
POLITICAL MONITOR NO.17

OFFICIAL MEDIA

BURMESE PRESIDENT MEETS POLITICAL PARTIES

In a meeting with representatives from 18 political parties held on 5 May in Naypyitaw, President Thein Sein said that democratization of the nation was only two years old and reform processes were undertaken in the country through trial and error methods as the whole society was not familiar with democratic practices. The government was trying hard to translate the future of the nation into a success in peace process and political and economic sectors. Reform processes are not being carried out by the government alone but through cooperation with Parliament, political parties, community-based organizations, the public, the military and ethnic armed groups willing to build peace. He added that the vision of the government was to build a new Burma/Myanmar that ensures independent and transparent all-inclusive political process and economic competitive on an equal terms with the participation of all to be involved in the process. And thus it was the onus on all stakeholders to strive in achieving the national vision and goal. In his concluding remarks he said, the government was placing emphasis on capacity building and institutional structures required for reforms though he did not believe that this work could not be completed during his term in office. However, he stated that the government is taking steps to bring about political devolution, shifting to people-centred administration and urged for the participation of all in the reform process. At the meeting members from the political parties expressed their views and opinions on a wide range of issue including the on-going peace process, amendment to the constitution, administrative reforms, agricultural reforms, ensuring people see the tangible results of reforms in shortest time, and resolution of sectarian tensions in Rakhine State and Meiktila. ¹

PRESIDENT THEIN SEIN REMARKS ON RAKHINE INVESTIGATION COMMISSION REPORT

In a televised speech, President Thein Sein remarked on the on the findings of the Rakhine Investigation Commission report released on 29 April. The President said that he is convinced that despite the challenges and difficulties, the country and its people would be able to create a society where equal opportunities could be enjoyed by all. However, at such a sensitive stage in the reform process where there is little room for error, senseless, irrational, reactionary and extremist behaviour and action by some could derail the failure of the reform process itself. President Thein Sein said that his administration was determined to resolve the ongoing problems in Rakhine state in a systematic and pragmatic manner and taking all necessary measures to create a harmonious society where all the communities can coexist peacefully. He also stated that it is crucial to ensure the freedom of religion, freedom of speech be given to all citizens and there must be tolerance and mutual respect among the different communities of different faiths. He also pointed out the misinterpretation of the conflict in Rakhine State as religious violence between the two communities has made it more difficult to resolve the problems. Furthermore, the failure to pay attention to the real causes of the conflict – a long shared border between Burma/Myanmar and Bangladesh with an explosive birth rate, evil legacy left behind by the colonialists and a low socioeconomic status of both the Rakhine and Muslim communities can be seen as a major concern to the conflict. As recommended by the investigation commission, he said community peace and tranquillity, and the enforcement of law and order to contain further violence and pledged relief and humanitarian assistance for all those affected by the violence. Moreover, citizenship-related issues will be

¹ Myanmar still facing challenges in spite of international recognition. Everyone obliged to strive for achievement of national vision and national goal –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-05-06.pdf> (NLM) 6 May 2013 (p.1 & 8)

handled by adopting short- and long-term plans to create a harmonious society and achieve economic development in Rakhine state and that the government will take measures not only to ensure the fundamental rights of the Muslims in Rakhine state but also to meet the needs and expectations of the Rakhine nationals. *(Please see Appendix A for full text of the President Thein Sein's address).*²

RAKHINE COMMISSION HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE

Rakhine State Conflict Investigation Commission held a press conference on its findings regarding the recent communal unrests in the Rakhine State in May 2012. The 183-page report featured interviews of more than 2000 individuals from both communities, a brief history of the state, conflicts, causes of 2012 conflicts, losses caused by violence, current social and economic conditions, efforts for the rule of law, operations of international organizations and recommendations for social harmony. U Ko Ko Gyi, a commission member, said the conflict was one of the issues that a country in democratic transition had to embrace, calling for cooperation to ensure social harmony. Commission secretary Dr Kyaw Yin Hlaing, commission members U Aung Naing Oo, U Ko Ko Gyi, Daw Yin Yin Nwe and U Thura (a) Zarganar answered questions raised by local and foreign reporters, officials of political parties and representatives of UN agencies.³

