Fifty-one members of the British Parliament from nine different political parties have added their names to an Early Day Motion (a Parliamentary petition) calling on the British government to support a UN Commission of Inquiry into the situation in Rakhine State, Burma.

The call for a UN Commission of Inquiry comes amid reports by the United Nations and human rights organisations regarding Rohingya in Northern Rakhine State being subjected to gang-rapes, executions, torture, mass arrests and the burning down of villages by the Burmese Army and security forces since October 2016.  A UN Human Rights report in February described what was happening in Rakhine State as likely to amount to crimes against humanity.

Rt Hon Tom Brake MP, Foreign Affairs Spokesperson for the Liberal Democrats and primary sponsor of the Early Day Motion, said: “The Rohingya are suffering unbearable cruelty. The Burmese Army is getting away with crimes against humanity. It is clear that a truly independent UN Inquiry is needed in order for this to be investigated properly and to stop the current abuses. Instead of ensuring members of the Burmese Army who are violating international law face prosecution, the British government are spending a quarter of a million pounds a year giving them free training. The British government must work to ensure that the establishment of a UN Inquiry is included in the Human Rights Council resolution on Burma later this month.”

An interim report in January by a commission set up by the Burmese President claimed that there was no evidence that any human rights violations had been taking place in Northern Rakhine State since the army crackdown began in October. The UK government has referred to this report as not credible but still has failed to back an independent UN investigation.

Karin Valtersson, Campaigns Officer at Burma Campaign UK said: “There was a time that the British government led the world in promoting human rights in Burma, but now they won’t even support a UN inquiry into possible crimes against humanity. There is a real opportunity for the UK government to push for a UN Commission of Inquiry in the next resolution on Burma at the Human Rights Council in March. The UK government should take the lead and come out in clear support of a COI.”

In the short term, the establishment of a UN inquiry could help curtail human rights violations taking place. The Burmese government and military will know a credible independent investigation is taking place and that those responsible for human rights violations will be identified. In the long term it could assess the overall human rights situation in Rakhine State. It could identify perpetrators and instigators of violence and hatred, assess laws and government policies which discriminate against the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities, and provide detailed recommendations to improve the situation.

The EDM has attracted a wide range of cross-party support from the Conservative Party, Labour Party, Liberal Democrats, Scottish National Party, Democratic Unionist Party, Ulster Unionist Party, Social Democratic and Labour Party, Plaid Cymru and Green Party.

The EDM also calls for the UK government to support the UN Secretary-General to lead negotiations for unhindered aid access in Rakhine State. The NLD-led government has kept in place severe restrictions on humanitarian aid in Rakhine State.

Full text of the EDM can be read here: [https://www.parliament.uk/edm/2016-17/884](https://www.parliament.uk/edm/2016-17/884%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)​

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