

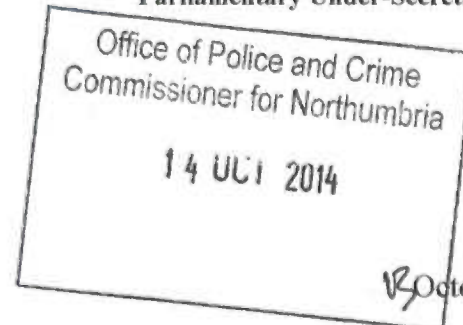


Department  
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Rt Hon Lynne Featherstone MP  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State



14 October 2014

Dear Vera

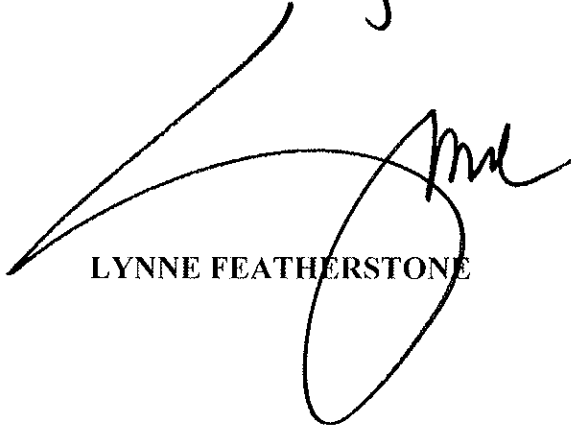
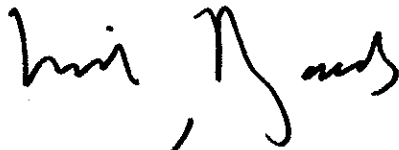
Thank you for your letter of 29 September to the Rt Hon Justine Greening MP about the Burma Campaign UK - Sexual Violence campaign. I am replying as the minister with responsibility for the issues raised, and in my role as Ministerial Champion for tackling violence against women and girls overseas.

Like you, we want to see the Burmese government tackling sexual violence, including in areas of ethnic conflict. We continue to make clear that where serious crimes have been committed; those who have perpetrated them must be held accountable for their actions. As part of the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative, the British Embassy in Rangoon is providing more than £300,000 to combat sexual violence in Burma. Projects funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) are training women in basic legal skills so that they can provide advice to victims of sexual violence, and providing workshops for community leaders and local government staff to help them prevent sexual violence in their communities.

Through DFID, the UK is one of the largest humanitarian donors to the two main areas of conflict and violence in Burma – Kachin and Rakhine – where we are funding UNFPA to support coordination of prevention and protection activities. The UK is a major funder of humanitarian assistance for Burmese refugee communities in Thailand. The humanitarian programme includes: training for medical and non-medical health centre staff on gender based violence (GBV); guiding principles for supporting survivors of violence and ensuring safe referrals; information for communities on how women and girls can safely access services; and legal advice, coordination support, technical advice and capacity building to gender based violence actors.

We continue to raise our strong concerns about reports of rape and sexual violence in Burma with senior members of the Burmese government and military. Foreign Office Minister, Hugo Swire, met Deputy Foreign Minister U Thant Kyaw during the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict on 13 June. The Deputy Foreign Minister publicly stated that Burma's attendance at the Summit was a signal of their support to the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and readiness to take action against perpetrators, including members of the military. We welcomed the Burmese government's attendance at the Summit and have made clear that concrete action is needed, including a credible action plan that involves the military. Our Ambassador has also raised this with U Thant Kyaw following the Summit.

We have made clear to the Burmese government that all allegations of human rights abuses must be dealt with through clear, independent and transparent investigative and prosecutorial processes which meet international standards.



LYNNE FEATHERSTONE