

POLITICAL MONITOR NO. 17

OFFICIAL MEDIA

RELIGIOUS CLASHES IN RAKHINE STATE

Due to clashes between Buddhist and Muslim communities in the townships of Maungtaw and Buthidaung in the Rakhine (Arakan) State, a state of curfew was imposed on these areas on 8 June. According to the Ministry of Information's website, the first attacks took place near the town of Taunggoke in Rakhine State on 3 June (Sunday) and were in retaliation for the rape of a Buddhist woman allegedly by a group of Muslims on 28 May. Prior to Sunday's attacks, which left 10 Muslims dead, the group Wunthanu Yeikita Taunggoke distributed leaflets showing a photo of the rape victim which raised tension locally. Due to the outbreak of violence, the government announced a dusk to dawn curfew in the two townships most affected. The President also gave a nationwide address on Sunday 10 June and warned that the violence could threaten democratic reform and appealed for calm and order. In addition, local Muslim organizations also issued statements calling on fellow Muslims to put an end to the violence. The Ministry of Information has also reported on its website that the area had been visited by Defense Minister Lt-Gen Hla Min and other senior government officials, including Rakhine State Chief Minister Hla Maung Tin, Western Regional Commander Brig-Gen Ko Ko Naing and Relief and Relocation Deputy Minister Phone Swe. A 16-man committee headed by the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs has been formed to investigate the recent riots and will submit its findings directly to the President by 30 June 2012. Information posted on the President's official website on 9 June reported that the unrest had ceased though many locals feel that tensions remain high and that it could reignite again.

Unofficial: Early reports according to local media suggest that the violence has claimed seven lives though this remains unconfirmed. The sectarian clashes which took place on 8 June have left many injured and caused damage to property and local businesses.¹

AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER CARR MAKES OFFICIAL VISIT

Australian Foreign Minister Robert Carr arrived in Burma on 6 May as part of a 3-day official visit, during which he called on President U Thein Sein, Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin, and Lower House Speaker Thura Shwe Mann and in Nay Pyi Taw. They discussed a wide range of issues including the further strengthening bilateral relations, the development of education, health and human resources, the conservation of culture heritage sites and providing assistance in the peace-building process. He also met National League for Democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and 88 Generation Student Group member Ko Ko Gyi.²

¹ Riots occur in Maungtaw, Rakhine State / Curfew imposed to restore peace and tranquility of community after controlling all situations – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-09.pdf> (NLM) 9 June 2012 (p. 16) /
Maungdaw, Buthidaung in Rakhine State placed under curfew – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-09.pdf> (NLM) 9 June 2012 (p. 16) /
All Myanmar Islam Association issues statement of its stance – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-09.pdf> (NLM) 9 June 2012 (p. 16) /
All Myanmar Islam Association requests Muslims to keep calm – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-09.pdf> (NLM) 9 June 2012 (p. 16) /
President's address on the situation on Rakhine State racial disturbances – <http://www.president-office.gov.mm/briefing-room/daily-news/news681> (President's Office website) 10 June 2012 /
Killing of 10 Muslims in Taunggoke – http://www.ministryofinformation.gov.mm/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=144:2012-06-04-14-46-43&catid=1:local-news&Itemid=58 (Ministry of Information) 4 June 2012 /
Situation back to normal in Rakhine State – <http://www.president-office.gov.mm/briefing-room/daily-news/news673> (President's Office website) 9 June 2012 /
Tense Calm Returns after Latest Outbreak of Violence in Arakan State – <http://www.irrawaddy.org/archives/6305> (Irrawaddy) 9 June 2012

² President U Thein Sein receives Australian Foreign Minister and party – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-08.pdf> (NLM) 8 June 2012 (p. 1)

Minister Carr announced that Australia would be lifting sanctions imposed on Burma and doubling its aid to around A\$100 million dollars by 2015. As part of the aid package, A\$3 million would be used to promoting human rights activities and A\$5 million dollars to support the peace initiatives in the conflict affected regions in Burma. In a press statement at the end of the visit, Minister Carr stated that tremendous progress had been achieved, and in order to continue the reform process at a robust and serious pace it must be supported through engagement rather than coercive measures. He added that it was important to speak to all those involved in the political process and that Australia respects and underline a condition in foreign policy of Burma that reflects the spirit of the non-aligned movement. He also said that he thinks other nations should show a similar respect for what appears to be a long-term foreign policy stance of Burma, and that there should be no effort to couch events in Burma in terms of American-Chinese strategic competition elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region.³

