

A letter of Rakhine State Chief Minister to UNSG

Nay Pyi Taw, 13 Nov — Secretary-General of United Nations Mr Ban Ki-moon held a press conference at the MICC-1 here on 12 November.

With regard to the press conference, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Maung Maung Ohn sent a letter dated today to Secretary-General of United Nations Mr Ban Ki-moon.

In the letter, the chief minister stated that I am writing to express my deep disappointment of your use of the term “Rohingya” at a recent press conference in Nay Pyi Taw. While I can understand your intention and desire to promote the rights of the minorities, lending the stature of your office to this highly volatile debate in such a public manner can have lasting detrimental impact on our ability to do the work needed on the ground to bring the communities together.

The term “Rohingya” has fostered distrust and further led to a greater divide between the Rakhine and the Bengali populations as well as between the Myanmar people and the international community. The international community’s insistence on the use of the term “Rohingya” has alienated the Rakhine population and further fueled their distrust of all the United Nations agencies and international organizations such as MSF that are providing much needed assistance inside Rakhine state, the letter added.

We have tried to be constructive and have concentrated on promoting the rights and livelihoods of both populations living in Rakhine State instead of focusing of this divisive debate, said the letter. Since I became the Chief Minister of Rakhine State, I have tried to bring communities together so that they can rise above their disagreements through interfaith dialogue and building of mutual trust. Not only that, I have tried to bridge the divide between the Rakhine population and the international organizations working there. I am concerned that your statement yesterday could further inflame local sentiment and undo previous gains we have achieved, which is very unfortunate given the timing and opportunities presented to us, the letter disclosed.—MNA
