

## **Response by Myanmar to Panel Discussion entitled “the root causes of human rights violations and abuses against Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar”**

(23 June 2022, Geneva)

It is learnt that the panel discussion entitled “the root causes of human rights violations and abuses against Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar” was held on 15 June 2022 during the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The format of the panel discussion and selection of the panelists is only a tool to highlight views from only one side rather than addressing the root cause of the issue impartially. In addition, absence of the country-concerned made the discussion unbalance.

Terrorism was the main cause of the outbreak of violence in Rakhine in 2016 and 2017. On 9 October 2016, the surprised and coordinated terrorist attacks on security outposts and Headquarters in different townships of Rakhine State took place for the first time, followed by the similar attacks on 12-13 November 2016. The 9 October 2016 attack alone showed a clear evidence of premeditated action by the self-styled ARSA aka Aqua Mul Mujahidin. It caused the death of 79 persons, 12 injured and 37 missing persons including the government staff, ethnic people, Hindus, Muslims, and security personnel.

Although large scale attacks were not found after the attacks of October 2016, there were assassinations, killings and intimidation against those who did not follow the so-called ARSA’s agenda. Between major attacks in 2016 and 2017, hundreds of village administrators, mainly Muslim administrators were brutally killed. The so-called ARSA campaign was already firmly rooted at the time of well-coordinated attacks against 30 police outposts in August 2017. These attacks resulted the death of several hundreds of people. It was also found that the terrorists also committed massacre of 99 Hindus in Maungdaw Township, Rakhine State, where mass graves were discovered.

The displacement started in later September 2017 when no major incidents were taken place and while the terrorists intimidated the community to flee from the areas and those who chose to stay faced violence including bomb attacks and vandalizing in their villages. Such terrorizing acts become more significant when

numerous cases of killings occurred in Cox's Bazar camps including killings of some group leaders who were advocating for the return of IDPs to Rakhine. A recent case was happened in September 2021. One of the well-known individuals who advocated for repatriation was killed in one of the Cox's Bazar Camps. In this respect, the population under threats of armed elements and the so-called ARSA members are reluctant to take part in repatriation process. The facts clearly indicated that it was a made-up crisis like other similar crises triggered by some influential countries back by wealth, power and media to destabilize Myanmar and its neighbours. Nevertheless, the constant truth and historical evidence shall never be defeated.

Meanwhile, Myanmar extends its cooperation with the Government of Bangladesh to repatriate the displaced persons from Rakhine State as per relevant bilateral agreement. Myanmar, nonetheless, does not agree with the numbers of 1.1 million displaced persons from Rakhine State cited by some countries as it is significantly much higher than the record of Myanmar. In accordance with the bilateral agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh, Myanmar stands ready to receive those who actually resided in Rakhine State and Myanmar has also informed what criteria to be met.

Although the bilateral mechanism could not commence the repatriation process yet, over 700 displaced Bengalis have returned to Myanmar with their own volition. It is necessary to recognize that many displaced persons have been facing life-threatening challenges and could not return to Myanmar, as extremists are active in the camps in Bangladesh side.

The fifth meeting of Myanmar-Bangladesh Joint Working Group (JWG) on the repatriation of displaced persons from Rakhine State was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw on 14 June 2022. The two sides agreed to regularly convene the Joint Working Group meetings and Ad Hoc Task Force for verification meetings.

Myanmar also stands ready to receive the verified displaced persons and to grant appropriate citizenship status to those who met criteria set out in the 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law upon application. The Law applies to everyone without

any discrimination within the country. Everyone who wishes to obtain citizenship must undergo national verification process and relevant citizenship status is granted as per the law.

It is the case from one of the panelists who had resided in Butheedaung and enjoyed the rights of a citizen including education and freedom of movement. Such person should encourage her own community to join the national verification process and to enjoy the relevant citizenship status and the rights like she did. However, many Bengali activists went abroad and incited the population living in poverty to make unrealistic claims without taking part in the verification process.

Nonetheless, Myanmar does not recognize the invented term “Rohingya”. The real aim of using this term is to claim wider ethnicity and territorial status. Such usage has never existed in legal and historical records of the country and thus, the people of Myanmar cannot accept it.

It is also disturbing to see that the unlawful and terrorist group, the so-called NUG recognizes the term “Rohingya” and call for repealing the 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law in direct contradiction to the national interest, historical facts and will of the people. Their intention is only to gain attention and support from international community.

Myanmar is also deeply concerned about the facts that demonstrate the progressive erosion of the fundamental principles of functioning of the Human Rights Council, imposing several intrusive mechanisms against Myanmar that are never result-oriented. These mechanisms under the HRC have become a course for a biased, one-sided and divisive agenda and a platform for gathering narratives and unverified sources which are what they named as documented.

As it only creates in infringement of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation, Myanmar categorically rejects the panel discussion entitled “the root causes of human rights violations and abuses against Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar”.

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to  
the United Nations Office and other International Organizations  
GENEVA**