



Council on American-Islamic Relations

Georgia Chapter

P.O. Box 942134
Atlanta GA 30341
404-285-9530
emitchell@cair.com

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The Honorable Johnny Isakson
United States Senate
131 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Isakson:

We write to request that you join your Senate colleagues in supporting two separate bills related to the ongoing crisis in Myanmar.

First, we ask that you join Senator Cory Gardner in co-sponsoring Senate amendment 607 (SA 607) to S.1519, the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The amendment would strike a proposed expansion of American military assistance to Myanmar's regime, which is currently engaged in a campaign of ethnic cleaning against its Rohingya Muslim population.

Over the past two weeks, Burmese soldiers have traveled from village to village in Rakhine State, committing mass murder, rape, and arson along the way. Survivors, bystanders, and even perpetrators have posted video footage online showing Rohingya men, women and children being beaten to death, dismembered, and burned alive, among other acts of brutality.

These latest acts of violence have sent thousands of survivors fleeing for Myanmar's closed border with Bangladesh, thereby sparking an international humanitarian crisis. Indeed, Georgia is now home to thousands of Burmese-Americans who fled persecution in Myanmar.

This violence has gone too far, and gone on for far too long. If the international community fails to stop the first genocide of the twenty-first century, Myanmar may soon become synonymous with Rwanda and Bosnia.

Although the United States cannot and should intervene in every global humanitarian crisis, our nation should not contribute to this crisis by expanding military-to-military cooperation with Burma's government. As you know, the Obama Administration lifted many sanctions on Myanmar when its military dictatorship took small steps towards becoming a democratic government. Sadly, Myanmar simultaneously took even longer steps towards becoming a genocidal government.

The United Nations issued a report in February 2017 alleging that the Burmese government has spent years engaging in behavior that "very likely" constitutes crimes against humanity and ethnic cleaning. Myanmar refused to grant entry visas to United Nations investigators charged with examining these allegations. In doing so, Myanmar violated its obligations as a member of the international community as well its promises to the United States.

We therefore hope that you will also join Senator John McCain in co-sponsoring Senate Resolution 250, which would condemn the violence in Myanmar, encourage de facto Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi to do the same, demand that Myanmar an investigation by the United Nations, and demand that Myanmar grant citizenship to its Rohingya population.

The world failed to intervene in Rwanda. The world failed to intervene in Srebrenica. The world still has a chance to act with decisive moral clarity in Myanmar. Our nation cannot allow the Burmese regime to use American diplomatic, economic, or military support to commit genocide.

To that end, we ask that you join Senator Gardner in supporting Senate amendment 607 to the NDAA, and we ask you to join Senator McCain in supporting Senate Resolution 250.

With thanks,

Edward Ahmed Mitchell, Esq.
Executive Director
Council on American-Islamic Relations
Georgia Chapter

Mr. Mohammad Ayub
Executive Director
Burmese Rohingya Community of
Georgia