

Press Statement

The Situation in the Rakhine State

The situation in Rakhine State has been the focus of the world attention in recent weeks. The Government of Myanmar fully shares the concern of the international community regarding the displacement and suffering of all communities affected by the latest escalation of violence ignited by the acts of terrorism committed by the extremist group known as the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) in Northern Rakhine State on 25 August 2017.

The fresh round of violence was the result of simultaneous and coordinated attacks by the terrorists on 30 police outposts in Northern Rakhine State. The ARSA, which has been independently verified to be externally funded and inspired organization, has claimed responsibility for the attacks. The same group has also claimed responsibility for the attacks initiated on 9 October 2016. The brutal acts of terrorism which targeted not only the Myanmar security forces but also innocent civilians must be unequivocally condemned. Acts of terrorism cannot be condoned for any reason.

The Government of Myanmar strongly condemns the vicious acts of terrorism and has declared the ARSA a terrorist group. The Government welcomes the statements issued by the United Nations and a number of countries firmly condemning the terrorist attacks.

The attacks of August 2017 were deliberately timed to coincide with the release of the final report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine led by Mr. Kofi Annan. It is evident that the latest terror campaign is an attempt to undermine the efforts of the Government to find a lasting solution to the issue of Rakhine through the speedy implementation of the Advisory Commission's recommendations.

The security forces have been instructed to adhere strictly to the Code of Conduct in carrying out security operations, to exercise all due restraint, and to take full measures to avoid collateral damage and the harming of innocent civilians in the course of carrying out their legitimate duty to restore stability.

Human Rights violations and all other acts that impair stability and harmony and undermine the rule of law will be addressed in accordance with strict norms of justice.

The recent attacks have led to widespread fear and the subsequent displacement of all communities, including Rakhine, Hindu, and various smaller ethnic minorities such as the Mro, Daingnet and Kaman, whose fate is sadly overlooked by the world.

The Government has granted media access to northern Rakhine to both local and international media in order to provide a balanced and comprehensive view of complex situation. The government provided prompt relief aid to alleviate the plight of displaced communities.

Humanitarian assistance will be provided to all displaced inhabitants without discrimination. A Government-led mechanism established in cooperation with the Red Cross Movement has already started its humanitarian assistance activities. Myanmar welcomes the offers of ASEAN members as well as other countries to contribute toward the assistance programme.

The Government brought out a statement welcoming the recommendations of Mr. Kofi Annan’s Advisory Commission on 24 August 2017. A Ministerial-led Committee to monitor the progress of the implementation of the recommendations will be established speedily and an Advisory Board comprised of eminent persons from home and abroad will also be constituted to assist the Committee in its work.

The international community can best help by supporting the Myanmar Government in its efforts to bring stability, peace and development to Rakhine State.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dated: 11 September 2017