in March which called on the Government of Burma to recognise the right of members of the Rohingya ethnic minority in Rakhine State to nationality and to protect all of their human rights.

During respective visits to Burma this year by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right honourable friend the Member for Richmond (Yorks) (Mr Hague) and, my right honourable friend Mr Cameron, they raised the issues affecting the Rohingya directly with President Thein Sein, and met with members of the Rohingya community to hear their concerns first hand.

During the visit of Aung San Suu Kyi from 18-26 June to the United Kingdom, both the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary discussed with her the issues affecting the Rohingya community.

We will continue to highlight the need for the Government of Burma to recognise the basic human rights of the Rohingya, with them directly, with our international partners and within international institutions, until the issue is resolved.

**9 July 2012 Baroness Uddin** : To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will co-ordinate an international response to aid Rohingya refugees seeking asylum in Bangladesh.

**Lord Howell of Guildford**: The Government have been playing their part to encourage a co-ordinated response to the recent events in Rakhine State, Burma.

We, along with European Union partners, have encouraged both Burma and Bangladesh to ensure the safety of civilians fleeing the intercommunal violence in Rakhine State, and to work with the international community so that the victims of violence can have access to humanitarian assistance.

We fully acknowledge Bangladesh's efforts in dealing with development and humanitarian issues in district over several decades, and understand the difficulties accepting further refugees would cause for Bangladesh. However, it is vital that Bangladesh continues to provide treatment for displaced individuals in need of emergency medical care.

**10 July 2012 Baroness Uddin** : To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Government of Burma about Rohingya refugees seeking asylum in Bangladesh.

**Lord Howell of Guildford** : Officials from our embassy in Burma regularly raise the ongoing discrimination

of the Rohingya with the Burmese Government. Most recently, they raised our concerns over the lack of regular humanitarian aid access to Rakhine State and the closure of the border with Bangladesh.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right honourable friend the Member for Richmond (Yorks) (Mr Hague) and the Prime Minister, my right honourable friend Mr Cameron also raised the ongoing discrimination of the Rohingya with senior members of the Burmese Government during their respective visits in January and April and met with members of the Rohingya community to hear their concerns first hand. Ministers also raised their concerns with Aung San Siu Kyi during her recent visit to the United Kingdom.

We regularly speak to Rohingya groups, and non-governmental organisations monitoring the situation, both inside and outside the country. At the Human Rights Council in March we secured a resolution which expressed the need to recognise the Rohingya's right to nationality, and the urgent need to respect their human rights as long as these issues remained unresolved. We will continue to raise this issue with the Burmese Government, with international partners and in international organisations.

**12 July 2012 Rushanara Ali** : To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid his Department is delivering to Rohingya refugees from Burma who live in Bangladesh.

**Alan Duncan** : DFID provides core contributions to the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO) and United Nations agencies, who are active in Bangladesh in this area.

**13 July 2012 Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead** : To ask Her Majesty's Government what information they have received regarding a helicopter firing on a boat of ethnic Rohingya refugees fleeing from Burma.

**Lord Howell of Guildford**: We are aware of unconfirmed reports of a helicopter originating in Rakhine State firing on boats carrying ethnic Rohingya fleeing Burma. We are continuing to clarify the situation, but have no further information on the validity of these reports at this stage.

### **Rakhine State**

**10 July 2012 Baroness Goudie** : To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Government of Burma regarding communal violence in Rakhine State.

**Lord Howell of Guildford** : The recent inter-communal violence in Rakhine State in western Burma has highlighted both the fragility of the situation in Burma, and has drawn further and much needed attention to the plight of the Rohingya. The Minister of State responsible for our relations with Burma, my honourable friend Mr Browne issued a statement on 10 June, which expressed concern about the violence. On 12 June our ambassador in Rangoon met Burmese President Thein Sein. The ambassador informed the president of our concern over the hostilities in Rakhine State, and made clear that we stood ready to support all efforts-including the President's-to end the violence.

The president emphasised his commitment to the peace process, and to resolving ethnic conflict. He said that the success of this process was essential to the sustainability of ongoing reforms.

On 22 June officials from our embassy in Rangoon raised our concerns over the lack of regular humanitarian aid access to Rakhine State and the closure of the border with Bangladesh with the Burmese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ambassador also discussed the ongoing peace negotiations with ethnic groups.

