

**Information Update on Recent Developments in Myanmar including Rakhine State
(Geneva, 20 August 2019)**

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1. Statements reject the recent report of FFM

The Government of Myanmar and private associations such as Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI), Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD), Max Myanmar Group categorically rejected the unfounded allegations in the report on the economic interests of the Myanmar Military released by the Fact Finding Mission (FFM) on 5 August 2019.

Some highlights of the Statements as follows:

Government's Statement

- Myanmar categorically rejects the Fact-finding Mission (FFM) since its establishment as well as its reports.
- Myanmar is addressing the issue of accountability in Rakhine with its national accountability mechanisms in place. Myanmar opposes mechanisms that are set up without allowing for national remedies to be exhausted.
- The recent report and its conclusions is intended to harm the interests of Myanmar and its people.

UEHRD's Statement

- The UEHRD categorically rejects the allegations in the report.
- From its inception, UEHRD's objectives are to provide effective humanitarian aid, to coordinate resettlement and rehabilitation efforts, and to promote conflict resolution and durable peace for all communities in Rakhine.
- UEHRD has never wavered in the pursuit of humanitarian objectives and have worked consistently to improve conditions on the ground.
- The FFM paints a distorted picture of the UEHRD.

UMFCCI's Statement

- The UMFCCI rejects FFM's one-sided allegations on private business companies and business associations who have been responsibly making concerted efforts with genuine goodwill for peace and development of the country.

- The UMFCCI does not accept FFM's actions intended to harm the interests of Myanmar and its people. The UMFCCI will continue to strive for businesses with highest standard of integrity, accountability, responsibility and human rights.

Max Myanmar Group's Statement

- Max Myanmar Group categorically denies the allegations of FFM since the group and Ayeyarwaddy Foundation which undertakes CSR activities and adopted highest level of "Human Rights Policy" as one of the key guiding principles of its group activities as far as responsible business practices, transparency, discrimination, and human rights issues are concerned.
- Max Myanmar Group has been taking several initiatives and key role in peace and development of the society which encompass every ethnic, gender, race and religion.
- Max Myanmar Group's contributions were solely and particularly intended for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the society, and towards the initiatives of UEHRD's directives on humanitarian assistance, resettlements, and developments of the local communities affected by unfortunate events without any bias, prejudice and discrimination, and with careful consideration of the charitable purposes of the foundation, stakeholders and business partner's feedback.

2. Strengthening Democracy and Human Rights

(a) State Counsellor stresses youth involvement in education reform

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi stressed youth involvement in education reform while addressing the International Youth Day 2019 ceremony held in Nay Pyi Taw on 12 August 2019. She said that education system must be all-inclusive enabling participation of all regardless of rich and poor, from rural or urban, from any social class.

Myanmar's youth policy was first drafted in 2016 and introduced by State Counsellor on 5 January 2018 which prioritizes programmes for disabled youth, orphans, young migrant workers, victims of war or natural disasters, transgender youths, young ethnic people, child soldiers, victims of human trafficking, drug addicts, victims of AIDS, sex workers and victims of child sex abuse. According to the 2014 Myanmar Population and

Housing Census, youths (ages 15–35 years) make up 35.81 per cent of the country's total population. According to 2014 census, the total population is 51.4 million.

(b) Anti-grave violations against children working committee discusses reporting mechanism with CTFMR

The Working Committee for Preventing Grave Violations against Children in Armed Conflicts held a meeting with officials from the UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Report (CTFMR) in Nay Pyi Taw on 5 August 2019. The committee discussed with CTFMR on the action plan to implement a national reporting mechanism to prevent the maiming of, and sexual violence against children in conflict zones.

The Committee for Preventing Grave Violations against Children in Armed Conflict was formed in January 2019 to work on preventing grave violations against children in armed conflicts and has held its coordination meetings in Nay Pyi Taw during January and July 2019 respectively.