COMMUNAL ERUPTS IN OAKKAN, BAGO REGION

Government security forces were called in to restore order when clashes between Buddhist and Muslims erupted in Oakkan, north of the former capital Rangoon on 30 April. According to state-run media the violence has left one person dead and ten injured according to state-run news media. The violence erupted in Myoma market after a young Muslim woman accidentally knocked down a novice Buddhist monk. Police have arrested 18 people in connection with the violence. Two mosques, two schools and gas station were destroyed in the clashes and a total of 130 houses were burned overnight in Oakkan's predominantly Muslim Yadanarkone, Panipin, Chautthe, Kyweponlay villages. The violence in Oakkan is the latest unrest to hit central Burma following a number of attacks by Buddhist mobs on Muslim communities in March.⁴

AUSTRALIAN SENATOR MEETS BURMESE LEADERS

Australian parliamentary delegation led by President of the Australian Senate John Hogg arrived in Burma on 27 April to begin his official visit to the country. During the visit the delegation held meetings with Burmese President Thein Sein, both the Speaker of the Lower and Upper Houses and Deputy Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw U Mya Nyein. In their meetings the two sides discussed promoting and further strengthening friendly relations between the two governments, inter-parliamentarian cooperation and aid assistance programmes given by AusAid in the democratic reform process in Burma/Myanmar. The Australian Senate President also called on Chairperson of Pyithu Hluttaw Rule of Law and Tranquillity Committee Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.⁵

² Whatever our prospects for a bright future may be, we are still at a sensitive stage in the reform process where there is little room for error –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-05-07-op.pdf> (NLM) 7 May 2013 (p.1 & 8)

³ Rakhine Commission interviewed over 2000 individuals to compile report –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-04-30.pdf> (NLM) 30 April 2013 (p. 16)

⁴ Religious building attacked by mob in Oakkan –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-05-01.pdf> (NLM) 1 May 2013 (p.10)/

18 suspects charged with Oakkan arson attacks –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-05-02.pdf> (NLM) 2 May 2013 (p.9)

⁵ Australian Senate President arrives in Yangon –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-04-28-op.pdf> (NLM) 28 April 2013 (p. 8)/

President U Thein Sein receives President of Australian Senate and party –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-05-01.pdf> (NLM) 1 May 2013 (p.1)/

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker receives Australian guests –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-05-01.pdf> (NLM) 1 May 2013 (p.16)/

SINGAPORE DEFENCE MINISTER VISITS BURMA

Singapore Defence Minister Dr. Ng Eng Hen during his recent visit to Burma/Myanmar met with Burmese military leaders and exchanged views on defence cooperation between the two countries. Dr Ng also held called on Burmese President Thein Sein and Defence Minister Lt-Gen Wai Lwin and discussed matters on promoting and strengthening of bilateral relationship, development of human resources and investments in economic sectors. The Singaporean Defence Minister also affirmed support for Burma/Myanmar's chairmanship of the ASEAN Chair as well as hosting the ASEAN Defence Minister's Meeting (ADMM) in 2014.⁶

LOWER HOUSE SPEAKER THURA SHWE MANN PAYS VISIT TO ROK

At the invitation of Speaker of National Assembly of the Republic of Korea Hon Mr Kang Chang-hee, a Burmese parliamentary delegation led by Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann paid an official visit to the Republic of Korea from 22-26 April. During the visit, he met his Korean counterpart Kang Chang-hee and signed an MOU on bilateral cooperation between the two parliaments. The Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker also met Korean President Ms. Park Geum Hye on 25 April and discussed ways to promote bilateral relations, assessed Burma's reform and exchanged views on opportunities for Korean business investments in Burma. He also called on Korean Foreign Minister Mr Yun Byung on 22 April and held talks on matters related to bilateral friendship and cooperation between the two countries.⁷

MEETINGS HELD TO REVIEW EXISTING LAWS

Lower House Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann addressed a meeting to revoke and revamp outdated laws at the Hluttaw Office Branch (Yangon) on 29 April. At the meeting, the Speaker called for united efforts in shaping multi-party democracy and market economy and urged law enforcement mechanisms to ensure the rule of law and order, stressing the need to draft 'democratic' laws. The Speaker called for united efforts in shaping multi-party democracy and market economy and urged law enforcement mechanisms to ensure the rule of law and order, stressing the need to draft 'democratic' laws. He also stated that existing laws should be reviewed, revoked and replaced with new ones while calling for the flexibility of the new pieces of legislation. And in doing so, the new laws prescribed by the parliament should be done in the interest of the people. In conclusion, he urged those present to recommend and draft new laws by respective ministries and legal practitioners accordingly. Similarly, the Union Election Commission (UEC) Chairman U Tin Aye also addressed the electoral stake-holders roundtable meeting on 26 April and promised to amend the electoral laws and bylaws as necessary to ensure free, fair and transparent general elections in 2015. The UEC Chairman admitted that there are still weak points in voter registration, pre-election voting, political campaigns and dissemination of electoral knowledge to voters and the huge financial gap among political parties. He said that the Commission has been taking steps to get accurate voters

