

News story: Violence in Burma: statement from Priti Patel

Commenting on the violence in Burma International Development Secretary, Priti Patel, said:

The appalling violence in Rakhine must stop now. Britain urgently calls upon the security forces to de-escalate the situation in Rakhine and the Government of Burma to allow immediate and full humanitarian access and support for the people and communities affected. Without full access the needs of innocent men, women and children will not be met, and more lives will be lost.

Right now, aid workers are getting British-funded humanitarian assistance to more than 80,000 people in parts of Rakhine State and this work must be allowed to continue unimpeded. Elsewhere, DFID's partners are ready to provide emergency food to 30,000 people and to treat more than 3,000 severely malnourished children and pregnant women, but cannot get the access they need. Things must change. The Government of Burma must act now and allow this desperately needed help to get through.

The impact of this violence on neighbouring Bangladesh is huge. DFID is and will continue to meet the humanitarian needs of vulnerable Rohingya who have fled into Bangladesh providing over 55,000 people with food and protecting the most vulnerable, including women and girls. But with more people fleeing for their safety, Britain is immediately releasing a further £5 million from existing funds to provide additional critical life-saving assistance – such as food, shelter, water and sanitation to those who are fleeing the violence.

Britain is ready to support the recommendations of the Kofi Annan led Rakhine Advisory Commission to assist the long-term development of all people in Rakhine state, but right now the immediate action is for the security forces to end the violence and the Government of Burma to allow humanitarian access.