3. Humanitarian Assistance to flood-hit areas in Mon State

(a) Vice President visits flood-hit areas

The Vice President U Henry Van Thio visited flood-hit areas in Mon State on 11 August 2019 and encouraged the rescue teams, comforted and provided aid to victims. A total of 11 relief camps have been opened for 45,839 flood victims from 8,568 households in Kyaikmaraw Township in Mon State and 20,000 victims are living in relief camps as of 16 August 2019. Humanitarian assistance and relief aids are being provided to the victims by the government, CSOs, NGOs, and philanthropic associations and people.

4. Peace Process

(a) JMC civil representatives review ceasefire works

Civil representatives of the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee held the 7th regular meeting at the National Reconciliation and Peace Center (NRPC) in Yangon on 13 August 2019. The meeting was attended by civil representatives from various levels of JMC and the technical assisting groups. The JMC holds its regular meeting every four months.

(b) Notification on effectively engaging in peace talks without delay for eternal peace

The Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services issued an announcement on 14 August 2019, urging the NCA non-signatories to take part in peace process during

ceasefire period. All the stakeholders are encouraged to participate in talks with National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC) and Negotiation Team formed by Tatmadaw for the interest of the State and the entire national people. The Tatmadaw ceased its military operations in five commands 3 times from 21 December 2018 to 30 April 2019, from 1 May to 30 June 2019 and from 1 July to 31 August 2019 to the way for the ethnic armed organizations to engage in peace talks without pressure.

(c) AA, TNLA, MNDAA armed groups attacks security forces and civilians

A combined ethnic armed group of AA, TNLA and MNDAA launched a series of attacks on security forces and public areas. Defence Services Technology Academy (DSTA) in Pyin Oo Lwin, Mandalay Region, Pyin Oo Lwin toll gate, Gote Twin Police Station in Nawnghkio Township, Nawnghkio toll gate, a narcotic inspection gate and a battalion headquarters came under small and heavy arm fire by the group on 15 August 2019. Due to the attack, two innocent civilians and three policemen were killed, 10 innocent civilians and two policemen wounded. They also mined and destroyed bridges on Hsenwi-Kunlong Road, torched a petrol station on Lashio-Hsenwi Road, fired on Lashio with heavy arms and also fired on Tatmadaw columns and police stations. Again, on 16 August 2019, they fired three rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) on a battalion headquarter in Kyaukme, Shan State North and retreated to the west after being fired back. The group also mined four reinforced concrete bridges on Namt Slup-Kunlong Road, Hsenwi-Namt Slup Roadaround on 17 August 2019. The bridges were damaged and road communication is cutting off. The AA, TNLA and MNDAA are not yet signatories to the Nation-wide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

With regard to these attacks, the Spokesperson of the Government said that these were intentional attacks against innocent civilians and destruction of narcotic drug-searching equipment. While it has caused an enormous impact on the government's peace process, the doors remain open for peace talks.

5. Recent Developments in Rakhine State

(a) State Counsellor receives Chinese Special Envoy for Asian Affairs

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China in Nay Pyi Taw on 14 August 2019.

They discussed matters relating to the recent developments in national reconciliation and peace process, progress on the bilateral consultation with Bangladesh for early commencement of repatriation of the verified displaced persons from Rakhine State and the constructive support extended by China to the Myanmar Government's efforts in this regard.

(b) Deputy Minister inspects the completion of houses for returnees

Deputy Minister for Construction and Rakhine State government inspected completion of houses for returnees in Maungtaw district on 11 August 2019. In Ohhtane, 122 houses – 72 units built by UEHRD and 50 units by Japan – have been completed. In Kyeinchaungtaung, 211 houses – 100 units by UEHRD, 60 units by India and 51 units by Japan – have been built.

In Hla Pho Khaung transit centre, the Deputy Minister inspected 623 buildings. The Hla Pho Khaung transit centre has a total of 1,090 assemble board houses, donated by China. Among them, 90 units have been erected with concrete water tanks, faucets, toilets and septic tanks.

