MARCHING TO GENOCIDE IN BURMA:

FUELED BY GOVERNMENT ACTION AND A SYSTEMATIC CAMPAIGN OF HATE AIDED AND ABETTED BY THE DIVERTED EYES OF THE WORLD

Hon. Thomas H. Andrews

Daniel Sullivan

March 24, 2014

UNITED TO END GENOCIDE

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Thomas H. Andrews is President and Chief Executive Officer of United to End Genocide and former Congressman from Maine. He is long-time advocate of democracy and human rights in Burma. Tom has worked closely with the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, facilitated the creation of the European Burma Network and served as General Secretary of the Nobel Peace Laureate Campaign for Aung San Suu Kyi. Tom is a Senior Advisor to the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, chaired by former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Tom was elected to the Maine House of Representatives in 1982, the Maine Senate in 1984 and the United States House of Representatives in 1990. He has worked to promote democracy and human rights throughout the world including Indonesia, Cambodia, Yemen, Algeria, Serbia, and Ukraine among many others.

Dan Sullivan is the Director of the Policy and Government Relations at United to End Genocide. Dan manages the organization's conflict analysis and development of policy recommendations related to Sudan, Syria, Libya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burma, and prevention of genocide and mass atrocities. He also plays a leading role in outreach to the U.S. administration and Congress and coordination with international non-governmental organizations and civil society groups.

Previously Dan worked for Human Rights First, the Brookings Institution and the Albright Stonebridge Group, where he assisted former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in her role as co-chair of the Genocide Prevention Task Force."

ABOUT UNITED TO END GENOCIDE

United to End Genocide is the largest activist organization in America dedicated to preventing and ending genocide and mass atrocities worldwide. The United to End Genocide community includes faith leaders, students, artists, investors and genocide survivors, and all those who believe we must fulfill the promise the world made following the Holocaust – "Never Again!"

United to End Genocide
1000 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 200
Washington DC, 20005
endgenocide.org
info@endgenocide.org

© 2014 United to End Genocide

MARCHING TO GENOCIDE IN BURMA:

FUELED BY GOVERNMENT ACTION AND A SYSTEMATIC CAMPAIGN OF HATE AIDED AND ABETTED BY THE DIVERTED EYES OF THE WORLD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

United to End Genocide completed a four week fact-finding mission to Burma on March 16, 2014. What we discovered was alarming. Nowhere in the world are there more known precursors to genocide than in Burma today. Hundreds have been killed with a death toll mounting daily, tens of thousands have fled under the most hazardous conditions, and 140,000 have been forced into horrible, overcrowded camps where they face severe restrictions and are denied basic necessities including medical care.

Deteriorating conditions have put Burma on a downward trajectory that could end in the world's next genocide without immediate action by the United States and the international community.

One hundred and forty thousand Rohingya Muslims live in conditions of segregation, marginalization and desperation in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. Thirty thousand attempted to flee these conditions last year by boat – a rate that has doubled in 2014 – preferring to be victims of human trafficking or death rather than remain in what many described as brutal "concentration camps".

An alarming rise in ethnic and religious tensions and systematic human rights abuses are being fueled by well organized and financed campaigns of hatred led by extremist nationalist Buddhist Monks. The government of Burma has been linked to these campaigns, has failed to protect Muslims under attack and is seeking to establish even more repressive laws against Muslims.

During United to End Genocide's visit, the government abruptly terminated all services by the only provider of health care for hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims living in Rakhine State – the Nobel Peace Laureate organization Doctors Without Borders. The death toll from this decision mounts daily with no end in sight.

United to End Genocide's President Tom Andrews met with dozens of Rohingya and their families whose lives depended on these services. Many were waiting to die. Andrews' recounted his experience: "I was followed by children in each of the eight camps that I visited housing 90,000 Rohingya. Hello! Hello! Hello!' they shouted as they ran to follow me. But their bright faces belied the suffering that surrounded them and that their older siblings, parents and grandparents described in heartbreaking detail. Hopelessness, resignation, fear, anger, frustration and bitterness were all evident: 'Your country is our only hope' I was often told. 'If you will not help us, please bomb these camps. End this, please."

The international community – and particularly the United States – is in a strong position to alter the course of these events. But, it is failing to do so.

