

Press Release

At the end of her visit to Myanmar from January 6 to 16, 2015, Ms. Yang Hee Lee, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights situation in Myanmar, made some observations when she met the press on 16 January 2015. Many of the concerns she raised in her statement do not reflect the overall positive aspect of an issue. Selectivity is often exercised. On some occasions, interfering on issues which falls within state sovereignty and domestic jurisdiction is evident. In this connection, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses the following points:

- On the use of term "Rohingya" in her statement, Myanmar rejects such use of nomenclature unequivocally. Myanmar never recognizes such terminology which has never been included among over 100 national races of Myanmar or even in the census records of the British colonial period. Insistence on using this controversial terminology will only pose a barrier on the road to resolving this important issue. Use of such term by the United Nations would certainly draw strong resentments of the people of Myanmar making the government's efforts more difficult in addressing the issue.
- On a package of four draft bills, they are being drafted in pursuant to the will of the people of Myanmar. They are widely published, and views and feedbacks from the public are also considered and incorporated, as appropriate, to the bills. Consequently, they have been forwarded to the Parliaments for a debate, consideration and a decision. They are subject to under stringent scrutiny by the people's representatives in the Hluttaws. It will be done with the view to serving the best interest of the Myanmar people. This due process on the bills is far from completion. Prejudging the outcome of this domestic legislation process constitutes an attempt to make undue influence on the public opinion and incitement among the people.
- On land issue, it should be reminded that Myanmar is an agro-based country, and as such the land and the farmers are primary assets of the country and are highly valued. In order to deal with land issues with transparency and effectiveness, the Central Committee on land use management has been endeavouring its utmost. In this mission, a great number of land disputes are caused by hindrances including outdated laws, rules and procedures, lack of concrete evidences for ownership. However, the government is committed to implement land reforms which will ensure effective resolution, and safeguarding the interest of people and returning the land to their rightful owners. In light of vast land in the country, such process cannot be completed overnight.
- On the mentioning of political prisoners, the scrutiny process on a few remaining has been carried out with special consideration. Release of

political prisoners is done with a view to enabling them to participate in political process, stability of the State and implementation of durable peace. In order to continue looking into the affairs of political prisoners, the membership has been expanded and reconstituted. It will continue in line with relevant existing law.

- Greater media freedom has been granted in the country by abolishing press censorship, permitting the publication of private daily newspaper and enacting new media laws in line with international norms and practices. Accusations of backtracking in some areas have been made. The arrests of some journalists were cited previously. No journalists were apprehended for exercising their due rights but for the offences they had committed such as breaking into a restricted area. No country will tolerate a breach of national security by any person. The state of Myanmar's media freedom can be compared not only with that of countries' in the region but also rest of the world.

The Special Rapporteur should fulfill her mandate in a professional and prudent manner. Her visit should not leave the country and people of Myanmar with discord, distrust and incitement.

In relation to the media statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights released on 21 January 2015, it is firmly reiterated that Myanmar will not tolerate any acts or expressions that would lead to hatred between religions and races.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw
3rd February 2015