BURMA & RUSSIA HOLD 6TH BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS IN MOSCOW

The 6th Bilateral Consultation meeting between Russia and Burma was held in Moscow on 29 May. Burmese Deputy Foreign Minister U Maung Myint and the Russian Deputy Minister Igor V Morgulov attended, held frank discussions on cooperation and promoting bilateral relations and also reviewed the existing cooperation programmes between Russia and Burma. The regular consultations are alternately held in the respective capitals.⁴

BRITISH LAWMAKER LORD POWELL VISITS BURMA

House of Lords Member Lord Powell met Lower House Deputy Speaker U Nanda Kyaw Swa in Nay Pyi Taw on 4 June and discussed matters on providing education and economic development and organizational structure of the Burmese parliamentary assemblies. Those present included International Relations Committee Chairman U Hla Myint Oo, Public Accounts Committee Chairman U Thurein Zaw, Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Committee Members U Than Tun and U Khin Maung Soe.

Lord Powell with Professor Harold Goodwin of the Hanns Seidel Foundation also met Minister for Hotels and Tourism and for Sports U Tint Hsan to discuss the promotion of tourism in Burma as well the adoption of a responsible tourism policy.⁵

Union Foreign Affairs Minister meets Australian counterpart –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-08.pdf> (NLM) 8 June 2012 (p. 8)

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann receives Australian FM and party –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-08.pdf> (NLM) 8 June 2012 (p. 16)

³ Australia to lift sanctions against Myanmar –

http://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2012/bc_mr_120607.html (Australian Foreign Ministry) 7 June 2012

Australia to double aid to Myanmar by 2015 –

http://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2012/bc_mr_120607a.html (Australian Foreign Ministry) 7 June 2012

Australia backs Myanmar peace support initiative –

http://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2012/bc_mr_120607c.html (Australian Foreign Ministry) 7 June 2012

Support for rights of the child and human rights in Myanmar –

http://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2012/bc_mr_120607b.html (Australian Foreign Ministry) 7 June 2012

Australia supports preservation of Yangon's urban heritage –

http://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2012/bc_mr_120606a.html (Australian Foreign Ministry) 7 June 2012

Australia invites President Thein Sein and Aung San Suu Kyi to Australia –

http://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2012/bc_mr_120607d.html (Australian Foreign Ministry) 7 June 2012

Transcript of Australian Foreign Minister Carr's Press Conference –

http://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts/2012/bc_tr_120607.html (Australian Foreign Ministry) 7 June 2012

Australian support for education in Myanmar –

http://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/2012/bc_mr_120609.html (Australian Foreign Ministry) 9 June 2012

⁴ Myanmar-Russian hold Foreign Ministries Sixth Bilateral Consultation –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-02.pdf> (NLM) 2 June 2012 (p. 2)

⁵ Dy Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives British lawmaker –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-05.pdf> (NLM) 5 June 2012 (p. 1) /

Britain and Hanns Seidel Foundation to assist in tourism industry development of Myanmar –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-05.pdf> (NLM) 5 June 2012 (p. 8)

ASEAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (AICHR) FINALIZES HUMAN RIGHTS DECLARATION IN YANGON

The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) held its 6th Meeting on the draft ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) in Yangon from 3-6 June and finalized the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, which will be submitted to the 45th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) scheduled to be held in Cambodia in July 2012. The Meeting was chaired by Cambodian Human Rights Committee Member H.E. Dr. Chet Chealy, the Alternate Representative of Cambodia to the AICHR and AICHR Chair.⁶

IDEA INVITES FEMALE MPS FOR STUDY TOUR OF SWEDEN

Under a programme to promote and enhance the role of women in politics and at the invitation of the International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), a delegation of Burmese MPs led by Daw Win Maw Tun, MP and member of the Social Development Committee of the Lower House left for Sweden on 5 June. The delegation includes 14 women MPs from both the Upper and Lower Houses and two government officials. During the tour, the group is to visit the Swedish parliament, and meet with government ministries, agencies and women's networks and organizations.⁷