Few within Burma are willing to stand up to repressive government policies or speak out against campaigns of hate and bigotry. But it is clear that government, business and military leaders of Burma value international legitimacy and the opportunities that the opening to the international community has generated. With that comes leverage which can alter the calculations of Burma's governing and military elite away from the current trajectory of repression, hatred and violence.

What is required is the will to exercise that leverage. But that requires attention and recognition of what remains hidden behind the persistent rosy narrative of Burma's progress, other world events and indifference to the plight of those in the cross-hairs of the warning signs of genocide.

United to End Genocide is therefore launching a public campaign calling for immediate action by President Obama and the U.S. Congress. It is reaching out to its 500,000 members, its network of allied organizations and human rights advocates, Members of Congress and all men and women of conscience to act now to stop the march to genocide in Burma.

We call on President Obama to take the following immediate steps:

1. Demand that President Thein Sein act immediately to protect the Rohingya Muslim ethnic minority from further attacks.

2. Demand that the government of Burma rescind the order expelling Doctors Without Borders from Rakhine State and allow the organization's 500 staff to reopen all of its health clinics and services which provide the only life-saving care and medicine to which hundreds of thousands of Rohingya have access.

3. Demand that there be a credible investigation of the violence against Muslims – that includes international investigators – and that those found responsible be held fully accountable;

4. Suspend official government-to-government functions including meetings between military leaders until the above-mentioned concerns are addressed. Stop the movement of closer military-to-military relations between the United States and Burma until basic standards of behavior are met. Rescind the invitation of the Burmese Defense Minister to Hawaii for the ASEAN meeting of Defense Ministers April 1-3.

5. Update the targeted sanctions list of Specially Designated Nationals to include anyone responsible for perpetrating violence and announce consideration of renewal of U.S. sanctions and continued suspension of trade benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences.

We call on the U.S. Congress to immediately pass the bi-partisan HR 418, now pending before the House Foreign Affairs Committee: "Urging the Government of Burma to end the persecution of the Rohingya people and respect internationally recognized human rights for all ethnic and religious minority groups within Burma".

BURMA'S MARCH TO GENOCIDE:

Nowhere in the world are there more known precursors to genocide than in Burma today. The deteriorating conditions observed by United to End Genocide have put Burma on a trajectory to mass violence.

Former U.S. Congressman and United to End Genocide President Tom Andrews and United to End Genocide Policy Director Dan Sullivan just returned from Burma after spending nearly a month on a fact finding mission. Mr. Andrews had conducted a similar mission last summer. The trip included visits with citizens, local civil society leaders, Buddhist monks, Muslim leaders, government officials and international and local experts from the troubled Rakhine state in the west to the sites of anti-Muslim violence in central Burma.

As a group dedicated to monitoring the warning signs of genocide and mass violence throughout the world, what United to End Genocide saw and heard was deeply troubling.

The government's decision to prohibit the delivery of the life saving services of Doctors Without Borders in Rakhine State – which was made and implemented while United to End Genocide was in Burma – is a clear example of "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part". This Nobel Peace Laureate organization is the only provider of vital health care services for hundreds of thousands of desperate men, women and children. This decision is a death sentence for many of the people United to End Genocide visited.

These and other serious human rights abuses occur in the context of organized campaigns of hatred by community leaders and extremist nationalist Buddhist Monks and long-standing central and state government policies of discrimination and repression.

A recently released report of the human rights group Fortify Rights reveals the clear intention of government officials that underlie these policies including the desire to prevent births and create conditions to bring about the groups destruction at least in part (see Appendix 2).

Mass atrocities have repeatedly taken place in Rakhine State, including a breakout of violence in January that left some 40 men, women and children massacred as reported by the United Nations. The Government of Burma continues to deny that such killings occurred, despite reports by the UN and the revelation by Doctors Without Borders that it had treated 22 people for stab and gunshot wounds in the area where the massacre is reported to have taken place. This was a principle reason cited by the government of Burma for the expulsion of Doctors Without Borders. Another was that Rohingya were hired as local staff.

One hundred and forty thousand people, most of whom are Rohingya Muslims, live in conditions of total segregation, marginalization and desperation in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps that are aptly described by those who live there as "concentration camps".