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets Australian Senate President –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-04-28-op.pdf> (NLM) 28 April 2013 (p. 8)/

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker meets Australian Senate President –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-05-01.pdf> (NLM) 1 May 2013 (p.10)

⁶ Myanmar, Singapore to cooperate in human resource development –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-05-03.pdf> (NLM) 3 May 2013 (p.1)/
Myanmar, Singapore to cooperate in regional peace and stability –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-05-03.pdf> (NLM) 3 May 2013 (p. 8)/
Union Defence Minister receives Singaporean guests –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-05-03.pdf> (NLM) 3 May 2013 (p. 16)

⁷ Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker leaves for Republic of Korea –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-04-23.pdf> (NLM) 23 April 2013 (p. 16)/
Myanmar, Korean speakers sign MoU on bilateral cooperation –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-04-28-op.pdf> (NLM) 28 April 2013 (p. 1 & 8)/
Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann holds talks with ROK President –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-04-29.pdf> (NLM) 29 April 2013 (p. 1)

lists in coordination with election sub-commissions, civil society organizations and government departments and political parties while launching public education programmes. UEC members U Win Kyi, Dr Daw Myint Kyi, U Myint Naing, U Nyunt Tin and U Win Ko discussed the topics of voter registration, financing of political parties, code of conduct for political parties, voter education, and status of observation for civil societies.⁸

COMMITTEE FORMED TO ADDRESS POLITICAL PRISONERS

The Committee for scrutinizing the issue of political prisoners in the country has been reconstituted under a Presidential Order dated 8 May. The committee is to be led by U Soe Thane, Minister at the President's Office and will scrutinize and the release of the remaining political prisoners of conscience for ensuring the state's peace and stability, implementing a peace making process, national reconsolidation and inclusiveness in the political process. (*Please see Appendix B for full text of the Presidential Order*).⁹

UNOFFICIAL MEDIA

BURMESE ARMY SEIZES SHAN REBEL OUTPOST

The Shan State Army-South (SSA-S) has lost an outpost near the Sino-Burmese border, after coming under a fierce attack by the Burmese army on 9 May. SSA-S spokesperson, Major Sai Lao Hseng, said the group was forced to withdraw from their outpost in Nawngma village, Namhkam township, after hundreds of government soldiers descended on their territory. Some 2,000 local residents from 19 villages on both sides of the adjacent Ruili River were forced to flee from their homes – with many heading over the Chinese border. The SSA-S has instructed its troops in the area to return to pre-ceasefire conditions and to engage in guerrilla warfare against government forces. Sai Lao Hseng added that the latest fighting was the biggest escalation in violence, since the group signed a ceasefire agreement with the government in December 2011. But he insisted that the group would try to maintain the ceasefire agreement until the government formally revoked it. According to local Shan media sources, the Chinese army has deployed troops to its border in response to the influx of refugees. The SSA-S and the Burmese army have reportedly clashed over 50 times since reaching a tentative ceasefire deal in December 2011. But the violence has escalated in the past week, after government troops raided and torched another rebel outpost in Namhkam township, claiming to be searching for four missing Burmese civilians — whom rebels suspect to be military intelligence officers.¹⁰

AMENDING CONSTITUTION 'MOST DIFFICULT IN THE WORLD': SUU KYI

Aung San Suu Kyi called for major amendments to be made to Burma's 2008 Constitution, saying that "the whole process is the most difficult in the world". It's not about blame, it's to solve the problem," said Suu Kyi, who highlighted her three priorities in the country's transition to democracy: upholding of rule of law, protection of ethnic minorities and the amendment of the constitution. The comments came at the conclusion of a three-day workshop on Myanmar's constitutional reform organized by the Sydney Law School in Yangon. Suu Kyi also added that her party and the Union

⁸ Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann addresses meeting to review laws – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-04-30.pdf> (NLM) 30 April 2013/
Electoral Stakeholders Roundtable Meeting held – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-04-27-op.pdf> (NLM) 27 April 2013 (p. 16)

⁹ Committee for scrutinizing the remaining prisoners of conscience reconstituted – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-05-09.pdf> (NLM) 9 May 2013

¹⁰ Burmese army seizes Shan rebel outpost after latest attack – <http://www.dvb.no/news/politics-news/burmese-army-seizes-shan-rebel-outpost-after-latest-attack/28130> (DVB) 10 May 2013

Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) had agreed to work together on drafting the amendments but refrained from giving specific details.