We remain concerned about the humanitarian situation in Rakhine State which we continue to monitor very closely.

**17 July 2012 Rushanara Ali**: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will press the Government of Burma to establish an independent inquiry, with international assistance, into the violence in Arakan State in that country.

**Mr Jeremy Browne**: We are deeply concerned by the recent violence in Rakhine (Arakan) state. We

are aware that the Burmese authorities have opened an inquiry into the recent violence. We will monitor this closely and will urge the Burmese Government to ensure that inquiry is able to work in a transparent manner and that its findings are balanced and credible.

**17 July 2012 Rushanara Ali:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had on the situation in Arakan State, Burma with his counterparts in other EU member states and in the US.

**Mr Jeremy Browne:** We are deeply concerned by the recent violence in Rakhine (Arakan) State. We regularly discuss the ethnic conflict in Burma and the specific issues affecting the Rohingya with our European and US colleagues. We are set to discuss the matter further at senior official level in Brussels on 18 July.

**17 July 2012 Rushanara Ali:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had on the situation in Arakan State, Burma with his counterparts in Bangladesh and India and in members states of the Association of South East Asian Nations.

**Mr Jeremy Browne:** We regularly raise the ethnic conflict in Burma and the specific issues affecting the Rohingya with countries in the region, including the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), India and Bangladesh.

Our high commissioner in Dhaka raised this issue with the Government of Bangladesh as part of an EU demarche in late June and officials from our high commission have continued to discuss it with the Bangladesh authorities since.

We acknowledge Bangladesh's efforts in dealing with development and humanitarian issues in Cox's Bazar district over several decades and understand the challenges accepting further refugees would cause. We continue to urge Bangladesh to continue to provide treatment for individuals displaced from Burma in need of emergency medical care.

In our meetings with ASEAN member states we continue to stress the important role that ASEAN and its members have in both supporting the reform process and resolving ethnic conflict in Burma. In particular, we have called on ASEAN member states to draw upon their own experiences to assist Burma's transition to democracy.

### ***Kachin State***

**10 July 2012 Baroness Goudie :** To ask Her Majesty's Government what reports they have received of the Burmese Army raping women in Kachin State, Burma.

**Lord Howell of Guildford :** In Burma we continue to receive reports of gender-based violence by the military in conflict areas. The Burmese Government have done little to investigate these cases. During Burma's Universal Periodic Review session at the United Nations (UN) in 2011 we urged the Government to prosecute human rights violations. At the UN Human Rights Council in March we strongly supported a resolution which called on the Burmese Government to take urgent measures to end the targeting of civilians in military operations, and end the use of rape and other forms of sexual violence.

Through its project programme our embassy in Rangoon supports several groups and projects that encourage respect for women's rights, and supports their participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right honourable friend the Member for Richmond (Yorks) (Mr Hague) recently announced a new initiative on preventing sexual violence in conflicts. The initiative forms part of the forthcoming presidency of the G8 (the Group of Eight) in 2013. It includes the establishment of a dedicated UK team devoted to combating and preventing sexual violence in conflict.

We continue to raise the issue of human rights abuses at every opportunity with the Burmese Government, the UN and international partners.

**11 July 2012 Baroness Goudie** : To ask Her Majesty's Government what funding they have provided in the past year to women's organisations in Kachin State, Burma, which are assisting women who have been raped and sexually assaulted by Burmese Army soldiers.

**Baroness Northover** : We are deeply concerned about reports of rape having been committed by members of armed forces in Burma.

The Government have consistently called upon all armed actors including the Burmese Army and ethnic militia to protect civilian populations. DfID provides a range of assistance to women in Burma including in health, livelihoods and through our humanitarian programme. This includes the provision of assistance for trauma care in camps in Kachin State through our support to Trocaire which can help in dealing with rape cases.

### ***Child Soldiers***

**10 July 2012 Baroness Goudie** : To ask Her Majesty's Government what reports they have received regarding the recruitment of child soldiers by the Burmese Army.

**Lord Howell of Guildford**: Our embassy in Rangoon continues to receive reports about the recruitment of child soldiers in Burma. On 27 June 2012 the United Nations (UN) signed a landmark plan of action with the Burmese military authorities to release children from armed conflict.