Genocide

"any of the following acts committed with the **intent to destroy, in whole or in part**, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; **(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;** (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

– UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide

THE UNHEEDED WARNING SIGNS OF GENOCIDE

Genocide and mass atrocities do not happen without warning. There are clear signs that emerge in advance that provide opportunities to take steps to avert disaster – but only if the warning signs are recognized and heeded.

There are clear warning signs of genocide in Burma. They include:

Hate Speech and Dehumanization of the Other

From stereotypes of Muslims as violent and evil to narratives of an existential threat to Buddhist Burman culture, one would be hard pressed to find a level of dangerous speech as prevalent as in Burma today. Prominent nationalist monks like Ashin Wirathu describe Muslims as "dogs" and "African carp" who "breed quickly and they are very violent and they eat their own kind" in rallies and sermons that he conducts in the most volatile areas of Burma.

Organized Campaigns of Hate

Extremist nationalist monks have been touring the country, giving speeches and handing out DVDs with messages stoking popular fears of an existential threat to Burmese Buddhist culture by rapidly multiplying Muslims seeking to rape and force conversion of Buddhist women. Outbreaks of violence have often followed recent visits by nationalist monk leaders like Ashin Wirathu.

Wirathu held events in several towns during United to End Genocide's fact-finding mission in what many consider the epicenter of hatred toward the Rohingya – Rakhine States' capital city, Sittwe. There were events also in Thandwe, the site of violence against non-Rohingya Kaman Muslims last October.

Otherwise well-educated and moderate individuals in Burma express racist vitriol and refuse to refer to the Rohingya by name, rather calling them Bengali or "kalar", the equivalent of the worst racial slurs in the United States.

In many places throughout the country there are ongoing boycotts of Muslim businesses, some still demarcated by the now infamous "969 Campaign" stickers and many more by a more subtle, but no less effective, Buddhist flag campaign marking Buddist shops and homes. This campaign was on full display in Meiktila, the site of a massacre of Muslims that left over 40 people dead last year, and where tens of thousands remain displaced with many homes and businesses destroyed or taken over by Buddhists.

The Elimination of Independent Observers and Witnesses

Independent observers and witnesses are being denied access to the most volatile and dangerous areas of Burma. More non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are being threatened as protests against "foreigners" in Rakhine State are systematically organized and financed. United to End Genocide met with staff members of NGOs who reported a marked increase in the level of tension and intimidation. "Things are bad and getting worse," said one who was preparing to travel to northern villages of Rakhine: "I don't know how much longer I will be here."

President Thein Sein broke the public pledge that he made to President Obama in November of 2012 to allow the UN High Commission for Human Rights to open a permanent office in Burma with access to Rakhine and other volatile and dangerous areas. Indeed, he has fulfilled only one of eleven pledges made during President Obama's visit (see Appendix 2).

The Government of Burma continues to deny a United Nations report of a break out of violence in Rakhine State in January that left 40 men, women, and children massacred. Doctors Without Borders reported that it had treated 22 people for stab and gunshot wounds in the area where the massacre is reported to have taken place. This revelation was cited by the government as one of the principle reasons for the expulsion of Doctors Without Borders from Rakhine State. The loss of 500 Doctors Without Borders staff means the loss of 1,000 eyes on the ground.

Increasing Exodus of Rohingya by Boat Face High-risk of Drowning or Human Trafficking

In 2013, the UN estimated that some 30,000 Rohingya fled conditions in Burma by boat. Other observers have estimated the number at 75,000 or even above 100,000, with hundreds, perhaps thousands having drowned. So far this year, tens of thousands more are believed to have taken the same risk. Apart from the risk of drowning, many of those who flee fall into the hands of human traffickers in Malaysia or Thailand, forced to work on rubber plantations or in the sex trade. While very effective at restricting the movement of Rohingya within Burma, the government has shown little effort to prevent the flow of this imperiled population onto this perilous course. "We cannot pass the gate leading to town," we were told by camp residents, "But the guards are happy to turn the other way if we are heading to sea."

The Intimidation and Silencing of Political Voices of Opposition

Politicians starting with Aung San Suu Kyi have been largely silent in the face of this crisis. Many fear that they will pay a political price for standing up for Muslims in general and Rohingya in particular. United to End Genocide met with civil society leaders, monks and Members of Parliament who were distressed with the conditions facing Muslims but who cited pressure to remain silent, describing the backlash they faced from extremist elements in the country.

In Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State, observers described an exodus of more moderate Buddhist Rakhine and warned that containing extremist sentiments would only become more difficult. As protests against Rohingya and international NGOs perceived to favor them increase in size and frequency – featuring uniform posters and t-shirts – Rakhine who might otherwise have declined to participate find themselves under immense pressure to prove their patriotism or risk being perceived as sympathizers and ostracized. Communities in other parts of Rakhine State that chose not to protest reportedly saw an influx of protesters shipped in from the capital Sittwe.

MPs described the political pressure that they were under, particularly as the 2015 election year approaches. They told how opposition to proposed repressive legislation that would "protect Buddhism" by restricting interfaith marriages between Muslims and Buddhists would put their political careers in jeopardy. President Thein Sein has advanced the legislation in Parliament and it has become an organizing tool of nationalist Buddhists. Three million petition signatures in support of the legislation have reportedly been collected by the monks in rallies across the country. 10,000 Buddhist monks reportedly participated in a conference in January where they not only endorsed the legislation but announced their support for legislation that would restrict Rohingya Muslims from voting.

Looming Triggers of Violence – the National Census and 2015 Election

Highly contested elections are one of the most common triggers of violence related to genocide and mass atrocities. Nearly everyone we spoke with registered a clear sense of rising tensions and a belief that risks of violence would only increase as the 2015 elections approach.

International and domestic observers alike warned about the national census beginning on Sunday, March 30. With an underreported Muslim population in the last census over 30 years ago of around 4%, the latest numbers are sure to show a significant increase that feeds into dangerous narratives about the existential threat of a rapidly growing Muslim population intent on destroying Buddhist culture.

The census does not include Rohingya as one of the ethnic groups that are listed as options for census respondents. The Rohingya have indicated that they will check "other" and specify "Rohingya". Protests, led by nationalist monks like Ashin Wirathu, have been organized to oppose providing Rohingya with any option for an ethnic identity other than "Bengali" – a pejorative term that reinforces their contention that Rohingya are foreigners.

Beyond stoking anti-Muslim hatreds, the census also risks increasing tensions with ethnic minority groups throughout the country who have decried a lack of consultation from a government known to have

manipulated ethnic categories and tensions for its own advantage in the past.

Restriction of Rights Based on Identity

This element is most starkly seen in northern Rakhine State where a state policy of persecution has limited the rights of Muslim Rohingya to marry, have children, work, move, and gain access to education. While we were in Burma, Fortify Rights released a report based on several leaked government documents laying out how engaged government officials have been in creating and enforcing these policies (see Appendix 2).

Denial of Readily Available Healthcare Causing Great Suffering and a Mounting Death Toll

The Nobel Peace Laureate Doctors Without Borders was thrown out of Rakhine State putting the lives of thousands of Rohingya Muslims in peril. The death toll of this decision mounts daily and is the latest manifestation of the increasing persecution of the Rohingya and a policy of apartheid that threatens to lead to genocide.

Abuse and Repression of Ethnic Minority Groups at the Hands of Burma's Military

Recent reports out of Kachin and Shan states document ongoing widespread cases of rape, torture, and attacks on civilian areas. Such abuses have been met with virtual impunity. Meanwhile, some 100,000 people remain displaced in Kachin State, displaced as recently as October and November 2013. The Burmese government continues to deny unfettered humanitarian access to those in need (see Appendix 2).

Government Policies and Statements that Condone the Actions of those Inciting Hatred and Violence

Hate speech is becoming more pervasive and dangerous in Burma. Well organized gatherings and rallies are held in the most volatile areas that feature the vitriol of radical nationalist monks. Reports of violence often follow in their wake. One of the most incendiary of these monks is Ashin Wirathu who has described himself as "the Burmese Bin Laden". When asked to comment on Wirathu and his pervasive hate speech, President Thein Sein defended him as a "son of Buddha" and lashed out at those who criticize him. Last month Thein Sein endorsed and sought to advance legislation to "protect race and religion" which included provisions that would prohibit the marriage of Buddhist women with Muslim men. The legislation has become a rallying cry and organizing tool for extreme nationalist monks and their rallies.

Government Failure to Protect Civilians

The central government and army have failed to provide for the security of those under immediate threat and failed to address the humanitarian crises of what was to be temporary shelters and are now permanent camps for internally displaced persons. The failure of security forces and police to protect Muslims – and their complicity in violent attacks – has been well documented (see Appendix 2).

