



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
NAY PYI TAW



**The Myanmar Government's Efforts
for Peace, Stability and
Development in the
Rakhine State**

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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Cover:

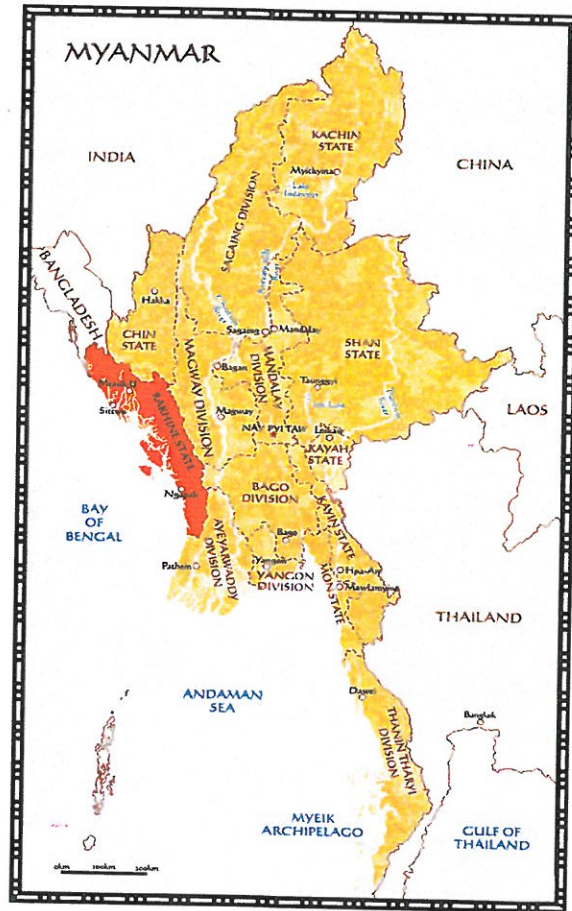
It is so designed to express Myanmar's appreciations to the United Nations and its Organisations, INGOs & NGOs contributing to the well-being of people in Rakhine State. There also are many other contributors.

The Myanmar Government's Efforts for Peace, Stability and Development in the Rakhine State (September 2013)

Area and Population

Rakhine State is located in the west of Myanmar bordering Bangladesh on the north-west, Chin State on the north, Magway Division, Bago Division and Ayeyarwaddy Division on the east and the Bay of Bengal on the west and south.

A long coastal stretch of land touching the Rakhine Yoma in the east, the state is criss-crossed with a large number of natural watercourses including Naff, Mayyu and Kissapanadi rivers and Maei, Tanlwe, Taungup, Thandwe, Kyeintali and Gwa creeks flowing from north to south.



The population of Rakhine State is 3.3 million and made up of Rakhine, other Rakhine tribes such as Thet, Daingnet, Mro, Khamee, Kaman and Maramagyi in addition to Bamars and Chins. Bengalis are also residing there. The area is 14,200 square miles (36780 km²) and the Capital is Sittwe. There are 17 Townships in Rakhine State.

Agriculture is the main economic activity: principal crops being paddy, chili, Myanmar tobacco, coconut, betel nut, groundnut, maize, rubber, various beans and pulses are cultivated. The Kissapanadi river runs through the State, giving water for plantation.

Brief History

The history of Rakhine rooted into the ancient time, portrayed with many successive Rakhine monarch who had established the City States: the First Danya Waddy in BC 3287 and the Second Danya Waddy in BC 1469.

In Rakhine history, Myauk U Dynasty existed until 1785 AD and lasted for more than 350 years which could be termed as the Golden Days of Rakhine.

In 1824 AD, British declared war against Myanmar. Through two Anglo-Myanmar wars, Rakhine State and Taninthari State fell under the British in 1826 AD.