The UN does not underestimate the scale of the problem in Burma. The action plan took five years of negotiation and commits all state and non-state actors in Burma to several key actions including: cease recruitment of child soldiers;strengthen vetting during recruitment;identify and release underage conscripts; undertake advocacy to reinforce the policy of not recruiting child soldiers;discipline offenders in Army service who continue to recruit;provide access for verification mission to military installations and prisons; andto ensure that ceasefire agreements between government and ethnic minority militias refer to ending recruitment of children.

The UN Secretary-General has listed a number of Burmese parties in his annual report to the Security Council that continue to commit grave violations against children.

We hope this action plan marks the beginning of a process that could see Burma delisted and an end to the practice of the recruitment of child soldiers.

### ***Political Prisoners***

**13 July 2012 Lord Alton of Liverpool** : To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Government of Burma about establishing a joint national and international board, to assess the number of political prisoners in Burma.

**Lord Howell of Guildford** : We have raised with the Government on a number of occasions the need for an independent investigative mechanism to assess the circumstances and numbers of political prisoners in Burma, in line with the recommendations made by United Nations Special Rapporteur Quintana. We have not made specific representations about the make up of that body. Following a significant release of some political prisoners in January, we have continued to call for the unconditional release of all political prisoners.

The Prime Minister, my right honourable friend Mr Cameron raised the issue of remaining political prisoners with President Thein Sein during his visit to Burma on 13 April. Around 25 political prisoners were released most recently in July.

We recognise the importance of establishing an appropriate mechanism whereby cases can be discussed and independently verified, leading to further releases of remaining detainees, where it would be appropriate to do so. We continue to press the Government of Burma to release all remaining prisoners, and to clarify the status of those remaining as a matter of urgency.

## **Investment**

**12 July 2012 Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead** : To ask Her Majesty's Government how they are ensuring British companies investing in and trading with Burma do so transparently and ethically.

**Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint** : The British Government urge all companies-including those entering Burma-to promote the highest standards of corporate governance and social and environmental responsibility, including adherence to the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and the UN's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

We will put responsible investment at the heart of our future commercial relationship with Burma. We want to encourage investment that will benefit local communities and respect the local environment.

To help achieve this, we are funding a three-year project by the Institute for Human Rights and Business in Burma, to work towards the implementation of the UN's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. As part of this, the IHRB are establishing a resource centre in Rangoon to provide advice to companies, governments and civil society on this, and are launching their project with a round-table on 11 July with UK business, senior members of the Burmese Government, and MPs.

We have also been focussing on the extractive sector. We have undertaken a concerted dialogue with the Burmese Government to encourage them to sign up to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. The Prime Minister raised this with President Thein Sein. The Burmese have now announced publicly that they are interested in implementing the initiative, and we are helping to organise a visit this month by the Secretariat as a first step.

More broadly, we want to ensure that all investment in Burma contributes to broad-based economic growth. We are launching an investment climate assessment and a public expenditure and financial accountability assessment for Burma through the World Bank. We are also working with the International Growth Centre, which has just visited Burma to consider how it might provide policy advice on this.

## **National League for Democracy**

**12 July 2012 Jo Swinson** : To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many meetings representatives of his Department have had with leaders of the National League for Democracy in Burma in 2012 to date.

**Alan Duncan** : To date, DFID officials have had three meetings with leaders of the National League for Democracy in Burma in 2012.

In addition, the Secretary of State for International Development, my right hon. Friend Mr Mitchell, met Aung San Suu Kyi during his visit to Burma in November 2011, and during her visit to the United Kingdom in June this year.

**18 July 2012 Lord Janner of Braunstone**: To ask her Majesty's Government , in the light of the address by Aung San Suu Kyi to both Houses, what action they are taking to support democracy in Burma.

**Lord Howell of Guildford** : The Government have long been a supporter of those in Burma pursuing democracy and respect for human rights. The Government continue to provide programme support to efforts promoting democratic practice, the rule of law and the protection of human rights. These projects cover capacity building for ethnic nationality political parties; training of independent citizen election watchers on the election law, electoral process and procedures; promotion of labour rights among workers; and increasing the capacity of civil society groups to lobby public institutions.