Muslims we spoke with cited worsening conditions and greater levels of intimidation and fear. Everyone believed that greater violence was inevitable and expressed the strong sentiment that the violence against Muslims would stop if the government and military wanted them to.

"Never Again"? The International Community's Failure to Act

Caught in the "good-news" narrative of a nation that has undergone significant reforms, including the release of Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and her election to Parliament, and seemingly focused on other world events, the world has been quick to declare the transformation of Burma a foreign policy success. In so doing the international diplomatic community has willfully ignored – or failed to adequately address – the warning signs of genocide and mass violence.

Should the conditions cited in this report erupt into mass violence questions will be asked, as they always are, about what the world could have done to stop the killing. Why were the clearly visible warning signs not heeded? Why did the world fail to act, yet again, to stop genocide?

First and foremost, it ignored them. United to End Genocide has begun to consult and brief officials, policy makers and advocates of its findings in Burma. What has been striking is how surprised many are. A Member of Congress responded with shock: "I pride myself in keeping abreast of important world developments," he said, "but I had no idea that this was going on."

This is a common response to genocide and mass atrocities: "How could this have happened?" "Why was nothing done?" And, finally: "Never again!"

These responses most often come after the massive loss of human life. While many lives have been lost and hundreds of thousands are at risk in Burma, the good news is that there is still time and opportunity to avert an even greater catastrophe. But the United States and the world must act now.

When informed of who we were and where we were from, many of the Rohingya who we met as we visited their IDP camps told us that the international community – and the United States in particular – was their only hope: "If you will do nothing to help us", they pleaded, "than please bomb the camps. Please end this!"

WHAT THE WORLD AND THE UNITED STATES CAN DO

The policies of the United States and other governments of the world have failed to alter these dangerous and deteriorating conditions in Burma, despite options and opportunities to do so. A change of course is imperative.

There is little domestic space within Burma to stand up to repressive government policies or speak out against campaigns of hate and bigotry. This has to do with a complex mix of popular fears, opportunistic hate mongering and self-interested political calculations.

But it is clear that government, business and military leaders value international legitimacy and the promise of wealth and prestige that the recent opening to the international community has begun to bring. With that comes leverage which can alter the domestic calculations away from the current trajectory of repression, hatred and violence and towards one of respect for human rights and the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities.

The U.S. government has a range of readily available options to act. Among them:

- Issuing a public demand from President Obama to President Thein Sein to restore health care services immediately to Rakhine State by allowing Doctors Without Borders to unconditionally re-open all clinics and restore all healthcare services to those in desperate need;

- Demanding a credible independent investigation – including international observers and partners – into recent violence in Northern Rakhine and holding perpetrators of violence and those inciting violence with campaigns of hate speech accountable;

- Generating greater public attention on the crises and pressure on those who are responsible. President Obama should begin immediately by speaking up and out against these alarming trends calling on President Thein Sein to act on his long-delayed promises including the opening of a UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights with a full mandate and access;

- Suspending diplomatic and military meetings until immediate concerns are addressed, starting with rescinding the invitation of the Defense Minister of Burma to Hawaii for the ASEAN meeting of Defense Ministers April 1-3;

- Stopping the movement of closer military-to-military relations between the United States and Burma until basic conditions and standards of behavior are met. Adhere to conditions for future engagement such as laid out in the Burma Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2014 (see Appendix 2);

- Update the targeted sanctions list of Specially Designated Nationals to include anyone responsible for perpetrating violence and announce consideration of renewal of U.S. sanctions and continued suspension of trade benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences;

- Announcing the strengthening of the few sanctions that remain on Burma including the long-delayed update of the Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) list;

- Putting Burma on the UN Security Council agenda to address the deteriorating conditions that are already severely impacting the nations of the region, including the refugee crises caused by the growing numbers of those risking their lives to escape Burma.

A CITIZENS CALL TO ACTION

United to End Genocide is issuing a call to its 500,000 members, its network of allied organizations and human rights advocates, Members of Congress and all men and women of conscience to act now to stop the march to genocide in Burma.

They can do so by taking two immediate steps:

1. Sign the petition to President Obama to take action; and,
2. Contact Members of Congress to urge their support of HR 418, now pending before the House Foreign Affairs Committee: "Urging the Government of Burma to end the persecution of the Rohingya people and respect internationally recognized human rights for all ethnic and religious minority groups within Burma."