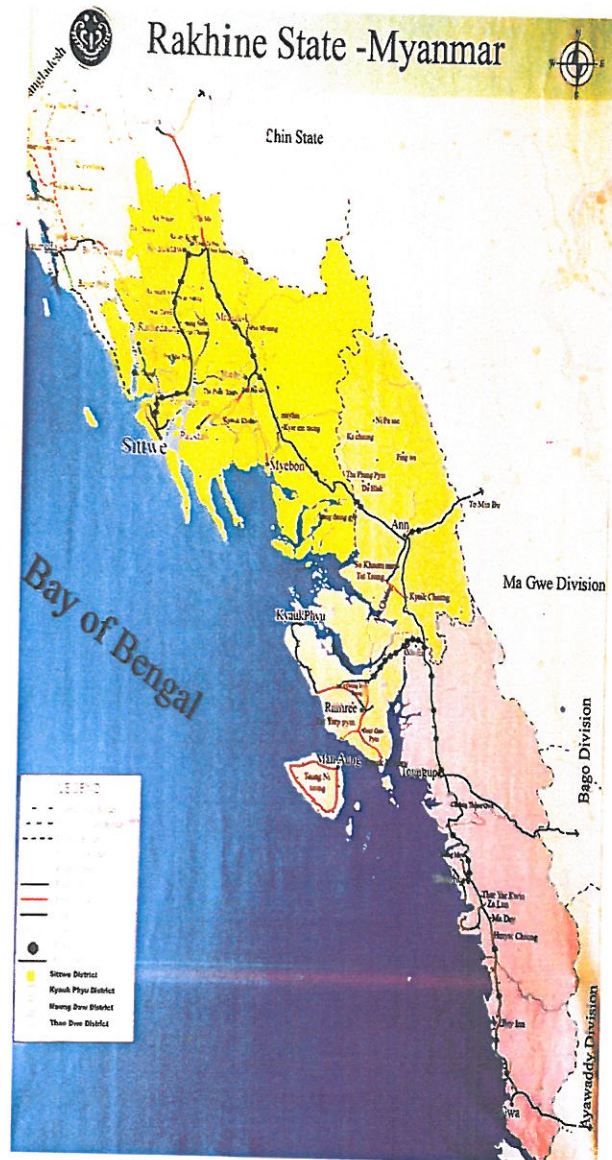


May Yu Mountain Range: a landmark of Rakhine

The British administration and economic policy had encouraged large migration of Indians into Myanmar. The agro-farming and land plots were expanded with the aim to collect taxations. However, British found original labour force in Rakhine inadequate, thus large number of cheap laborers from India was brought into Rakhine by the British to use in the cultivation of the fertile land of Rakhine.

Bengali population expanded throughout the history and reached to the second largest populace in Rakhine. The State is under-developed and resources are limited. This created a competition for livelihoods between the original Rakhines and the Bengalis. The frustration and competition is largely seen in economic activities and social settings. Furthermore, differences in culture, race and religion made room for misunderstandings, disapprovals and conflicts whenever sensitivity arises.

Root causes like its location bordering with a densely-populated country, colonial legacy and lower socio-economic state of both Rakhine and Bengali communities—among others are also contributing adversely to Rakhine situation today.



Rakhine State with 443 miles coastline

Recent Developments

Communal violence broke out in Rakhine State in May-June 2012 was triggered by a crime. Similar pattern of violence followed in Meiktila township, Lashio and Kantbalu in 2013. During the public disorder, both Buddhist and Muslim communities lost human lives, properties, houses, schools, monasteries and mosques.



An aerial view of Rakhine Coastline

In restoring law and order, the authorities exercised maximum restraint and acted in a responsible manner. Rakhine Investigation Commission, composed of high profile individuals from all walks of life, academia and religious leaders from Hinduism, Islam and Christianity released its report to the public on April 29, 2013 which has analyzed the issues surrounding communal violence in Rakhine State from various perspectives in a comprehensive, pragmatic and forward-looking manner. Recommendations include measures to see to immediate needs and on rule of law and peaceful co-existence.

The sentiments between the two communities in Rakhine State have influenced the people elsewhere in Myanmar and fuelled ordinary crimes or incidents into a violence.

Current condition at the camps

The Camps

Currently a total of 59 temporary camps are sheltering about 120,000 displaced persons including both Rakhine and Bengali. A total of 1,883 long houses were built in Sittwe, Tathedaung, Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, Minbya, Kyaukphyu, Yan Byae, Pauktaw, Myaepone townships in Rakhine State by Union Government, Rakhine State Government, UNHCR and NGOs. Individual houses of 1,235 were also completed by the end of August 2013.

