

Nay Pyi Taw, 1 Aug – The following is a translated transcript of President U Thein Sein’s Monthly Radio Address to the Nation.

My Fellow Citizens,

I would like to inform you all of the developments that have taken place in our country in the month of July just as I have done previously on this radio program.

I paid working visits to the United Kingdom and the French Republic from 14th to 20th July. We have had long and deep ties with both countries and I am pleased to have been able to meet with their heads of government and other key figures at this important turning point in our history.

I held constructive and substantive discussions with political, business, and civil society leaders on several important issues such as the state of our reform process, peace building efforts, the issue of political prisoners, and on the recent communal violence that has erupted in our country. And, we also made progress on discussions relating to security sector reform and increased cooperation between our respective armed forces, both of which are fundamental to our reform process.

We also exchanged ideas and explained our current economic conditions to representatives of various prominent businesses and associations so that we can successfully attract responsible investment and trade to develop our economy. Similarly, we met with civil society organizations to strengthen the bond between the Myanmar peoples and peoples of those two countries. I have always made the effort to make such important working visits to build friendly relations with the international community and to gain international support, help and trust during this difficult transition period.

July is the month of turbulence in our political history. It teaches us tragic historical lessons to learn from as we build a better future. We have seen how violent attempts to control political problems or crises and how the acts of the radical politicians without any respect for fundamental democratic values such as diversity of opinion and freedom of expression could have long-term detrimental impact on the society at large. We must always be vigilant towards such threats and tragic legacies.

We must never fail to remember 19th July, the day that the leaders of our independence movement were brutally assassinated, nor forget the full measure of their devotion to ending colonial rule over our land and people. Our recent

political progress can be measured by how many sectors of our society participated in honoring our fallen heroes and their memory. It is with great pride to see not only participation from leaders of government and public offices, but also active and vibrant participation from the general public, and especially spirited participation of the youth and civil society organizations.

My Fellow Citizens,

We also had valuable discussions with representatives of Interfaith Dialogue Group and Human Rights Commission before and after my trip to the United Kingdom and the French Republic in order to expand our efforts to find lasting solutions for peaceful coexistence among different religions and prevent further violence.

On the topic of communal and religious violence, I would like to highlight and reflect on one of Bogyoke Aung San's most important political speeches—"Ale Pyitsayan" Speech (Bogyoke Aung San gave this speech at the middle terrace of Shwe Dagon Pagoda on January 20, 1946 during the National Conference of Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League).

He said there that freedom of worship is a fundamental right of our citizens, and that all religions, in promoting truthfulness, loving kindness, and the right way to live through right actions cannot be a deterrent to progress of our society. However, our society must never tolerate thoughtless, ruthless and abusive violent acts in the name of religion. He also cautioned us that we must always condemn and prevent hate speech veiled with religious overtones. In the practice of freedom of religion, we must draw a demarcation line between politics and religion. Mixing religion with politics would go against the true teachings of various faiths. Bogyoke Aung San's speech is full of valuable warnings that we can reflect on and relevant lessons can to be drawn for our current situation.

I would also like to report to you on the progress of our peace building efforts. The Union Level Peace Making Work Committee conducted meetings with SSPP/SSA and Wa Self-Administered Division Peace Building Team. A liaison office for KIO Technical Advisory Team was established in Myitkyina to open more effective communication channels. We are also making progress in our continuing negotiations and discussions with armed ethnic groups to sign a National Cease fire Accord in the very near future. We are also making necessary preparations to proceed with political dialogue that is inclusive of all relevant stakeholders.

My Government released seventy-three political prisoners after review and recommendation from the Remaining Political Prisoners Scrutinizing Committee to strengthen our national reconciliation efforts that are at the heart of our reform process. I am working towards fulfilling my promise of no political prisoners in Myanmar by the end of this year.

My concluding message is that my Government has been persistent in our efforts to achieve nation-wide peace, foster economic development and mold a better future for our young people.

May you all have peace of mind and good health.