We are united to end the threat of genocide in Burma.

Dear President Obama:

The government of Burma has ordered Doctors Without Borders, the only source of medical care for hundreds of thousands of the Rohingya ethnic minority, to close its doors in Rakhine State. As you know, this decision is a death sentence for many.

The expulsion of Doctors Without Borders is the latest policy of persecution against the Rohingya population amid long-standing state policies of discrimination. It's part of a series of deteriorating conditions sending Burma on a downward trajectory that could end in the world's next genocide without immediate action.

I am writing to urge you to immediately use the leverage and influence of the US government to protect the Rohingya. You must make it clear to President Thein Sein – protect the Rohingya from further attacks or face economic and diplomatic consequences from the United States and others. Specifically, I am asking you to:

1) Demand that Burma immediately rescind the order expelling Doctors Without Borders and allow the organization to reopen all of its health clinics and services;

2) Demand a credible independent investigation including international observers and partners into the violence against Burma's Muslim minority and hold perpetrators accountable;

3) Rescind the invitation to the Defense Minister of Burma to attend the ASEAN Defense Ministers meeting April 1-3 in Hawaii and suspend official engagements;

4) Update the targeted sanctions list of "Specially Designated Nationals" to include individuals responsible for perpetrating recent violence.

Nowhere in the world are there more known precursors to genocide than in Burma today. There are few voices calling for a stop to the killing of the Rohingya, the U.S. must be one of them.

Addendum

EYEWITNESS TO SUFFERING: AFTERMATH OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EXPULSION OF DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS FROM RAKHINE STATE

Former Congressman and United to End Genocide President Tom Andrews released the following statement from Burma immediately following the announcement that Doctors Without Borders was being forced out of Rakhine State by the government of Burma:

"Today's action by the government of Burma to shut down the health services of Medicines Sans Frontières (MSF) is outrageous.

MSF has been found guilty of telling the truth about attacks against the Rohingya last month. For this, the lives of tens of thousands of desperate people have been put at risk.

The international community cannot turn its back on the latest assault by the government of Burma on the most persecuted and neglected people in the world. Their only crime is their ethnicity and religion.

A strong and immediate response by the U.S. government and the international community is imperative. This is not only a matter of right and wrong but life and death."

Congressman Andrews travelled to Rakhine State two days after the announcement. What he saw was deeply troubling. The human suffering and death toll in the wake of the expulsion of doctors and other health care has begun. It will continue to rise until the expulsion order is reversed.

Here is part of Congressman Andrews' eyewitness account:

I travelled to all of the IDP camps in the Sittwe – housing over ninety-thousand men, women and children – over four days. I sought out those whose lives were being impacted by the decision to deny health care for otherwise readily treatable conditions. I met patients, young and old, and members of their families. I spoke to many near the closed doors of a shuttered Doctors Without Borders clinic. I listened to their stories and took their photos.

They included:

- A one-and-a-half-year-old child suffering from pneumonia who was in the middle of her treatment with two days of medication remaining. Her mother was told to come back to the MSF clinic to check on the condition of the child and receive additional care and medicine. The closure of the clinic makes this no longer possible. As the child coughed, her mother told me that her little girl had blood in her stool and been suffering from fever. The family is at a loss as to what to do.

- A forty-three-year old mechanic with an open wound on his abdomen who had arrived at the MSF clinic on Friday was told that the staff could not help him because the clinic was no longer open. His deteriorating condition was linked to complications of an emergency appendectomy that he had at Sittwe General Hospital. He told me that he would never go back there again. I was told by several who had experience with Sittwe General that, unlike MSF, they had to buy food and also pay bribes for their security. They feared for their lives and the safety of their family and mistrusted those providing treatment. Unable to walk, the man was emaciated and weak. He said he had little hope left and was ready to die. His wife, who sat beside him, wept as she told me how sad and afraid she was for her family.

- A ten-year-old boy was suffering from what MSF doctors suspected was tuberculosis. An outpatient, the boy was receiving daily treatment that included injections, pills and nutritional supplements. He was told to return to the clinic on Monday for observation and

treatment but the clinic was closed. He had two weeks of medication left. His mother said that with no money or property to sell – her husband is unemployed – they have no options and little hope if their son's condition does not improve on its own.

