



ARCHBISHOP EMERITUS DESMOND M TUTU

O.M.S.G C.H D.D F.K.C

**Daw Aung San Suu Kyi**

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**OPEN LETTER FROM ARCHBISHOP EMERITUS DESMOND TUTU TO MS AUNG SAN SUU KYI**

My dear Aung San Suu Kyi

I am now elderly, decrepit and formally retired, but breaking my vow to remain silent on public affairs out of profound sadness about the plight of the Muslim minority in your country, the Rohingya.

In my heart you are a dearly beloved younger sister. For years I had a photograph of you on my desk to remind me of the injustice and sacrifice you endured out of your love and commitment for Myanmar's people. You symbolised righteousness. In 2010 we rejoiced at your freedom from house arrest, and in 2012 we celebrated your election as leader of the opposition.

Your emergence into public life allayed our concerns about violence being perpetrated against members of the Rohingya. But what some have called 'ethnic cleansing' and others 'a slow genocide' has persisted – and recently accelerated. The images we are seeing of the suffering of the Rohingya fill us with pain and dread.

We know that you know that human beings may look and worship differently – and some may have greater firepower than others – but none are superior and none inferior; that when you scratch the surface we are all the same, members of one family, the human family; that there are no natural differences between Buddhists and Muslims; and that whether we are Jews or Hindus, Christians or atheists, we are born to love, without prejudice. Discrimination doesn't come naturally; it is taught.

My dear sister: If the political price of your ascension to the highest office in Myanmar is your silence, the price is surely too steep. A country that is not at peace with itself, that fails to acknowledge and protect the dignity and worth of all its people, is not a free country.



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It is incongruous for a symbol of righteousness to lead such a country; it is adding to our pain.

As we witness the unfolding horror we pray for you to be courageous and resilient again. We pray for you to speak out for justice, human rights and the unity of your people. We pray for you to intervene in the escalating crisis and guide your people back towards the path of righteousness.

God bless you.

Love

**Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu**

Hermanus, South Africa

**cc. Mr Mbulelo Bikwani, Chief Executive of the Desmond & Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation**