



5 February 2020

Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House ACT 2600

To the Prime Minister

On behalf of Australian Quakers, I urge the Australian Government to take an active role in supporting the ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in relation to the Rohingya people of Myanmar. The ruling arose from an application from The Gambia to the Court that Myanmar had breached the Geneva Convention on preventing genocide. It follows a United Nations investigation in 2017 that reported mass killings and rapes of the Rohingya people.

The Court has ruled that the Myanmar Government has “caused irreparable damage to the rights of the Rohingya” and has called on the Government to “take all measures within its power” to prevent acts of genocide and ensure the preservation of relevant evidence. It said that Myanmar must report within four months the action it has taken.

Given that the Myanmar Government denies ‘genocidal intent’, and claims that the displacement of Rohingya people is a case of ‘military clearances, we feel that it is essential for our own Government to use its links with Myanmar to reinforce the importance of the ICJ ruling. We agree with the comment by Morten B Pederson of the University of NSW Canberra (Australian Outlook, 28 December 2019) that “the key to resolving the Rohingya crisis is to empower moderates on all sides that are willing to work to bridge the divides”.

We acknowledge the humanitarian assistance given by Australia to the Rohingya in Rakhine state and Bangladesh. We would like to see more done to enable refugees to come to Australia, possibly under a special program similar to that created for refugees from Syria and Iraq. We also believe that Australia can use its position on the UN Human Rights Council to press the case for greater international efforts to persuade the Myanmar authorities to respond positively to the ICJ ruling.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann Zubrick".

Ann Zubrick
Presiding Clerk
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia

Cc: Anthony Albanese, Leader of the Opposition

Australia Yearly Meeting

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