The UK is one of a small number of countries to have always maintained an embassy in Rangoon and we monitor developments in Burma closely. This enables us to play a leading role in the policy towards Burma. We are active in the United Nations (UN), and during Burma's Universal Periodic Review session at the UN, we urged the government to prosecute those responsible for human rights violations. We also strongly supported a UN resolution at the Human Rights Council in March which called on the Burmese Government

to take urgent measures to end the targeting of civilians in military operations.

We will continue to take every opportunity to press the Burmese Government to protect their people's human and democratic rights, release all political prisoners and achieve a lasting and peaceful end to ethnic violence

### ***Aid to Burma***

**10 July 2012 Rushanara Ali** : To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate his Department has made of the number of internally displaced people in Burma (a) on the most recent date for which figures are available and (b) in June 2011; and what the change in the level of his Department's funding for internally displaced people has been in the last year.

**Alan Duncan** : Reports estimate that there are between 55,000 and 100,000 people currently displaced as a result of the recent unrest in Rakhine state. In Kachin state it is estimated that some 65,000 people are currently displaced. Along the Thai-Burma border it is estimated that there are approximately 141,000 people currently displaced. For June 2011 reports show that there was an estimated 150,000 people displaced along the Thai-Burma border.

In 2011, bilateral funding from DFID for internally displaced people along the Thai-Burma border was around £1.4 million. This is an increase of around £300,000 compared to 2010. We are currently reviewing bids for DFID's new programme of support to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees along the Thai-Burma border, which is planned to start later this year.

In January this year the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Richmond (Yorks) (Mr Hague), announced that DFID will be allocating an additional £2 million of bilateral funds for IDPs in Kachin. To date, just over £1.1 million of this has been spent.

**12 July 2012 Jo Swinson** : To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his budget for aid to Burma is in (a) 2012-13, (b) 2013-14 and (c) 2014-15.

**Alan Duncan** : DFID's current allocation for development work in Burma between 2011-15 is £187 million. These funds will deliver transformative change to benefit the people of Burma: helping children complete primary school, supporting responsible investment and economic growth, fighting malaria, improving livelihoods in rural areas, and assisting people affected by conflict and the process of ethnic reconciliation. A revised profile of DFID's spending over 2013-14, 2013-14 and 2014-15 will be published later this summer.

**17 July 2012 Lord Alton of Liverpool** : To ask Her Majesty's Government how much aid funding they provided to internally displaced people in Burma in 2011-12; and how much they intend to provide in 2012-13.

**Baroness Northover** : In 2011-12 DfID provided around £2.5 million in bilateral aid for basic healthcare, food security, improved sanitation and grants to help with the costs of schooling for internally displaced people in Burma. Projected figures for 2012-13 are under review.

**17 July 2012 Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead** : To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have discussed with other European Union member states the reduction of funding for refugees living on the Thai-Burmese border.

**Baroness Northover**: DfID staff frequently discuss support for refugees living on the Thai-Burmese border with EU counterparts as well as with other donors. DfID has consistently supported the need to ensure sufficient support for refugees living on the Thai-Burmese border.

**12 July 2012 Rushanara Ali** : To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid his Department is delivering to people who have been displaced by communal violence in Rakhine state in Burma.



**Alan Duncan** : The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the have provided water containers and constructed latrines in 37 camps and provided other essential items to several camps. The World Food Programme has reported distributing 887 metric tonnes of food to around 103,000 people. DFID provides core funding to each of these organisations.

**16 July 2012 Rushanara Ali**: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to (a) improve access for international aid agencies to all areas of Arakan State, Burma and (b) monitor the distribution of aid in that area on the basis of need without discrimination.

**Mr Duncan**: We are working with other donors through the UN in relation to the needs in Arakan State and await the needs assessment based on the findings of OCHA and aid agency partners. This will set out the actions proposed and mechanisms for distribution and monitoring. The British ambassador has repeatedly raised concerns with Ministers and directly with the President about the humanitarian and political situation in Arakan and called on all sides to allow unrestricted humanitarian access for international and local aid agencies to the affected communities.

**17 July 2012 Lord Alton of Liverpool** : To ask whether the Government of Burma is allowing full and free access to local and international aid agencies to assist internally displaced people in (1) Arakan State, and (2) Kachin State.