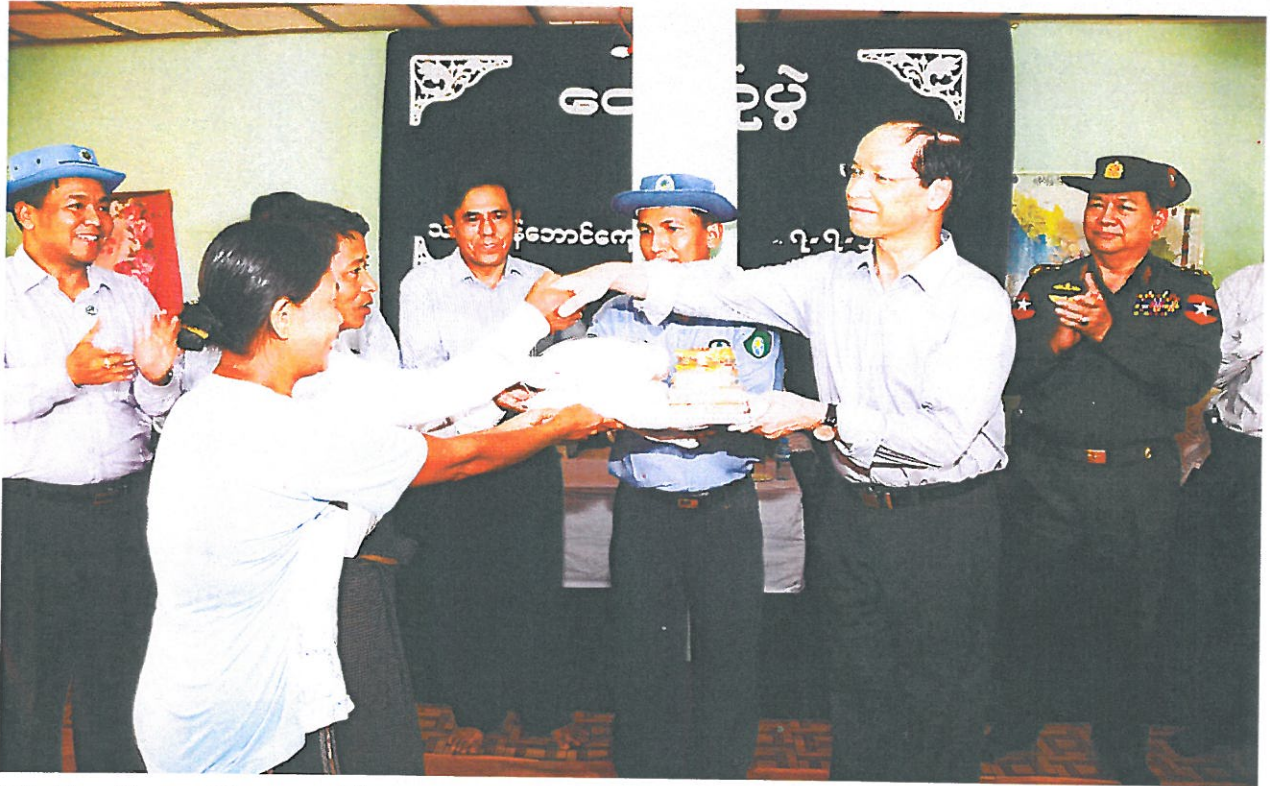
At present, a total of 87,362 Bengali people have been housed in 2,769 long houses while a total of 6,578 Rakhines have been accommodated in 19 long houses and 1,242 houses.



A scene of a camp with long houses

Food

A total of 21,717 metric tons of food including rice, edible oil, salt, pulses and beans, nutrition powder were distributed from 2012 to 2013. Average food requirements for each month is 2,100 metric tons.



His Excellency Vice President Dr. Sai Mauk Kham donating food items.

Non-Food Items

Household boxes, delivery kits, kitchen utensils, tarpaulin sheets, blankets and mosquito nets are distributed.



The Security

The Border Area Immigration Control forces known as NASAKA were responsible for the security forces in the region during the violence. At present, their Headquarters and its forces has been abolished since July 2013. As there still exists mistrust between the two communities, there has been incidents in which a routine police work was encountered by clashes from a community.

Water and Sanitation

Access to clean water and sanitation is also a priority to prevent the outbreak of diseases in the camps. Building 3,273 toilet facilities, digging 4 new wells and upgrading of 27 water reservoirs and ponds are also done at the camps.