The three-day workshop was attended by a cross section of society including current and former members of the military, leaders of the Union Solidarity and Development Party and representatives from ethnic groups, as well as international jurisprudence experts. A range of views on the future of the military and the nature of federalism in Myanmar were raised at the workshop. However, there was a general agreement that the current constitution has inconsistencies that prevent Myanmar's transition to becoming a prosperous and stable member of the global community. "The principle objective [of the event] was to provide the constitutional tools needed for a transition to democracy and to assist Myanmar in moving towards an enduring democracy," said Andrew McLeod, adjunct lecturer at the Sydney School of Law and one of the event organizers. "Resolving this issue and providing a more effective form of federalism is critical to solving the ethnic tensions that have characterized recent history."¹¹

NIPPON FOUNDATION ISSUES ULTIMATUM TO SHAN STATE ARMY

At a meeting held in Chiangmai on 1 May, the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) stated that it was not involved in the decision of the Nippon Foundation, to issue an ultimatum to the Shan State Army (SSA) 'South'. The Japanese foundation said that unless the SSA joined the UNFC, it would suspend its humanitarian aid to internally displaced populations in SSA-controlled areas. "It was not our policy," said Nai Hong Sa, Secretary General of the 11-party UNFC. "In fact, we had welcomed the Foundation's earlier decision to extend aid to areas under non-UNFC movements." Joint-Secretary Hkun Okker also said that, the right to self-determination of each group must be respected, and similarly the concern of the Nippon Foundation must also be recognised. It is learnt that, the Nippon Foundation, informed the Restoration Council of Shan State / Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA), on 31 March that further aid would be reviewed if it refused to take part in the UNFC activities to which the RCSS/SSA is not a member. The warning came after the first batch of rice, 6,000 bags (303 tons), was delivered, for the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) that have taken refuge with the group. The RCSS/SSA spokesman Maj Lao Hseng said the group's standing principle was that it would join only a state-based (in contrast to organization-based) alliance. "Aid should not be used as a weapon," commented a non-Shan participant at the meeting.¹²

ANALYSIS

The communal riots in Oakkan, Bago Region and the outbreak of fighting between the Burmese Army and Shan State Army (SSA) in recent weeks once again has created uncertainty regarding the on-going reform process in Burma. The violence in Oakkan, similar to those in Rakhine State and Meiktila has seen Buddhists and Muslim communities taking law into their own hands and subsequently ending up into mob violence. The government on its part, has managed to contain the violence on each occasion, but has been unable to find a lasting solution to address the issue. The unrests have created an air of mistrust and animosity between the two communities and will need not only time to heal but more importantly the desire to live in an integrated society. And until such times, the racial divide will remain a major challenge for President Thein Sein. Similarly, the outbreak of fighting in Namkham Township between the Burmese Army and the SSA (South) has casts doubts on the sincerity of the government's desire in achieving peace with ethnic armed

¹¹ Amending constitution 'most difficult in the world': Suu Kyi – <http://mizzima.com/news/politics/9377-amending-constitution-most-difficult-in-the-world-suu-kyi.html> (Mizzima) 10 May 2013/

Aung San Suu Kyi Says Burma to Amend 'World's Most Difficult' Constitution – <http://www.irrawaddy.org/archives/34296> (Irrawaddy) 10 May 2013

¹² Alliance not taking part in Nippon Foundation's warning to Shan of aid suspension: UNFC – http://www.english.panglong.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5392:alliance-not-taking-part-in-nippon-foundations-warning-to-shan-of-aid-suspension-unfc&catid=85:politics&Itemid=266 (S.H.A.N.) 3 May 2013

groups. While a cease-fire agreement between the two sides was signed in December 2011, the latest fighting will not be in the best interest of either parties but create mistrust.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: PRESIDENT THEIN SEIN'S REMARKS ON THE REPORT OF THE RAKHINE INVESTIGATION COMMISSION

The recent reforms carried out by the Government centres on three parallel processes: a peace process that strives to end all ethnic conflicts ongoing since independence and achieve lasting peace; the transformation from military rule to democratic administration; and the replacement of a centralized economic system with a market-oriented economy.

