

**Statement by Mr. Kyaw Moe Tun,
Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar
at the Interactive Dialogue on Agenda Item 2
38th Session of Human Rights Council
Geneva, 4 July 2018**

Mr. President,

- Our delegation briefed the Council on the challenges Myanmar is facing during the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar on 27 June, and I will focus on the issue of Rakhine at this time.
- Finding sustainable solution on the issue of Rakhine is one of the Government's top priorities.
- While the situation in northern Rakhine has been the focus of much international attention, the narrative related to it has, very sadly, been incomplete and misleading. Unverified allegations have been reported as facts, resulting in perceptions that aggravated the whole situation.

Mr. President,

- I listened attentively to the statement of the High Commissioner and read his conference room paper carefully.
- I recognized that many points contained in the paper are flawed. For example, the second half of the Para 11 says "Bangladesh and Myanmar stated that repatriation would preferably be complete within six months. Seven months later, repatriation has yet to begin". According to Para 36 of the Physical Arrangement signed by Myanmar and Bangladesh on 16 January 2018, both sides agreed to complete repatriation in a time-bound manner agreed by both parties preferably within 2 years.
- In fact, Myanmar side was ready to receive the verified returnees since January 2018 and still awaiting the official communication from Bangladesh.
- We have also made our utmost efforts to verify over 1400 people out of 8032 people, as reflected in Para 12, which did not use the agreed verification forms.
- Much of information contained are also distorted or exaggerated.
- The misinformation can lead to imprecise memories. In some cases, it can even result in false memories which cause unjust convictions. The incorrect information will also mislead the readers, particularly member states, to make wrong decisions.
- It will negatively affect our common endeavour of finding sustainable solution for the Rakhine State.

Mr. President,

- The situation in Rakhine State, particularly in northern Rakhine, is extremely complex.
- It has challenge of enormous dimension involving issues, inter alia, sovereignty, territorial integrity, terrorism, rule of law, human rights and illegal migration.
- The security situation in northern Rakhine deteriorated sharply following the attacks on police outposts in Maungtaw Township by the terrorist group called ARSA in August 2017.

- The recent revelation of the massacre of 99 Hindus committed by ARSA on the same day attack on the security outposts is shocking. We are disturbed by the fact that the High Commissioner conveniently failed to mention such heinous terrorist attacks in his conference room paper.
- 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 for the suffering of all the people who have been caught up in the conflict especially women, girls and children. Those who fled their homes are many – not just Muslims and Rakhines, but also small minority groups, such as Daing-net, Mro, Thet, Mramagyi and Hindus. The root cause of the tragedy was terrorism and terrorism cannot be condoned under any circumstance.

Mr. President,

- Myanmar strongly condemns the violation of human rights in particular sexual violence against women and girls. 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.
- We even mentioned that all alleged victims are invited to come back with the international protection to Rakhine to file a case at open courts and return back to the camps in the neighbouring country.
- 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.
- In her speech to the dip corps in Nay Pyi Taw in September 2017, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi stressed that “action will be taken against all peoples, regardless of their religion, race, or political position who go against the laws of the land and who violate human rights as accepted by our international community. We have never been soft on human rights in this country. Our government has emerged as a body committed to the defence of human rights. Not of any particular community’s rights, but of the rights of all human beings, within the borders of our country”.

Mr. President,

- With the arrival of the monsoon season, the humanitarian situation in the camps will be getting severe, and we need to expedite the repatriation process agreed by Myanmar and Bangladesh in November 2017.
- Myanmar is doing its utmost to repatriate the verified displaced persons as immediate as possible in order to avoid yet another humanitarian disaster.
- To accelerate the repatriation process, Myanmar has provided a list of over 1000 verified displaced persons, including Hindus and Muslims, to the Bangladesh side in January 2018 but Myanmar has not received any single returnee yet.
- We hope that with the recent signing of the MoU between the Government of Myanmar, UNDP and UNHCR, things will now move expeditiously. 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.

Mr. President,

- Transition in Myanmar is indeed a challenging path to democracy after more than five decades of authoritarian rule. Peace and stability was something that Myanmar had to achieve after nearly seventy years of internal conflicts. We are nurturing democratic values, establishing peace and stability and sustainable development that would be beneficial to all our people.
- The Third Pang Long Peace Conference will be held next week.
- The challenges we face are daunting but we are resolute to overcome them for all people of Myanmar.
- In concluding, **Mr. President**, we call for constructive approach 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 objectively and supporting the long-term reconciliation and sustained socio-economic development in Rakhine State.
- I thank you.