**Baroness Northover** : We remain concerned about limitations to access for local and international aid agencies trying to provide aid to Arakan and Kachin, and have raised this issue with the Government of Burma.

On 28 and 29 June 2012, a joint visit of government, international organisations and non-government organisations took place to Rakhine (Arakan) State.

In Kachin State, UN relief convoys into non-government controlled areas have restarted along pre-agreed humanitarian corridors. Security concerns in areas where fighting continues have prevented access to much of the state.

### ***Shan Women's Action Network***

**12 July 2012 Jo Swinson** : To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what funding he is providing to the Shan Women's Action Network in Burma.

**Alan Duncan** : DFID has allocated £400,000 for the between 2009 and 2012 to deliver assistance in the areas of education, health, capacity building and women's empowerment for Shan communities affected by conflict, displacement and violence in Burma.

### ***Myanmar Egress***

**17 July 2012 Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead** : To ask Her Majesty's Government how much funding they have given to Myanmar Egress in Burma in (1) 2010, and (2) 2011.

**Baroness Northover**: In financial year 2010-11 around £22,000 was provided by DfID for Egress to support training for the design, implementation and evaluation of projects for NGOs and individuals involved in development in Burma. DfID did not receive any subsequent requests for funding from Egress and therefore no funding was provided to Egress in the financial year 2011-12.

## **ANSWERS TO SPOKEN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS**

### ***Aid***

**11 July 2012 Yasmin Qureshi** : What plans he has for future development assistance to Burma.

**Andrew Mitchell** : On 1 March we announced a doubling of British aid to Burma. We are supporting the World Bank in conducting an assessment of the development opportunities there following the remarkable

changes which Aung San Suu Kyi underlined in her historic visit to Westminster last month.

**11 July 2012 Yasmin Qureshi** : For the first time in decades, positive changes in Burma offer hope to refugees to return home. What is the Secretary of State's Department doing to encourage them to return to Burma?

**Andrew Mitchell** : We are engaged in Kachin and Rakhine states, both of which are receiving British humanitarian support. I can also announce today that a team of Members of this House, under the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, will be visiting the Burmese Parliament in Naypyidaw later this month.

### ***Kachin***

**11 July 2012 David Burrowes** : Despite the signs of hope, I am sure that the Secretary of State will share my concern about the recent reports of human rights abuses in Kachin state—Christians being persecuted, women being gang raped and internally displaced persons camps becoming pools of prey for human trafficking. Can he assure me that international aid with robust human rights protection will reach the Kachin people?

**Andrew Mitchell** : My hon. Friend identifies a matter of great concern in Kachin. We have set aside £2 million for humanitarian support there, of which some £1.2 million has already been allocated.

## **EARLY DAY MOTIONS**

### **AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND VISIT TO PARLIAMENT 21 JUNE 2012**

23. 05. 2012

That this House welcomes Aung San Suu Kyi's election into Pyithu Hluttaw, the Lower House of the Burmese Parliament, as an indication of change in the country; congratulates the National League for Democracy on its success in the by-election; welcomes change in the Burmese government; notes that Burma still holds a considerable number of political prisoners, who should be released immediately; welcomes Aung San Suu Kyi's visit to speak to both Houses of Parliament on 21 June 2012; and calls on the Government to continue actively to promote the transition to free democratic government in Burma.  
Total number of signatures: 43

### **COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN BURMA**

16.07.2012

That this House sends condolences to the families and friends of all those killed and affected by recent communal violence in Arakan (Rakhine) State in Burma; expresses concern that the government of Burma and local community leaders have not taken sufficient action to stop continuing sporadic violence; is deeply concerned by reports of widespread rape and of mass arrests, predominantly against the ethnic Rohingya minority; calls on the government of Burma to stop obstructing international agencies from delivering desperately needed humanitarian assistance to around 90,000 displaced people; further calls on the government of Burma to stop obstructing ethnic Rohingya from returning to their homes and villages; further calls on all parties in Burma to reform the 1982 citizenship law, which discriminates against ethnic minorities in Burma; and requests that the Government ensures the swift delivery of aid to the region.  
Total number of signatures: 13

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