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Hon Andrew Giles MP
Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs
via: *Australian Government Department of Home Affairs*

Dear Minister Giles

We write to raise our concerns for the Rohingya people.

Australia's decision in November 2022 to prioritise Myanmar nationals for humanitarian visas sends a clear signal that Australia recognises the humanitarian disaster in post-coup Myanmar and we welcome this decision. However, we believe the Australian Government should seize this moment to also include the Rohingya in this arrangement.

Rohingya people have faced decades of violence and discrimination in Myanmar, with more than three million stateless Rohingya now living in over-crowded refugee camps across the Asia-Pacific and Middle East. As you would be aware, Cox's Bazar Camp in Bangladesh currently has over one million Rohingya people with no access to work and limited access to health services and education.

Over 12,000 people at this camp are reported as currently without shelter due to the recent fire which destroyed their bamboo and cloth homes and other important infrastructure such as learning centres and mosques. Médecins Sans Frontières reports that it is overwhelmed by the ongoing outbreak of scabies with current numbers far outweighing their capacity to respond. Scabies is a highly infectious parasitic condition causing extreme itchiness, bacterial infections and which can cause devastating kidney failure for children in later life. The mental health toll for people living in these conditions is unimaginable. Minister, we can and must do better.

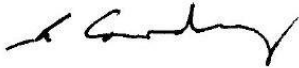
We recognise the excellent work the government is doing across the region, in particular your colleague Senator The Hon Penny Wong imposing targeted financial sanctions and travel bans on individuals responsible for egregious human rights abuses in Myanmar and the provision of humanitarian support to Myanmar and Bangladesh. Australia rightly takes a leadership role across our region.

We note that there are many Rohingya refugees who have been living in Australia on temporary protection visas for up to eight years. They will become permanent residents during the next year under the Resolution of Status visa changes and will want to sponsor their families to Australia. The inclusion of Rohingya in the humanitarian visa priorities will simplify family reunion processing.

By explicitly including the Rohingya with Myanmar nationals in its refugee intake policies, Australia can send a strong message to the authorities in Myanmar and other states in the region and help extremely vulnerable people resettle in a place of safety, supported by family and community.

We urge you to exercise reasonable compassion under the law and create a humane refugee resettlement pathway for the Rohingya people.

Yours sincerely



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President
International Commission of Jurists (Australian Section)



Kerry Weste
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