

**Information Update on Recent Developments in Myanmar including Rakhine State
(Geneva, 5 August 2019)**

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1. Strengthening Democracy and Human Rights

(a) Widening democratic space in Myanmar

In Myanmar, democratic space is widening day by day under the current government. There have been open public debates at various fora in the country. The Parliament is one of these fora where human rights issues are discussed openly and questioned on the work of the government agencies. On 24 July 2019, the representative from Sagaing Region, while acknowledging the progressive work of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) as well as its 2018 report submitted to the Union Parliament, urged the Commission to check the failure of Police forces in bringing perpetrators to justice with regard to the rape cases as well as the wrongful conviction. He also questioned how the government would compensate to those wrongfully convicted in line with international standard and urged the MNHRC to investigate if there were such hidden cases remained. It is obvious that check and balance is now more an accepted practice rather than an exception and the democratic space is more widening than ever.

(b) Pyidaungsu Hluttaw starts discussion on the report of Joint Committee on Amending 2008 Constitution

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Parliament) started discussion on the report of Joint Committee on Amending the 2008 Constitution in Nay Pyi Taw on 30 July 2019. Before the submission to the Parliament, the committee met 21 times to review the entire constitution. The report contains 3765 recommendations of amendments/ additions/ nullifications on the 2008 Constitution. The discussion on the report has been in progress at the Parliament.

(c) Anti-grave violations committee discusses draft action plan for implementation

The Committee for Preventing Violence against Children in Armed Conflicts held its second coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on 24 July 2019 and discussed draft action plan for implementation. The committee was formed in January 2019 to work on preventing grave violations against children in armed conflicts and held its first meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on 21 January 2019. The government-led draft action plan will be discussed with UN agencies for future implementation.

(d) Parliament passes Myanmar Child Rights Law

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Parliament) enacted the new Child Rights Law on 23 July 2019. It demonstrates the government's efforts to align national policies and regulatory frameworks with the UN Convention on the Rights of Child that Myanmar has ratified since 1991. All forms of violence against children are prohibited under the newly enacted law. The law also contains provisions guaranteeing punishment of six grave violations against children in armed conflicts. "This landmark step today makes this year's 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child all the more meaningful in Myanmar," said June Kunugi, UNICEF Representative to Myanmar.

2. Myanmar and Non-Aligned Movement

(a) Union Minister for International Cooperation stresses the need to respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, justice, equality and mutual respect among nations

Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin delivered a statement in the debate under the theme "Promotion and Consolidation of Peace through Respect for International Law" at the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordination Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held in Caracas, Venezuela from 20 to 21 July 2019. In his statement, Union Minister emphasized the importance for all NAM member states to remain committed to the core principles of the Movement, especially the principles of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, justice, equality and mutual respect among nations without interfering in the internal affairs of another country and settlement of disputes by peaceful means.

He underscored that developing countries are now far from enjoying the right to determine their own destiny or resolve their own internal problems in their own way best suited to their own circumstances. Some of the United Nations today focuses more on retribution than helping the countries resolve their problems by peaceful means.

He expressed serious concern over the claim of jurisdiction of ICC to a country which is not a party to the Rome Statute, citing the 1969 UN Vienna Convention on International Treaties which clearly states that "no treaty can be imposed on a country that has not ratified it". The extension of the jurisdiction to a non-party may have a reverberating effect to all non-parties and challenges the long established legal principles such as legal certainty. It will also run counter to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and set a very dangerous precedence in international law.

He briefed the meeting on Rakhine issue: Myanmar has provided Bangladesh with a long list of verified persons and stands ready to receive them in line with the bilaterally

agreed Arrangement; Myanmar would dispatch a high level team accompanied by representatives of ASEAN and AHA Centre to Bangladesh to inform displaced persons about the preparation for repatriation; The Union Minister sent an invitation to the Minister of Foreign affairs of Bangladesh to visit Myanmar for discussion on the issue.

3. Recent Developments in Rakhine State

(a) Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs meets Bangladeshi Ambassador

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Myint Thu met with Mr. Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw on 24 July 2019. The two sides discussed the arrangements for the visit of high level delegation from Myanmar to Bangladesh. Permanent Secretary mentioned that Myanmar side has already provided Bangladesh with the village-wise list of verified displaced persons in seven batches for smooth repatriation. In order to accelerate the repatriation process, he reminded that Bangladesh should make returnees ready, family-wise and village wise, for repatriation from those verified list and that repatriation of the first batch of verified displaced persons to Myanmar should follow the bilateral agreements between the two countries. He also reaffirmed the readiness of the Myanmar side to receive the verified displaced persons.

As of 24 July 2019, the Immigration authorities of Myanmar have already checked 19,014 displaced persons, that is, 85 % of the list of 22,432 persons provided by Bangladesh.

(b) A high level delegation from Myanmar visits Cox's Bazar and meets displaced persons

A high level Myanmar delegation led by Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Myint Thu and ASEAN ERAT team comprised of officials from the ASEAN Secretariat and the AHA Centre paid an official visit to Bangladesh from 27 to 29 July 2019. The delegation visited Cox's Bazar, met with some displaced persons from various camps, and informed them the preparations for the repatriation. The delegation also handed over Factsheets on repatriation process to the Bangladesh side, for distribution among the prospective returnees in the camps.

(c) Tatmadaw warns fabricated news being spread by AA insurgents

Tatmadaw True News Information Team released a Statement on 28 July 2019 regarding the fabricated news in broadcasting, writing and talks of AA insurgents. At present, AA insurgents are continuously spreading rumours with attempts to cause instability among the innocent local people. The Tatmadaw have warned the local people about the fabricated news from AA.

(d) AA/ARSA combined group fires on Border Police station in Buthidaung Township

The AA and ARSA combined group launched an attack on a border police station in Nyaungchaung Village, Buthidaung Township on 26 July 2019. The group fired on the Police Station with light and heavy arms from southeast and southwest. The Police Station returned fire and a Border Police mobile company came in support of the station and blocked the attacking forces and the AA/ ARSA combined group retreated to the southwest and east.

AA group fired two rockets at three Tatmadaw (Navy) boats anchored near Mayu River bank west of Yathedaung on 20 July 2019.

(e) Construction of King Chaung bridge completes 64 percent

In Rakhine, 64 percent of King Chaung Bridge connecting between Kyaukphyu and Ramree/ Yan Byel townships has been completed and it is planned to be commissioned in April 2020. The completion of the bridge will benefit to the local people living in Kyaukphyu, Ramree/ Yan Byel, Manaung for their better and smooth transportation as well as to the Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone. Myanmar is currently implementing three Special Economic Zones and Kyaukphyu of Rakhine State is one of them.

(f) Resettlement programmes discussed for displaced persons in Kachin State

The second coordination meeting of the Working Group on Resettling IDPs in Kachin State was held in Nay Pyi Taw on 24 July 2019. At the meeting, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Kachin Humanitarian Concern Committee (KHCC) discussed the future plan based on the data of IDPs and choosing prioritized villages resettlement. The KHCC is comprised of political leaders and humanitarian organizations and has been formed since October 2017 to address the IDP issue.

Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar,
Geneva.

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