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*Myanmar's Observations on the report of the United Nations High Commissioner entitled  
"Situation of Human Rights of Rohingya Muslims and other Minorities in Myanmar"*

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1. Reference is made to paragraphs under Introduction and methodology. The emphasis of the report largely shifts to the interest of armed groups and terrorists watering down the escalated violence including killings, abductions, forced recruitment, arson attacks and expulsion against different communities by AA armed group in Rakhine State. The mandate given by Human Rights Council Resolution 50/3 was further twisted by integrating overall situation in the country in the report although the resolution did not request the High Commissioner to do so.
2. Despite Myanmar's consistent position against country-specific resolutions, the Government provided the information as per the request made by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. However, the report not only ignores the facts provided by the Government but also includes a few erroneous figures which mislead the viewers.
3. Myanmar further notes with grave concerns over the selection of interviewees as many of their accounts matched with the narratives of armed groups and terrorists indicating sampling bias which eventually lead false insights, incorrect conclusions and flawed recommendations.
4. Reference is made to paragraphs 8 to 10. The paragraphs represent one-sided narratives as if the Tatmadaw was attacking civilians while ignoring the armed attacks of anti-government armed groups against villages and towns with residential and civilian infrastructures. The state security forces have the legitimate right to protect its population and accordingly, counter operations have been taken to stabilize the areas for the safety and security of the people and their properties. Figures contained in the paragraphs are stated as "credible sources" without specifying the source of information whereas there is no standard to measure credibility.

5. Moreover, the report fails to disclose the number of deaths due to acts of terror committed by the so-called PDFs across the country although the Government has provided it. As of April 2024, the terrorist groups NUG and PDFs have claimed the lives of more than 7,500 innocent civilians including 271 children, 99 teachers, 20 healthcare workers, 104 Sanga (monks) and 1,028 administrative staffs in different townships across the country. The present report not only fails to mention the number of civilian casualties due to restless killings of PDFs but also ignores the atrocities of NUG and PDF terrorist groups although such information were slightly included in the previous report. One recent abhorrent act took place on 9 May 2024 when PDF terrorists attacked Hsonywa Village in Myingyan Township of Mandalay region with small arms and heavy weapons and killed 32 people including innocent children.
6. Reference is made to paragraphs 11 to 15. The figure of so called 50 towns under the control of anti-government armed groups is inaccurate. While several towns with civilians mainly in remote areas were under attacks, the Government managed to restore stability in many including Kawkareik, Mongmit, Kawlin, Myawaddy and Loikaw. Relevant State/Regional officials have been facilitating the return of residents, reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructures and resuming public services. The report repeatedly mentions that such and such armed groups attacked or took over “towns”. It clearly shows that armed groups have been targeting towns which are neither military bases nor military targets and there is no question that the state security forces take counter measures within the parameter of Rules of Engagement.
7. Reference is made to paragraph 16. PDF terrorists, with the support of KIA armed group, attacked Kaw Lin, Hti Gyaing and surrounding villages in November 2023 and civilians. Due to killings, abductions, arsons and lootings committed by the armed groups, local residents could no longer live under their control and abandoned their places. Therefore, no civilians but only armed men remained in the towns and allegations of civilian casualties by military are unfounded.

