

No one told me I'd be interviewed by a muslim, says Aung San Suu Kyi

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London: Myanmar democracy veteran Aung San Suu Kyi angrily complained about being interviewed by a Muslim BBC presenter who pressed her about violence against Rohingya Muslims, a biographer claimed today.

"No one told me I was going to be interviewed by a Muslim," the Nobel laureate reportedly said off air after a tense exchange with British-Pakistani news presenter Mishal Husain broadcast in October 2013.

The claim was made by Peter Popham, a journalist with The Independent newspaper and author of newly published book "The Lady and The Generals -- Aung San Suu Kyi and Burma's Struggle for Freedom".

Â Â Â In the BBC interview, seasoned journalist Husain had pressed Suu Kyi about the plight of the persecuted Rohingya minority, who have been hardest hit by deadly bouts of communal violence in Buddhist-majority Myanmar.

Suu Kyi insisted the violence was "not ethnic cleansing" and said: "Muslims have been targeted but also Buddhists have been subject to violence. There's fear on both sides."

Popham wrote about the outburst in an article for The Independent published online today, and said it was relayed to him by a "reliable" source.

A BBC spokeswoman contacted by AFP declined to comment.

Suu Kyi has faced international criticism for not taking a stronger stance on the Rohingya's plight, and for failing to field any Muslim candidates in November's polls, a move observers say was designed to placate Buddhist nationalists.

Suu Kyi will be foreign minister in Myanmar's first civilian government for decades, her party said on Tuesday, giving the democracy champion a formal post despite being blocked from the presidency.

- PTI