Inspecting a medical clinic at the camp

Health care

In addition to existing ones, 29 additional Health Clinics are under construction in 11 townships in Rakhine State. Services are available for emergency transportation of patients from camps to nearest Hospitals. Education on reproductive health is conducted while providing necessary kits. Nutrition programmes for children are also conducting in 10 townships. Mobile clinics are also operating there. Almost fifty thousand hygiene kits were distributed. Treatments for children with malnutrition were provided at 14 camps and 59 villages.

Education Services

While 30 new schools have been built, 20 existing schools are being renovated in Sittwe, Yathaytaung, Pauktaw and Myebon townships. To cater education services to 7,972 Rakhine and Bengali school children in 24 camps in 6 townships, 213 teachers from their own communities have been trained with teaching skills.



School children at a school in a camp

Law Enforcement

Myanmar practices zero tolerance on impunity as the State policy. Any perpetrator regardless of faith or race is being penalized. In the case of Rakhine, a total of 1,189 were detained and tried. In Meikhtila incident, a total of 82 including 63 Buddhists have been detained. Likewise, 57 Buddhists were among the 67 detained and tried in Lashio. These cases are being dealt with existing law and verdicts have been reached. Information in this regard has already been widely published in local media.

The Rakhine Investigation Commission, composed of prominent figures from civil society, academia and all faiths was established on 17 August 2012. The report by the Commission on 29 April 2013, recommended as priorities, the need to maintain peace and stability in the region and to put law enforcement measures in place to prevent the recurrence of violence.

Following the report, President U Thein Sein, in his statement on 6 May 2013, expressed his administration's determination to resolve the ongoing problems in Rakhine State in a systematic and pragmatic manner and to create a harmonious society where all communities can live together peacefully. He also highlighted the importance of ensuring freedom of religion and speech, the need to practice tolerance and mutual respect in order for religious freedom to prevail and peaceful coexistence. He also reminded that all perpetrators to violence will be dealt with law without any discrimination and also that the Government would provide genuine and decisive leadership in resolving the conflict in Rakhine State while ensuring national security, rule of law and human rights.

Measures taken for long-term development

To address the root causes that led to the conflict and implement reconstruction activities swiftly, the Government has established a Central Committee for Implementation of Stability and Development in Rakhine State. In implementing the state policy and recommendations of the taking into consideration of the recommendations of the Rakhine Investigation Commission -seven subcommittees are now working on:

- ▶ rule of law,
- ▶ security and law enforcement,
- ▶ immigration and review of citizenship,
- ▶ temporary resettlement and reconstruction and,
- ▶ social and economic development and strategic planning.



Vice President's visit to the camps

A coordination centre for effective execution of conflict prevention and reconstruction activities has been set up in Sittwe since May this year.

Considerable progress has been achieved in construction of shelter, housing, schools, clinics in addition to food security and education and health services.



A scene of a camp

Provisions necessary to support livelihood such as tractors, power tillers, seeds, fertilizer, fuel, fishing boats and nets are provided to the local population.

Upgrading and installation of telephone landlines in Buthidaung, Gwa and Yanbyae Townships has been completed. Mobile phones for temporary camps for camp management authorities have been distributed as well.

For the ease of daily life, temporary bazaars will be established. One such bazaar has already been in place.

Views by UN Officials

Mr. Quintana meets with chief abbot of Shwe Zaydi Monastery in Sittwe



In his statement at the Yangon International Airport on 21 August 2013, the special rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Myanmar Mr. Tomas Ojea Quintana noted that the states and central government were working well with the international community to address urgent humanitarian needs of both Rakhine Buddhists and the Muslim Communities.



At a mosque in Aung Mingala Quarter

The Chief Minister of Rakhine assured him that there was no two-child policy in place for the Muslim populations in Northern Rakhine State and it was reconfirmed by the Union Minister of Immigration and Population.

United Nations Secretary General's special advisor Mr. Vijay Nambiar during his meeting with Rakhine State Government on 1-9-13 said "The conflict that had broken out in Rakhine State is a domestic issue that is to be settled in Myanmar and no other country needs to interfere the internal affairs."

He also said that "As a matter of fact, this conflict is just a internal affair that is to be resolved between two communities just in Myanmar. We don't like that any other foreign government will intervene this affair."

Cooperation with the International-Community



Food security is one of the priorities.