8. Reference is made to paragraph 17. Again, Myanmar cannot verify so-called local sources while distributing such propaganda have been coordinated by self-claimed local organizations or human rights groups affiliated with armed terrorist groups. With regard to the alleged incident in Daw Si Ei village on 5 February 2024, it is learnt that the video footage circulated clearly shows the trench used by the armed group and claiming the area as a school is another deceptive act.
9. Reference is made to paragraph 18. Kawkareik is a place repeatedly disturbed by means of attacks, lootings, arsons and threats by KNLA and its affiliated groups and the local residents are clearly aware of who the perpetrators are. Nevertheless, the interviewees selected by the authors of the report portray just the opposite. The photos with the crowds returning to the town once Tatmadaw regained control over it in April 2024 clearly indicate that the local population feel safe and trust the state security forces.
10. Reference is made to paragraphs 23, 24, 25 and 26. The State Administration Council (SAC) issued an announcement that set the date for the People's Military Service Law to come into force, which is 10 February 2024. The Government has been conducting vigorous public awareness campaigns such as pamphlets distribution, news releases and announcements and sending Short Message Service (SMS) to better understand the Law and to counter false information. Anyone who has the knowledge of forced recruitment can file the complaint with the Central Body for summoning People's Military Servants. Necessary steps to realize the law including the formation of region and state level committees for summoning People's Military Servants, developing rules and SOPs and preparing facilities are being prioritized at the moment. It is disappointing to observe the allegations of military abductions of youths from the streets. Myanmar invites those who made the allegations to provide facts such as names of the victims, date and place of alleged incidents for verification. In fact, People's Military Servants Training Batch No. 1 and 2 have been opened with the youths who voluntarily registered to join.
11. Reference is made to paragraphs 27 to 32. Responding to OHCHR, Myanmar provided a list of known damaged religious buildings stating 84 buddhist

monasteries, 11 Christian churches, 4 Hindu temples, 1 nunnery, 8 religious community halls, 1 religious abode, 3 pagodas and 3 Mosques, and a total of 115 buildings were damaged by the armed insurgents such as KIA, KNU, TNLA and the so-called NUG and PDF terrorist groups. However, the report cited “4 Buddhist monasteries” instead of 84 and therefore, Myanmar calls for its amendment. It is questionable whether the error was unintentional since the paragraph appears to incite religious tension among Myanmar’s diverse communities. It is also found out that the report ignores publicly available materials like photos and videos showing how religious sites have been used by the armed groups and terrorists for military purposes in addition to destroying of pagodas, Buddha statues and monasteries by such groups.

12. Reference is made to paragraph 19 and paragraphs 33 to 36. The allegations in connection with Sin Gyi Pyin village contained in paragraph 34 are originated from AA’s media arm which is propagating for AA. Similarly, regarding the alleged incident in Zaydi Taung village, different media in exile report inconsistent narratives while Tatmadaw never target civilians. As part of the so-called Three Brotherhood Alliance, AA armed group provokes coordinated attacks towns and villages in the areas of civilian population in Rakhine State along with the so-called operation 1027 in northeast Shan State. The report neglects the fact that AA has been using several villages as their bases and villagers as human shields. The local communities, particularly Bengali population resist and oppose such acts of AA and their community becomes target of killings, arson attacks, expulsion and other forms of violence by AA. The fact that the report vaguely outlines the widespread violations of the AA while asserting 86 Bengalis were killed by the military is a clear sign of fabricating. Myanmar, therefore, provides the following grave atrocities of AA armed group which the report fails to mention:
  - a. On 28 February 2024, artillery shells fired by AA insurgents hit Korea Seik Kan market in Sittwe killed ten innocent civilians and injured many others who were treated in Sittwe General Hospital.
  - b. On 9 March 2024, artillery shells launched by AA insurgents hit Kathe ward in Sittwe killed five civilians including a 12-year-old-child.

