



ရခိုင်ပြည်နယ်ဆိုင်ရာနေ့စဉ်သတင်းအကျဉ်းချုပ် Daily News Brief on Rakhine State Affairs

March 15, 2018

Union official: the real Rakhine

Union officials explain cause for exodus, ARSA threats, repatriation obstruction

Naypyitaw, March 14

A press conference on developments in Rakhine State including an update on the repatriation effort and clarifications on illegal settlements on the border between Myanmar and Bangladesh was held in Nay Pyi Taw on 14 March.

In opening address at the press conference, U Aung Hla Tun, the Deputy Minister for Information, said the major reasons for the mass exodus of mostly Muslim residents of northern Rakhine State to Bangladesh were fear of arrest, and also threats from the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), which attacked border guard outposts in August 2016, sparking a military response. ARSA has been termed a terrorist organisation.

“According to information from reliable sources on the ground, most of these people fled in panic just after the military operation following the terrorist attacks, for fear of being arrested for their involvement or on suspicion. The second reason was threats by ARSA and its supporters. The third reason was many of them were persuaded to flee by the expectations such as chances of resettlement in a third country or better livelihood in the camps in Bangladesh”, said U Aung Hla Tun. He also added that discussions are ongoing with the UNHCR and UNDP for their involvement in assisting the government in the repatriation process.

Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe and Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali signed an agreement in Nay Pyi Taw on 23 November, 2017 that allowed repatriation of displaced residents who could produce proof of residency in Myanmar.



U Myint Thu, the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said Myanmar has been ready to receive verified returnees from Bangladesh, and also there have been problems involving prospective returnees and the people illegally living on the border between the two countries.

“We must stress here that the area occupied by them, under Border Treaty and Law, cannot be inhabited by anyone. More importantly, it will be extremely dangerous as this area is bound to become a foothold of ARSA terrorist”, he said. There are many areas where the international community can play a constructive role in the endeavours in Rakhine State, U Myint Thu said.

“We call for a constructive approach and understanding on the complexity of the challenges in Rakhine State. We also seek support from the international community to help our efforts in finding a durable solution. The international community can best help us by understanding the prevailing situation and supporting the long-term reconciliation and sustained socio-economic development in Rakhine State”, he said.

As part of that effort, Myanmar authorities met with the UNHCR Representative and UN Resident Coordinator in Nay Pyi Taw on 23 February.

“We consider that the appropriate time is now to invite the UNHCR and UNDP to get involved in the repatriation and resettlement process of displaced persons as well as in carrying out livelihood development for all communities in Rakhine State”, U Myint Thu said.

Dr. Aung Tun Thet, Chief Coordinator of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Aid, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine State, reiterated the readiness for repatriation with providing human rights, diversities, tolerance and security for them, adding the UEHRD has built reception centres and accommodation for the returnees. UEHRD is also working for creating economic opportunities for returnees while working for effective humanitarian aid, holding negotiation for resettlement and for development socio economy and long-lasting peace there.

Also present at the press conference were permanent secretaries and heads of departments of the ministries, diplomats and local and foreign journalists.



Full Text of the speeches delivered by Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun and Permanent Secretary U Min Thu are available at www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com).

—MNA, The Global New Light of Myanmar

History, not the UN, will be final judge on Rakhine

Opinion, The Global New Light of Myanmar, March 15

The terrorist attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) in Rakhine State in August 2017 abruptly changed the state of affairs in northern Rakhine and made restoration of law and order a priority, which led to the displacement of people internally in Rakhine State and across the border.

Since then, there have been misleading, presumptuous and uninformed accusations against Myanmar.

The latest of these accusations is that authorities were bulldozing the ground to build military installations on sites that once were the homes of members of the Muslim community in northern Rakhine.

In reality, the authorities are preparing to construct new structures for returnees as part of the repatriation process.

“What the government does should not be viewed with a preconceived mind and doubtful eyes”, U Htin Lynn, the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the UN in Geneva, told the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council currently meeting in Geneva.

Instead of criticism, the Permanent Representative said he hoped for support.

“Myanmar hopes that the international community will constructively contribute to our efforts to advance the democratization process and promote and protect human rights in line with the country’s circumstances and needs”, U Htin Lynn said.



The passage of time may be the only way to cut through the rancor and clear the fog of misinformation surrounding the real truth behind what is happening in northern Rakhine.

History, not the United Nations, will be the ultimate judge of what has occurred in Rakhine State.

With regard to alleged human rights violations, the government shall never condone impunity and action will be taken against any perpetrators in accordance with the law if there is concrete evidence.

Myanmar strongly objects the use of such words as ethnic cleansing and genocide in reference to the situation in Rakhine State. Myanmar would welcome the international community to play a constructive role in relation to Rakhine State and sought their understanding on the complexity and their support for the government efforts in finding a durable solution. Taking non-constructive measures would be counterproductive, as it will further polarize the communities and undermine the efforts for the long-term objective of reconciliation.

Many ethnic groups, including Rakhine, Daing-net, Mro, Thet, Mramagyi and those belonging to Buddhist, Muslim and Hindu faiths have remained in their villages, as witnessed by members of the diplomatic corps and UN agencies their recent visits.

It is unreasonable to assert that the Myanmar leadership, whose mission has human rights at its core, remains indifferent to the allegations of grave human rights violations. The leadership and the government shall never tolerate such crimes. Myanmar is ready to take action when there is clear evidence.

Myanmar is facing the most challenging time in its history of transition, but the Union Government will turn these challenges into opportunities for national reconciliation and peace leading to further strengthening of democracy. The Myanmar government has expressed its belief that the success of democratic transition will overcome these challenges.

—The Global New Light of Myanmar