Another 100 units are ready for installation, and the remaining 900 units will be set up depending on the increased number of returnees. The inspection was also done at Shwezar camp on the houses donated by India for the displaced Hindu people at Thatkalbyin.

(c) “Myanmar negotiated with Bangladesh to start repatriation of 3,450 persons on August 22”, the Spokesperson briefs at a press conference

At the press briefing held at the President Office in Nay Pyi Taw on 16 August 2019, the spokesperson of the Government, Director-General U Zaw Htay briefed on repatriation of displaced persons. He said that Myanmar has negotiated Bangladesh for the repatriation of 3,450 verified displaced persons to start on 22 August 2019.

(d) Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs reiterates Myanmar's readiness to receive first batch of verified returnees during the meeting with Ambassador of Bangladesh

U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Affairs met with Mr Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury, Ambassador of Bangladesh at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Yangon on 9 August 2019. He informed the Ambassador of Myanmar's readiness to receive the first batch of verified returnees on the list of 3,450, whose village-wise lists have already been sent to Bangladesh.

Any new list of returnees should be sent through the diplomatic channel and they will be repatriated two weeks from the receipt of the list. Permanent Secretary also reiterated that both sides need to comply with the Physical Arrangement signed between the two countries.

During the meeting, the Permanent Secretary also handed over to the Ambassador a letter addressed to Mr. Md Shahidul Haque, Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh from Mr. Kenzo Oshima, Member of the ICOE and Team Leader of the ICOE's Advance Team. The Advance Team of the ICOE proposed to visit Bangladesh in August 2019.

(e) Myanmar has verified 87% from the list of displaced persons provided by Bangladesh

At the 3rd Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting held in Dhaka in October 2018, Bangladesh handed over the second list of 22,432 displaced persons to the Myanmar delegation. As of 9 August 2019, Myanmar has verified 19,618 persons, that is, 87 % of the list. Among them, 12304 were verified as former residents; 113 as suspects involved in terrorist attacks; 7201 as not included in the registered list of family household in Myanmar. The breakdown list of 3,450 displaced persons in village-wise has been informed to Bangladesh side for smooth and swift repatriation under the principle of voluntary, safe and dignified return.

(f) Court of Inquiry conducts investigation in Buthidaung and Maungtau

The Tatmadaw True News Information Team announced on 6 August 2019 that the Tatmadaw's Court of Inquiry conducted investigations at local military units, police stations, prison and villages in Buthidaung, Rakhine State for two times and would continue the investigation. The COI carried out the investigation at 3 military units including a command headquarter 3 police stations, a prison and 5 villages in Buthidaung area during the first time. It investigated a command headquarters, a base tactical operation, 3 military units, 2 border guard police forces, one Rakhine State police force and 22 villagers during the second time on 15 July 2019.

(g) ICOE issues press release

The Independent Commission of Enquiry issued a press release on 17 August 2019. It mentioned that the ICOE held its tenth meeting from 15 to 16 August 2019 in Nay Pyi Taw and discussed on the documents received from the Tatmadaw and Myanmar Police Force related to ICOE's enquiries. They had intensive discussions on the work progress and the evidence received so far. The ICOE has expanded its ECVT investigators in

order to hasten their evidence collection. It also mentioned that ICOE also took note of their advance team visit to Bangladesh led by two ICOE members. The purpose of the advance team's visit is to prepare the ground work and seek the necessary approvals for the ICOE's ECVT to collect evidence and statements/depositions from witnesses in Cox's Bazar. The advance team will pay courtesy calls on the relevant authorities in Bangladesh and conduct preliminary discussions to be able to arrange a work plan for the ECVT in Cox's Bazar. ICOE discussed preparation of their Final Report. The eleventh meeting of the ICOE is scheduled in September 2019.

The advance team of ICOE arrived in Dhaka on 17 August 2019.

Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar,

Geneva.

20 August 2019