- c. On 12 April 2024, AA insurgents attacked Kon Tai, Yut Nyo Taung and U Hla Pe villages with mainly Bengali population in Buthidaung township and therefore, the villagers fled and the state officials shelter them in Buthidaung town and provide food.
  - d. On 17 April 2024, artillery shells launched by AA insurgents hit No-2 ward in Buthidaung township killed four civilians.
  - e. On 4 May 2024, AA insurgents launched artillery shells against No. 1 Basic Education High School (BEHS) in ward 1 of Buthidaung where displaced persons are temporarily sheltered. It killed 2 civilians and injured 15 including a one and half-year-old child, a three-year-old child and four other children at the age of 5.
  - f. On 11 May 2024, AA insurgents shelled a public hospital in Buthidaung and killed three persons.
  - g. As of 13 May 2024, 60 innocent civilians lost their lives due to attacks committed by AA terrorists.
  - h. The worst incidents occurred in Buthidaung on 17 and 18 May. It was learned that AA terrorists entered Buthidaung at about 9:30 pm on 17 May. They torched the houses of Bengalis and ordered them to leave their places. They set fire to all Bengali villages – the villages near Buthidaung, such as Ohthi Village, and then all the villages to the east of Buthidaung. AA reportedly had committed massacres and the number of victims is still verifying.
13. With reference to the alleged forced recruitment contained in paragraph 35, Spokesperson of the Rakhine State Government already clarified on 27 February 2024 that the accusations made by some media are not accurate. On 24 February 2024, the Spokesperson of the Information Team of the Government announced that anyone who has the knowledge of forced recruitment can file the complaint with the Central Body for summoning People’s Military Servants and the contact details to do so have been made known to the public. The report, on the other hand, downplays the forced recruitment made by the Arakan Army (AA) insurgents which demanded 10 persons from each village in Buthidaung townships to join AA since December 2023. In March 2024, individuals namely Tun Khin and Nay San Lwin

visited a camp in Bangladesh and met with some leaders of AA and their discussion included recruiting 50,000 Muslims from the camp to join AA.

14. Reference is made to paragraph 37 to 39. If the villagers do not follow their agenda, AA armed group committed armed attacks and set fire to the villages, threatened and abducted the villagers. The attacks of AA caused civilian casualties in Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State. As a result, thousands of people have been forcefully displaced. Reports on AA fighters destroying, burning and looting houses of the people are widespread. AA have been using drop bombs and heavy weapons on the non-military targets including schools, wards, villages and public places, inflicting deaths of innocent people. During the clashes, AA has been using the general public as human shield and Tatmadaw has been exercising maximum restraint to protect everyone without discrimination. The Tatmadaw's operations are carried out in accordance with the Rules of Engagement (ROE) that follow the principle of distinction between civilian objects and military targets.
15. Reference is made to paragraphs 21, 37 and 39. AA terrorists have been blocking the main transportation and trade routes. The local authorities have been providing shelter to the villagers who were forced to flee from the attacks of AA armed group. The State Administration Council arranged sending commodities at a lower price for the local people. One example is that 27 trucks arrived in Ann, Rakhine State on 2 May and 29 May 2024 respectively and sold commodities such as rice, cooking oil, salt, fish paste, garlic, onion and chilies at Shwe Ann Taung Hall to locals. From 16 May 2023 to 7 May 2024, 67,741.92 tons of rehabilitation supplies such as construction materials, electric materials, medicine, health items, commodities and foodstuffs, 249,762 gallons of Diesel and 199,886 gallons of Octane 92 have been delivered to Sittwe in Rakhine State through 46 vessels including the Tatmadaw's naval vessels.
16. Since January 2024, the Government has approved the temporary relocation of the UN and INGO staff as well as their eligible dependents from Buthidaung and Maungdaw to Sittwe. They were relocated from Maungdaw to Sittwe in 3 batches with the facilitation of the authorities concerned and some individuals to Yangon.