UNOFFICIAL MEDIA

KNU OFFICIALS GIVE PUBLIC BRIEFINGS ON PEACE TALKS

Karen National Union (KNU) senior officials began a series of public discussions to explain the outcome of their peace talks with the government held in Yangon on 6 April and the 13 resolutions agreed on. The meetings were held in Thandaunggyi Township in Kayin State, which attracted about 800 people from 160 villages on 22 May. KNU representatives, including Taungoo District chairman Phado Saw Awe Wa and Brigade 2 commander Phado Saw De Pho, and government representatives, such as Kayin State Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Christopher and Thandaunggyi township administrator U Thein Win, attended the meetings and replied to the questions from the public. Most questions raised concerned land issues related to resolutions 9, 10 and 11 of the agreement. The KNU said that they had explained the agreement to the public so that they can participate in a strong peace process well informed on what had been agreed upon, including by the troops from both sides. They said that only if the public is aware of the issues being discussed and are able to participate in the peace process will the process be able to bring about peace. Therefore the KNU will continue to make public the outcomes of future meetings.⁸

⁶ ASEAN human rights declaration (draft) completed –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-07.pdf> (NLM) 7 June 2012 (p. 8) /

The Sixth Meeting of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) on the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) –

<http://www.aseansec.org/27029.htm> (ASEAN) 3-6 June 2012

⁷ Female MPs from Burmese parliament visit Sweden –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/MA2012-06-07.pdf> (Myanma Ahlin) 7 June 2012 (p.3)

⁸ KNU holds public talk on peace plans –

<http://www.mmtimes.com/2012/news/628/news62816.html> (Myanmar Times) May 28 - June 3, 2012

ANALYSIS

The current unrest unfolding in Rakhine State is a major challenge for President Thein Sein's reformist government. The issue of 'Rohingyas' or Muslims in Rakhine State is a deep rooted issue, which in the past had been left unresolved as many other crucial issues related to nation building. The recent clashes once again underscore the need for the government to seriously address these sensitive issues in a just and open manner if national reconciliation is to be achieved in Burma. Suppressing or ignoring problems will no longer work. The authorities are trying to restore law and order in Rakhine State and have promised an investigation. But an investigation alone will not resolve the problem. A public discussion on national identity, ethnic identity, citizenship, minority rights, religious freedom and basic human rights should be undertaken as part of peace process now under way. The planned national census could also be used as a forum to discuss these issues. The situation in Rakhine State is complex. While most people see the Muslims as a persecuted minority in Burma, many Buddhist Rakhines are actually minorities within Muslim communities as in Maungdaw and Buditaung, and they need to be protected as well.

The need for national reconciliation was also raised during the meeting between President Thein Sein and Australian Foreign Minister Robert Carr. The Australian government's decision to provide \$5 million to implement peace initiatives in conflict regions underscores the fact that democracy cannot be achieved without peace in the country. Unfortunately, the sectarian violence in Rakhine State could derail the on-going political process if not addressed in the right manner. The authorities will need to adopt a more transparent and open process than in the past. Not only must justice be done but it must be seen to have been done by all parties in the conflict to prove its reform and democratic credentials.

APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Investigation Committee formed
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Union Government
Notification No. 43/2012
2nd Waning of Nayon, 1374 ME
(6 June, 2012)

Formation of Investigation Committee

1. The Government is now marching towards a new democratic society making political and economic reforms in the country. At the same time, it is also educating the people step by step to observe the democratic practices.
2. There occurred organized lawless and anarchic acts that can harm peace, stability and rule of law in Rakhine State in May and June, 2012. The investigation committee comprising the following persons was formed to expose the truth and take legal actions.

a.	Brig-Gen Kyaw Zan Myint	(Deputy Minister, Ministry of Home Affairs)	Chairman
b.	Police Brig-Gen Zaw Win	(Vice-Chief of Myanmar Police Force)	Vice-Chairman
c.	U San Shwe Maung	(Rakhine State Law Officer)	Member
d.	Police Col Myo Swe Win	(Commander of Rakhine State Police Force)	Member
e.	U Kyaw Khin	(Director, Head of Rakhine State Jail Group)	Member
f.	U Aung Myo Kyaw	(Deputy Director, Rakhine State Bureau of Special Investigation)	Member
g.	U Lin Ko Ko	(Sittway District Deputy Commissioner)	Member
h.	U Yan Lin Aung	(Kyaukpyu District Deputy Commissioner)	Member
i.	U Oo Tun Wai	(Thandwe District Deputy Commissioner)	Member
j.	Police Lt-Col Hsan Lwin	(Commander of Sittway District Police Force)	Member
k.	Police Lt-Col San Shwe Maung	(Commander of Kyaukpyu District Police Force)	Member
l.	Police Lt-Col Kyaw Tint	(Commander of Thandwe District Police Force)	Member
m.	U Khin Maung Hla	(Sittway District Law Officer)	Member
n.	U Saw Mra	(Kyaukpyu District Law Officer)	Member
o.	Daw Hla Kyi	(Thandwe District Law Officer)	Member
p.	U Zaw Thein	(Rakhine State Commissioner)	Secretary
3. The Investigation Committee is to probe into the incident in connection with the following matters.
 - a. the cause of the incident
 - b. instigation to cause the incident
 - c. leaders of the organized crime
 - d. offenders
 - e. legal actions after the case
 - f. the Investigation Committee's opinion and
 - g. the Investigation Committee's reviews and suggestions
4. The Investigation Committee must submit the report directly to the President by 30 June, 2012 after making necessary investigation into the case in line with Penal Code and Evidence Act.

