

MYANMAR

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Statement by U Myint Thu,
Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
Leader of the Delegation of Myanmar
at the interactive dialogue on the human rights situation in
Myanmar
at the 38th Session of Human Rights Council
Geneva, 27 June 2018

Mr. President,

- Just two years ago, the present government came to the office with the overwhelming support of the people to push forward its long struggle for peace and stability, democracy and development. None of these goals can be achieved overnight.
- Transition in Myanmar is indeed a challenging path to democracy after more than five decades of authoritarian rule. Now, we are in the process of nurturing our nascent democracy.
- Peace and stability was something that Myanmar had to achieve after nearly seventy years of internal conflicts that began right after the independence in 1948.
- We are nurturing democratic values, establishing peace and stability, and sustainable development that would be attainable by all our people.
- Moreover, the leadership of the present Government has been striving for freedom, democracy and human rights in Myanmar for decades even before they assumed the responsibility of State.
- Our leadership shall never tolerate any violation of human rights. Any allegation on our leadership for unresponsiveness to the alleged human rights violation is unreasonable.
- We are a young and fragile democracy facing many problems, but we have to cope with them all at the same time. We cannot just concentrate on a few.
- The challenges are daunting but we are resolute to overcome them for the benefit and betterment of the people of Myanmar.

- In so doing, we appreciate cooperation from all our friends who understand the issues objectively, and render their support to achieve democratic transition, peace and stability, and sustained development in Myanmar.

Mr. President,

- The situation in Rakhine State, particularly in northern Rakhine, is a complex challenge of enormous dimension involving issues including, but not limited to, sovereignty, territorial integrity, terrorism, rule of law, human rights and illegal migration.
- Unless the security challenges are promptly addressed, the risk of renewed inter-communal violence will remain. The security situation in northern Rakhine deteriorated sharply following the attacks on police outposts in Maungtau Township by the terrorist group called ARSA.
- The subsequent clashes between the security forces and the terrorists with the inevitable consequences of conflict led to a significant number of Muslims seeking shelter in the neighbouring country and other communities in Southern Rakhine.
- We feel deeply concerned over the suffering of all the people who have been caught up in the conflict. Those who have had to flee their homes are many – not just Muslims and Rakhines, but also small minority groups, such as the Daing-net, Mro, Thet, Mramagyi and Hindus. Regrettably, their plight has been totally and conveniently overlooked by the international community. Some have gone even further to glorify or advocate the terrorist group.
- We are disturbed by the fact that the Special Rapporteur in her long statement conveniently failed to mention the heinous terrorist attacks and the brutal massacre of 99 Hindus committed by ARSA. This demonstrates clearly bias and imbalance of the Special Rapporteur's assessment.
- At the same time, the Government of Myanmar, as repeatedly stated, will not condone any human rights violations, and will take action against perpetrator in accordance with the law where allegations are supported by sufficient evidence.

- The Government has recently made the announcement of its decision to establish an Independent Commission of Enquiry with international and national personalities as part of its national initiative to address reconciliation, peace, stability and development in Rakhine.

Mr. President,

- With the arrival of the monsoon season, there is an urgent need to provide humanitarian assistance to all and to expedite the repatriation process agreed by Myanmar and Bangladesh in November 2017.
- Myanmar is doing its utmost to repatriate the displaced persons expeditiously in order to avoid yet another humanitarian disaster.
- We hope that with the recent signing of the MoU between the Government of Myanmar, UNDP and UNHCR, things will now move expeditiously and the UN agencies will take part in various stages of return and resettlement as well as sustainable socio-economic development in Rakhine. The cooperation will create condition further conducive to voluntary, safe and dignified return of the verified displaced persons.
- We call on the international community to encourage all relevant stakeholders to immediately launch the repatriation process for the sake of the life of displaced persons in the camps.
- The Government of Myanmar is also taking concrete steps with regard to the issue of Rakhine, in specific, humanitarian access, accountability of alleged human rights violations and implementation of the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission.

Mr. President,

- On our position regarding the Special Rapporteur, Myanmar has a good track record of cooperation with the Special Rapporteur over the past two decades. We remain committed to continue to work together with the mandate of the Special Reporter.

- But, the people of Myanmar consider that it would no longer be productive to continue to extend cooperation with current Special Rapporteur because of her lack of objectivity and non-compliance with the code of conduct.
- As such, we have requested the Council for the replacement of her for the reasons mentioned earlier. We regret that our request was fallen to deaf ears. After listening attentively to her statement just now, I would like to reaffirm our position. Her assessment lacks the values of an independent Rapporteur, - balance, impartiality and accuracy.
- As the cooperation with the United Nations is a cornerstone of the Myanmar's Foreign Policy, Myanmar will continue to extend cooperation with the relevant UN mechanisms. With this in mind, Myanmar facilitated the first visit of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General from 12 to 21 June 2018. She was allowed to visit all places of her request including a tour of Rakhine State. We have also agreed to open Special Envoy's office in Nay Pyi Taw and invited her to take part in the forthcoming Union Peace Conference. Briefly put, we have provided full cooperation with her during the visit.

Mr. President,

- To conclude, in its efforts to achieve national reconciliation and peace, democracy and development, we are happy to engage constructively with the United Nations as well as the international community.
- I thank you.