If the entire country works together to successfully implement these reforms, I am convinced— even in the face of many challenges and difficulties— that we will be able to create an open society where all citizens can enjoy equal opportunities to pursue their dreams. Whatever our prospects for a bright future may be, we are still at a sensitive stage in the reform process where there is little room for error; as such, senseless, irrational, reactionary and extremist behaviour and action by some of our citizens may lead to the failure of the reform process itself. I would like to seriously caution you that we, as citizens, must refrain from doing anything that will jeopardize our transition to a peaceful, democratic nation.

The Rakhine Investigation Commission was established in mid-2012 with the intention to systematically uncover the root causes of communal violence in Rakhine State. The Commission released its report to the public on April 29, 2013. The Commission's report has analyzed the issues surrounding communal violence in Rakhine State from various perspectives. The report is comprehensive, pragmatic and forward-looking. I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the dedication and contribution of the Commission members in this effort.

My administration remains determined to resolve the on-going problems in Rakhine State in a systematic and pragmatic manner. It will also undertake all necessary measures to create a harmonious society where all communities can live together peacefully.

In doing so, we must heed lessons from our own history, liberate ourselves from the shackles of past memories and historical mistrust, and look ahead to finding lasting solutions.

Because of our previous inability to institute proper democratic practices and establish an open society, our country has witnessed many armed conflicts, hardships, distrust between various ethnic groups, economic backwardness and underdevelopment.

We are undertaking democratic reforms to remedy these problems. In this democratization process, we must ensure that all citizens are able to enjoy freedom of religion and freedom of speech. In order for religious freedom to prevail, there must be tolerance and mutual respect among the members of different faiths. Only when there is tolerance and mutual respect, will it be possible to coexist peacefully. The government, for its part, will respect and protect the right of all citizens to worship any religion freely. We are all citizens of our beloved Myanmar. As citizens we should take pride in the fact that we are a multiethnic, multi-religious society. Diversity can be strength. As President I am determined to represent every citizen of my country, no matter their ethnicity, religion or social status. I ask all of you, my fellow countrymen, to stand up against hatred and to reach out to those of different belief and backgrounds than yourself. Find the similarities and values you share and build on them. A strong modern Myanmar depends on you and your willingness to let diversity be your strength. Not our weakness.

I also want to comment on the right to free speech, which is the essence of democracy. However, some people abuse this right with speech intended to provoke, cause fear and spread hatred, thereby exacerbating the conflict between different religious communities. We must be mindful that the abuse of certain rights could jeopardize the enjoyment of many other rights.

In our country, Buddhist temples and pagodas, Christian churches, Islamic mosques and Hindu temples exist side by side with each other. Throughout history Myanmar has enjoyed social harmony between members of different ethnic groups.

The failure to pay sufficient attention to the real and perceived root causes of the conflict—ranging from the explosive birth rate, the long shared border between Myanmar and Bangladesh, negative colonial legacy, the economic backwardness in both the Rakhine and Muslim communities—and misportrayal of the conflict in Rakhine State as religious violence between Rakhine and Muslims have made it more difficult to resolve the problems we are facing. Concomitantly, we can also see the negative effect of the misportrayal of communal violence as religious conflict in the outbreak of violence in places like Meiktila and Oakkan.

If we look at the main recommendations put forward by the Rakhine Investigation Commission, the actions that should be taken immediately are the restoration of law and order and the enforcement of rule of law. I, as the president of the country, will do everything in my power to make sure that all security apparatus will cooperate and coordinate with each other to effectively perform the law enforcement duty entrusted to them. I have instructed all security forces to perform the duties entrusted to them without any bias and in accordance with law and public servant code of conduct. Anyone who breaks the law and carries out violence will be prosecuted in accordance with the law in a transparent and accountable manner.

We are also undertaking relief activities to help people who lost their homes and other property during the violence. We will also do everything in our power to provide secure temporary shelters for the internally displaced before the rainy season, to remedy malnutrition among children, to help those traumatized by violence, to prevent epidemics, and to create job opportunities for the people of Rakhine State. We will also swiftly undertake economic development programs in the state. In so doing, we will also be seeking assistance from our international partners.

The government will provide the international aid agencies and international organizations that are engaging in relief activities with the necessary assistance. I want to note that some of the activities undertaken by international relief agencies may have worsened the situation in the conflict affected areas in Rakhine State.

