

Ebrahim Yazdi's Letter To Burmese Leader

The secretary general of the Freedom Movement of Iran, Dr. Ebrahim Yazdi to the Burmese leader, Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi: You have spoken lovingly of Burma's diverse peoples as "siblings from a single family". I appeal to you to pay closer attention to the increasingly brutal violence against a small minority within your family, Burmese Muslims. These acts and incitements are perpetrated by groups and individuals claiming to speak for you, as a member of the majority.

Her Excellency Aung San Suu Kyi

General Secretary

National League for Democracy

၁၂B West Shwegondaing Road, Bahan Township,

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Daw Aung San Suu Kyi,

Your uncompromising struggle for freedom and democracy in your country has been an inspiration to freedom-loving Iranians and freedom fighters throughout the world. It is even more inspiring to see encouraging signs from Burma that your efforts at political reform are bringing fruit. We share the values you have championed during the long years of struggle, most of all respect for the human rights of peoples of all ethnic and religious communities.

As we experienced in Iran, periods of political transition put reform leaders to the test. Leaders may be focused on the realization of one cherished value, such as free elections, while other values, such as respect for the rights and dignity of religious minorities, receive less attention. When this happens, a fledgling democracy is put at great peril and the seeds of reemergence of dictatorship are sown.

You have spoken lovingly of Burma's diverse peoples as "siblings from a single family". I appeal to you to pay closer attention to the increasingly brutal violence against a small minority within your family, Burmese Muslims. These acts and incitements are perpetrated by groups and individuals claiming to speak for you, as a member of the majority. I am sure you are familiar with the heart-rending details. For many of us in Muslim-majority countries that support your values, a pall of fear for Burma has appeared where there was a great deal of hope.

You have shown courage in speaking the truth to powerful men. Will you now show the same courage to speak up against a new powerful force in your country, that of ethnic and religious bigotry in the name of the majority? This is a force that will no doubt be wielded by unscrupulous politicians who would undermine all you have fought for. I appeal to you to stand up to them. In doing so, you will save

the lives of countless Burmese Muslims, Buddhists, and other ethnic groups, and you may also be saving the dream of a democratic and free Burma.

Respectfully,

Ebrahim Yazdi, PhD

General Secretary, Freedom Movement of Iran

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, Islamic Republic of Iran

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

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