



Jean Lambert MEP
Green Party Member of the European Parliament for London

3 May 2018

Mr Andrea Radrizzani
Elland Road
Leeds
LS11 0ES

Dear Mr Radrizzani,

Leeds United's planned tour of Myanmar

I was extremely alarmed to hear that Leeds United plans to visit Myanmar next week. Since August, almost one million Rohingya people have been forced to flee the country to escape a military crackdown in Rakhine state.

I recently visited the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, and heard first-hand about the suffering they have faced - from violent torture and abuse, to rape and sexual exploitation.

Sadly, the crisis is far from over. The monsoon season in Bangladesh will begin any day now, and up to 100,000 Rohingya refugees - including 55,000 children - are thought to be at risk from flooding and landslides. Those affected would fill the stands at Elland Road almost three times over. This is nothing short of a major humanitarian emergency.

In this context, I find it astonishing that Leeds United would choose to embark on a post-season tour of Myanmar. The visit will suggest that the international community does not have a problem with the persecution of the Rohingya. This could not be further from the truth.

The actions of Myanmar have been roundly condemned. In December, the European Parliament passed a resolution calling on the military and security forces in Myanmar to immediately stop the violence, killings, harassment and rape of the Rohingya. Two months later, when I visited the camps in my role as Chair of the Parliament's South Asia delegation, I urged Myanmar to respect the dignity of the Rohingya people and return their full citizenship rights to stop this persecution.

Greens in the European Parliament

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If Leeds United's tour is, as you say, “about people not governments”, I would encourage you to learn more about the ways in which ordinary peoples’ lives have been destroyed by the violence in Rakhine state.

This compilation of devastating personal stories would be a good place to start: <http://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2017/09/world/myanmar-rohingya-refugee-stories/>

The violence perpetrated by the regime in Myanmar is simply indefensible. If you postpone or cancel the tour, it would send a strong message to Myanmar and make it clear that the international community condemns its ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya people. You could, instead, offer sports opportunities to the many young people in the region, in Thailand or Bangladesh for instance, who have been displaced by violence in Myanmar. I urge you to reconsider your plans.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jean Lambert', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Jean Lambert
Green MEP for London