17. Reference is made to paragraph 41. Blaming the Tatmadaw accusing stirring inter-ethnic tensions is not helpful. Buthidaung township in Rakhine State is a peaceful place as Hindus, Muslims and Rakhine communities live in harmony. AA armed group disseminated false news that Hindus and Buddhists have been abducted by Islamic terrorist group with the intention of creating tension among the diverse communities. The Government strongly condemns such attempts to provoke resentment among different communities in Rakhine State and provides accurate information in a timely manner to prevent misunderstanding among local communities.
18. With regard to the repatriation of displaced persons, Myanmar is steadfast to keep its bilateral commitments with Bangladesh to commence the repatriation of the verified displaced persons from Rakhine State. As of 30 April 2024, the Myanmar immigration authorities have checked the data of more than 180,000 individuals and found that 130,000 displaced persons were former residents of Rakhine State. Myanmar is committed to receiving any verified returnees who wish to return on their own volition when security condition allows.
19. Reference is made to paragraphs 45 to 50 under the subtitle “emerging local governance structures”. It is shocked to learn the blatant support of the High Commissioner to insurgent groups infringing territorial integrity of a member state. In addition, the report glorifies the mechanisms under the armed groups to put their control over the local population by seizing public services and extending their financial resources through extortion, controlling access to natural resources and trade routes.
20. The report further ignores the grave violations committed by armed groups which go contrary to its narrative and therefore, it expels Myanmar to provide following some instances for the benefits of viewers;
  - a. MNDAA armed group executed individuals twice in public in April and May 2024. While some states issued press releases and expressed their concerns, the High Commissioner was silent and the report neglected the fact. MNDAA

destroyed pagodas and statues and circulated the video footages and majority of the people were shocked to see the abhorrent acts of MNDAA. The United Nations keeps its silence. Additionally, the armed group bulldozes the buildings which belong to the Bamar ethnic and expels Bamar from the areas temporarily seized by them. Although these points are well-known to the people of Myanmar, they fail to attract the attention of OHCHR.

- b. TNLA armed group attacks civilians, towns, residential areas and civilian infrastructures in northern Shan State while the group claiming itself as representatives of Ta'ang ethnic. Its attacks against towns with majority Shan population led ethnic tensions and infighting among armed groups particularly SSA and TNLA. TNLA's ethnically motivated killings, torture and inhumane treatment against members of Shan ethnic, destruction of historic buildings and pagodas not only lead to loss of civilian lives but also create divisions among the different ethnic communities.
- c. It is also the case between KIA and TNLA armed groups as they have been fighting for territorial gains while so-called Three Brotherhood Alliance took control over KIA areas. Long standing discrimination and persecution of KIA armed groups against Shan and Bamar ethnics never attract attention of the United Nations.
- d. Meanwhile, there are multitudes of reports that the armed insurgent groups and terrorist groups have been recruiting new members forcibly. For instance, in Rakhine State, the armed insurgent group AA is coercing villages to allot a number of people for recruitment and those who refuse to join are retaliated brutally.
- e. Tension between AA armed group which falsely represent Rakhine ethnic and Chin armed groups has been growing along with armed attacks among them for territorial and resource control. Additionally, killings, torture, violence of AA armed groups against the members of Chin ethnic has been increasing. Infightings among fictions of different Chin armed actors along with murders has been creating divisions and mistrust among different tribes of Chin.



21. The report slightly touches upon violations and atrocities of AA armed groups against Bengali population. It is in fact similar characters of other armed groups which commit heinous crimes including killings, torture, threats, expulsion, arson attacks, extortion, exploiting natural resources, etc against local population. Such incidents are not paid any attention not only by western dominated media but also by the reports of the United Nations including of the High Commissioner. It is observed that the report even mentions about building democratic federal union of Myanmar by armed insurgents who understand no multiculturalism but are overwhelmed by taking arms for self-interest.
  
22. Reference is made to Conclusions and Recommendations. The report of the High Commissioner has watered down armed violence committed by PDF terrorists under the control of NUG and their affiliated armed groups. Since it even encourages the international community to support actors opposing the Government, it is truly a flawed and biased report.

## Conclusion

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23. Myanmar finds that the report largely includes the elements which can polarize the communities in Myanmar while the Government is committed to ensuring peace, tranquillity, rule of law and socio-economic livelihood of the people of Myanmar. Myanmar is concerned about the prestigious multilateral organization such as the United Nations, the tolerance to terrorism and the willingness to support those who use terrorism as a tool to achieve political goals.

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar**

**Geneva**

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