Myanmar is grateful to international partners that are donating funds for Rakhine State. The main donors include the United States of America, UK, Australia, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, UAE, Luxemburg, New Zealand, Norway, France, India and Indonesia. The United Nations and its system, international organisations and other entities like UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOCHA, UNDP, WHO, WFP, UNFPA, EU Humanitarian Office and ICRC. Non-Governmental Organisations including Malteser, Care, Save the Children, MSF, Oxfam, Solidarities, CDN, ZOA Refugee Care, Various Recipients, DRC, Coalition of Dutch NGOs, Swedish Civil Contingency Agency and Church of Sweden.

Areas of humanitarian activities are providing food, non-food items, nutrition for children, shelter, water and sanitation, health and education services, means for livelihood and so on.



Providing blankets

Since the launching of emergency, resettlement and reconstruction programs a year ago in July 2012, a total of US\$ 73 million donated by the above-mentioned international partners has been received and disbursed until now. However, US\$ 6.2 million is still needed to meet the needs of current programmes.



Resident Diplomats visiting camp



UN Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator Ashok Nigam and US Ambassador Derek Mitchell with IDP

The Government has already spent over 12.45 billions of Kyat from its own resources in addition to providing materials and services. Local well-wishers have also contributed cash and kind worth of billions of Kyats. However, international assistance continues to play an important role.



UNSG's Special Advisor Vijay Nambiar with Muslim elders

Cooperation with member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)



Assistance from Turkey

- ▶ The Government has been facilitating humanitarian and other assistance from any quarters including the member states from the OIC if the assistance is provided to both the communities without any discrimination.
- ▶ Myanmar understands and is fully aware of concerns by the international community.
- ▶ A Presidential Statement issued at the last HRC session is the testimony of our goodwill to work with the international community.
- ▶ In the spirit of cooperation and for the sake of transparency, Myanmar has invited the OIC Secretary-General and 5 Foreign Ministers of the Contact Group to visit Myanmar.



Indonesia Foreign Minister Mr. Marty Natalegawa visiting camps near Sittwe

The Challenges

The Government of Myanmar and people are fully aware that trust and harmony between the Buddhists and the Muslims is important for lasting peace and development of the country. All communities should preserve and promote mutual respect, understanding, empathy and patience. To this end, the Government and people are striving to oppose hostilities of religious extremism and stand against those who are instigating for the escalation of religious divergence and instability.

Today, although stability has been restored in Myanmar. Certain organisations both at home and abroad are portraying as if there exists severe religious and racial discrimination. All should be cognizant of the fact that such fabrications will further complicate the situation.



Mr. Nambiar listening to IDPs



Vice President listening to IDPs

Anxiety and distrust between the two communities particularly at the grass roots level is still high. Advocacy to understand and accept peaceful and harmonious co-existence among different faith and races is one of the highest priorities of the government. President U Thein Sein called on the people to pay mutual respect on different beliefs and to promote peace and harmony and to join hands with the government, civil societies and elders. The President urged the Interfaith Friendship Group to work nationwide to help implement three main priorities of rehabilitation, prevention of conflicts and developing a long-term plan to resolve root causes.

The temporary re-settlement of people in one place is to provide security, shelter, food and other immediate assistance to those who are in need. As soon as essential circumstances such as restoration harmony and trust between the communities and creation of conditions for livelihood are met, people will be going back to their original on new homes.



Long house with paddy field by its dwellers

It is encouraging to see that interfaith dialogue at various levels and across the societies is taking place more and more frequently in Myanmar.

Message to the International Community



High level visit underlines the importance attached to the issue

- ▶ Political and socio-economic reform of Myanmar is gaining momentum. This process is all inclusive. Any group of people will not be left behind in this process.
- ▶ There is no discrimination against anyone based on gender, race and faith. The State Constitution guarantees fundamental rights of all.
- ▶ In the interest of all people in Myanmar, the government never tolerate anyone who try to spread incitement of religious hatred directed against anyone or any groups.
- ▶ The Government and people of Myanmar know the situation in Rakhine State the best.



Peace and development for this beautiful land

The answer to Rakhine situation lies within Myanmar. We will find the solution in line with national interest and the international norms and standards. Constructive engagement by the international community would help Myanmar in finding solutions to the issue.

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Nay Pyi Taw.*

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