

## News Release

Russ Hiebert  
Member of Parliament



### Hiebert and Cotler Condemn Latest Myanmar Army Atrocity

(Ottawa) - MPs Russ Hiebert (Con) and Hon. Irwin Cotler (Lib) condemned recent actions of the Myanmar (Burmese) Army in shelling an unarmed group of people in the northern province of Kachin.

The 19th of November mortar strike killed 23 young people and maimed many others who were participating in a graduation ceremony for cadets of the Kachin People's Army. The Myanmar Government has claimed the attack was intended as a 'warning shot' and the rebels were not intentionally targeted.

"Myanmar's Army has conducted a systematic program of persecution in Kachin State against the various ethnic and religious minorities that live there," said Mr. Hiebert. "This is a nation that wants to re-engage with the rest of the world, but to do so Myanmar must adhere to the standards the rest of the world lives by. That means respecting minority rights, and protecting the lives and property of all its citizens, including those that don't always agree with the regime."

"This is but the latest round of violence perpetrated by the Myanmar (Burmese) army against the ethnic and religious minorities of Kachin," said the Hon. Irwin Cotler. "I join with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar in calling for an end to continuing arbitrary detentions, torture, restrictions on freedom of movement, and discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities - and where the denial of fundamental human rights and the attendant culture of impunity is at odds with efforts to secure a lasting peace."

The shelling is only the latest atrocity in a 17 year-old conflict that has pitted the Myanmar Army against the ethnic and religious minorities of Kachin. The attack may have derailed peace talks scheduled for December.

The Canadian Parliament has heard testimony that hundreds of thousands of Kachin have been displaced from their villages and forced to flee to neighbouring countries, while another 80,000 are internally displaced; that rapes and killings by the Myanmar Army in Kachin are commonplace; and that places of worship are routinely burned down and worshippers are arrested and detained for months with no charges being laid.

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