- A forty-year-old mason went to the clinic to be treated for chronic lung disease. His difficulty breathing had gotten worse and needed treatment. The treatment began weeks ago and required him to come to the clinic regularly for check-ups and medication. The treatment, including the inhaler that the clinic gave to him, seemed to be working. He was to return the clinic the week I met him but was told it was closed. His pills and inhaler will soon run out. Looking for options he went to the Daiping Emergency Hospital but was told that they can only provide cough medicine, not treatment for the disease. He told me that he is afraid what will happen when his inhaler and pills run out. He is at a loss as to what to do.

- A fifty-five-year-old farmer was being treated for diabetes at the MSF clinic when he was turned away because of its closure on Friday. His right leg had been amputated three months ago and gangrene had set into his left leg. He told me that he had decided that it was better to die than go back to Sittwe General Hospital particularly if MSF would not be there to take care of him afterward. With little hope that MSF clinic would re-open, he and his wife were preparing to return home where they said he would die. The pills that MSF had given him for his treatment would be gone in a few days and he had enough pain medication to last a few days beyond that.

The loss of life because of the loss of health care in Rakhine State is the latest development in a deeply disturbing trend that I have witnessed here in Burma. An increasingly toxic mix of hatred and intolerance is threatening not only the Rohingya, but all Muslims. I have seen a notable increase in tension and fear among the Muslim community in Burma since I visited last June. Indeed, I was informed that some of the community leaders who I met with last summer had closed down their business and taken their families out of the country. Things were getting worse, not better, I was told.

Meanwhile, staff members of NGOs working in Rakhine State described their increasing level of fear and intimidation. They told of the growing number of well organized and funded protests against the presence of "foreigners" in Rakhine State.

It is clear that the expulsion of Doctors Without Borders is not just about the loss of healthcare. It is about the expulsion of witnesses. When I asked why, I was told that the pressure to eliminate witnesses was growing along with the threat of even greater mass violence. Indeed, large areas in northern Rakhine State are now inaccessible raising fears and speculation about the fate of those who are under threat and in the shadows. If the MSF expulsion is allowed to stand, I was told, more expulsions of NGOs and witnesses will very likely follow.

The warning signs of mass violence are clear. It is imperative that these warning signs be heeded. After nearly four weeks here in Burma, I fear that we could be one incident away from a conflagration of violence and a significant loss of life.

Appendix 1

H.RES.418: URGING THE GOVERNMENT OF BURMA TO END THE PERSECUTION OF THE ROHINGYA PEOPLE AND RESPECT INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS MINORITY GROUPS WITHIN BURMA

Urging the Government of Burma to end the persecution of the Rohingya people and respect internationally recognized human rights for all ethnic and religious minority groups within Burma.

Whereas over 800,000 Rohingya ethnic minority live in Burma, mostly in the western Rakhine state;

Whereas currently, approximately 140,000 Rohingya are internally displaced in central Rakhine state and hundreds of thousands have fled to neighboring countries, including at least 231,000 in Bangladesh, at least 15,000 in Malaysia, and many more in Thailand and Indonesia;

Whereas the Burma Citizenship Law of 1982 has long excluded from approved ethnic groups the Rohingya people, despite many having lived in northern Rakhine state for generations, and has thereby rendered Rohingyas stateless and vulnerable to exploitation and abuse;

Whereas the Rohingya have historically experienced other particularized and severe legal, economic, and social discrimination, including restrictions on travel outside their village of residence, limitations on their access to higher education, and a prohibition from working as civil servants, including as doctors, nurses, or teachers;

Whereas authorities have also required Rohingya to obtain official permission for marriages and have singled out Rohingya in northern Rakhine state for forced labor and arbitrary arrests;

Whereas the Government of Burma has forcefully relocated Rohingya into relief camps, where they lack decent shelter, access to clean water, food, sanitation, health care, the ability to support themselves, or basic education for their children;

Whereas a two-child policy sanctioned solely upon the Rohingya population in the districts of Maungdaw and Buthidaung in northern Rakhine state restricts the rights of women and children, prevents children from obtaining Burmese citizenship, denies Rohingyas access to basic government services, and fosters discrimination against Muslim women by Buddhist nurses and midwives;

Whereas the United States Department of State has regularly expressed since 1999 its particular concern for severe legal, economic, and social discrimination against Burma's Rohingya population in its Country Report for Human Rights Practices;

Whereas the level of persecution, including widespread arbitrary arrest, detention, and extortion of Rohingya and other Muslim communities, has dramatically increased over the past year and a half;

Whereas communal violence has affected both Muslims and Burma's majority Buddhist population, but has overwhelmingly targeted Burma's ethnic Muslim minorities, which altogether comprise less than 5 percent of Burma's population;

Whereas violence targeting Rohingyas in Maungdaw and Sittwe in June and July of 2012 resulted in the deaths of at least 57 Muslims and the destruction of 1,336 Rohingyas homes;

Whereas on October 23, 2012, at least 70 Rohingyas were killed, and the Yan Thei village of the Mrauk-U Township was destroyed;

Whereas violence has also targeted Muslims not of Rohingya ethnicity, including riots in March 2013 in the town of Meiktila that resulted in the death of at least 43 Burmese Muslims, including 20 students and several teachers massacred at an Islamic school, the burning of at least 800 homes and 5 mosques, and the displacement of 12,000 people;

Whereas on October 1, 2013, riots involving more than 700 Buddhists in Thandwe township resulted in the death of 4 Kaman Muslim men and the stabbing death of a 94-year-old Muslim woman;

Whereas over 4,000 religious, public, and private Rohingya structures have been destroyed;

Whereas Rohingyas have experienced and continue to experience further restrictions on their practice of Islam, culture, and language; and

Whereas the violence against ethnic Muslim populations, including the Rohingya and other Muslim groups, is part of a larger troubling pattern of violence against other ethnic and religious minorities in Burma:

Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the House of Representatives:

(1) calls on the Government of Burma to end all forms of persecution and discrimination of the Rohingya people and ensure respect for internationally recognized human rights for all ethnic and religious minority groups within Burma; and

(2) calls on the United States Government and the international community to put consistent pressure on the Government of Burma to take all necessary measures to end the persecution and discrimination of the Rohingya population and to protect the fundamental rights of all ethnic and religious minority groups in Burma.

Appendix 2
RESOURCES

Widney Brown, JD, "Health Crisis in Rakhine State," Physicians for Human Rights, March 2, 2014. Available at: http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/blog/health-crisis-in-rakhine-state.html

Bill Davis, MA, MPH, Holly G. Atkinson, MD, FACP, Richard Sollom, MA, MPH, "Massacre in Central Burma: Muslim Students Terrorized and Killed in Meiktila," Physicians for Human Rights, May 2013. Available at: http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/library/reports/meiktila-report-may-2013.html

Fortify Rights, "Policies of Persecution: Ending Abusive State Policies Against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar", Februrary 25, 2014. Available at: http://www.fortifyrights.org/downloads/Policies_of_Persecution_Feb_25_Fortify_Rights.pdf

Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2014: Burma", January 21, 2014. Available at: http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/burma_6.pdf

Reports of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, latest in March 2014. Available at: http://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/asiaregion/pages/mmindex.aspx

Dan Sullivan, "Burma's Broken Commitments: Thein Sein's 11 Promises to Obama," United to End Genocide, November 19, 2014. Available at: http://endgenocide.org/burmas-broken-promises-thein-seins-11-commitments-obama/

Shan Human Rights Foundation, "Action Update: Burma Army shelling of villages, torture, looting cause 2,000 villagers to flee their homes near Chinese pipelines in N. Shan State", March 17, 2014. Available at: http://www.shanhumanrights.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=396:march-17-2014&catid=75:action-updae

U.S. House of Representatives, "H.R. 3889: Burma Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2014," introduced January 15, 2014. Available at: https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr3889

Women's League of Burma, "Same Impunity, Same Pattern: Report of Systematic Sexual Violence in Burma's Ethnic Areas," January 14, 2014. Available at: http://womenofburma.org/same-impunity-same-pattern-report-of-systematic-sexual-violence-in-burmas-ethnic-areas/

UNITED TO END GENOCIDE
1000 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005
202.556.2100
endgenocide.org

FACES OF THE ROHINGYA

WITHOUT ACCESS TO LIFE-SAVING HEALTHCARE THEIR LIVES ARE NOW AT RISK

endgenocide.org/burma

UNITED TO END GENOCIDE