I therefore would like to urge all relief agencies to take into account local sensitivities when planning activities and to try and win the trust and support of both communities. Furthermore, in line with the recommendations of the Rakhine Investigation Commission, the Government will take all necessary security measures to deter illegal immigration. In addition, the Government will deal with the citizenship-related issues by adopting short-, medium and long-term strategies.

The Government will also adopt and implement short-, medium- and long-term plans to create a harmonious society and achieve economic development in Rakhine State. In so doing, the Government will adopt the recommendations of the Rakhine Investigation Commission as the basis for these plans.

However, the Government will also continue to welcome suggestions from civil society and other community groups.

This is a situation that requires time and careful handling. We have to ensure that we do not inadvertently create additional difficulties when we address it. We ask everyone to recognize that this is a complex and sensitive issue that requires wise, careful as well as decisive action.

In order to end conflict and implement reconstruction activities swiftly, the Government has established a Central Committee for Implementation of Stability and Development in Rakhine State (CCISD) on March 23, 2013. In order to implement the policies adopted by the CCISD, the recommendations of the Rakhine Investigation Commission and other necessary actions, the Government has also established seven subcommittees on rule of law, security and law enforcement, immigration and review of citizenship, temporary resettlement and reconstruction, social and economic development and strategic planning on March 29, 2013. I also want to inform you that the Government will provide genuine and decisive leadership in resolving the conflict in Rakhine State in ways that will ensure national security, promote rule of law and protect human rights.

One of the lessons we can take from the Rakhine Investigation Commission is that the defective policies adopted by previous governments have led to human rights violations within our society. Therefore, in resolving all the problems we are facing now, it is time for us to stop casting blame on each other and adopt pragmatic approaches that will help us create a peaceful and harmonious society in Rakhine State.

I would like to conclude by saying that the Government will take all necessary actions to ensure the basic human rights of Muslims in the Rakhine State and to accommodate the needs and expectations of the Rakhine people.¹³

¹³ Whatever our prospects for a bright future may be, we are still at a sensitive stage in the reform process where there is little room for error –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-05-07-op.pdf> (NLM) 7 May 2013 (p. 1 & 8)

APPENDIX B: COMMITTEE FOR SCRUTINIZING THE REMAINING PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE RECONSTITUTED

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
President Office

Notification No.43/2013

13th Waning of Tagu, 1375 ME (8th May, 2013)

The Committee for scrutinizing the remaining prisoners of conscience has been reconstituted with the following representatives from the government ministries, civil society organizations and some political parties shown hereunder. The aim of the committee is to scrutinize and release the remaining prisoners of conscience for ensuring the State's peace and stability, implementing eternal peace-making process, national reconsolidation, all inclusiveness in the political process and turning them into those who contribute to nation-building endeavours in whatever way they can on humanitarian ground realizing the magnanimity of the State.

Sr.	Name	Appointed Portfolio
1.	U Soe Thane, Union Minister, Ministry of President Office (3)	Chairman
2.	Brig-Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Home Affairs	Member
3.	U Tun Tun Oo, Deputy-Attorney General, Office of the Union Attorney-General	Member
4.	U Aung Saw Win, Director-General, Bureau of Special Investigation	Member
5.	U Than Htay, Director-General, Myanmar Correctional Department	Member
6.	U Sit Myaing, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission	Member
7.	U Kyi, Myanmar Red Cross Society	Member
8.	U Hla Maung Shwe, Myanmar Egress	Member
9.	U Bo Kyi, Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP)	Member
10.	U Nyo Tun, Former Political Prisoners Federation	Member
11.	U Ye Aung, Former Political Prisoners Group	Member
12.	U Thura (Zarganar), House of Media Entertainment	Member
13.	U Nyan Win, National League for Democracy	Member
14.	U Khun Tun Oo, Shan Nationalities League for Democracy	Member
15.	U Ko Ko Gyi, 88 Generation (Peace and Open Society)	Member
16.	Dr Win Naing, National Democratic Forces	Member
17.	U Thein Nyunt, New National Democracy Party	Member
18.	U Kaung Myint Htut, Myanmar National Congress Party	Member
19.	U Aung Thein, Deputy Minister, Ministry at President Office (4)	Secretary

Sd/ Thein Sein

President

Republic of the Union of Myanmar¹⁴

¹⁴ Committee for scrutinizing the remaining prisoners of conscience reconstituted – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-05-09.pdf> (NLM) 9 May 2013