By order,
Tin Myo Kyi
Secretary
Union Government⁹

⁹ Investigation Committee formed to probe riots in Rakhine State –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-07.pdf> (NLM) 7 June 2012 (p. 1)

Appendix B:

Government Announcement of curfew in Maungtaw and Buthidaung Townships

Maungtaw, Buthidaung in Rakhine State placed under curfew

NAY PYI TAW, 8 June—Maungtaw Township General Administration Department has imposed a curfew order (1/2012) under Section 144 of Code of Criminal Procedure in Maungtaw, Rakhine State today as riots broke out in the town this afternoon have disrupted the community peace and prevalence of law and order. The following is the translation of the order.

**Township General Administration Department
Maungtaw Township**

Code of Criminal Procedure Section-144

Curfew Order No.1/2012

8 June, 2012

(4th Waning of Nayon, 1374 ME)

General Penal Code No. 1/2012

1. It is hereby announced for the public knowledge on 8 June, 2012. During riots in Maungtaw on 8 June, 2012, houses in wards in Maungtaw were set fire, people were beaten and houses were looted. I believe that gathering of five or more than five people at streets, roads, the main road, lanes, garden (or) public places which are built for the people in Maungtaw to live in peace can cause arson attacks, clashes and lootings again.
2. Therefore, curfew is imposed under Section 144 of Code of Criminal Procedure and five or more than five people shall not gather at roads, streets, the main road, lanes, garden (or) mosques and public schools in municipal area of Maungtaw and not to go outside from 6 pm to 6 am.
3. This order shall take effect until any other order is issued.
4. I sealed and signed and issued this order on 8 June, 2012.

Seal

Township Administrator

Similarly, Buthidaung Township has been placed under curfew. —MNA¹⁰

Appendix C:

Statement issued by All Myanmar Islam Association

All Myanmar Islam Association issues statement of its stance

NAY PYI TAW, 8 June —All Myanmar Islam Association today issued a statement of its stance on the situations happening in Rakhine State. The translation of the announcement is as follows:-

**Republic of the Union of Myanmar
All Myanmar Islam Association**

No. 214 (Government's Religious Cash Assistance Acceptance Committee Office),
Bo Sun Pak Street, Pabedan Township, Yangon
Ph: 388146, 253683, 252608, 241717, 241212, 296134

All Myanmar Islam Association

8 June, 2012

All Myanmar Islam Association has issued a statement of its stance on the situations happening in Rakhine State as follows:-

- a. We condemn the terrorizing and destruction of lives and property of innocent people.
- b. We express deepest sympathy for the loss of lives of innocent people, destruction of public property and those dismayed.
- c. We especially favour the situation in which the public live peacefully within the framework of law.

¹⁰ Maungtaw, Buthidaung in Rakhine State placed under curfew –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-09.pdf> (NLM) 9 June 2012 (p. 16)

- d. The Muslims living across the nation need to live in accordance with the special request made by All Myanmar Islam Association.
- e. We have issued the statement of our stance that government organizations concerned are to take an effective and prompt action against any act that can harm stability of the State and the peaceful living of the people in accord with the law.¹¹

(Al-Haj Maw
Lana Yusof)
Vice-President
Ulama-Islamic
Scholars
Federation

(Al-Haj Nyunt
Maung Shein)
President
Islamic Affairs
Council
Headquarters

(Al-Haj Kyaw
Soe)
Secretary General
Myanmar Malawi
Organization
Headquarters

(Al-Haj Myint Tun)
Chairman
Myanmar Muslim
Youths (Religion)
Organization Ma-
Ma-La
Headquarters

(Kyaw Khin)
General Secretary
Myanmar Muslim
National Affairs
Federation (Ma-
Ah-Pha)
Headquarters

Appendix D:

All Myanmar Islam Association requests Muslims to keep calm

NAY PYI TAW, 8 June—All Myanmar Islam Association has issued a letter of request asking Muslims to keep calm in line with Islamic teachings.

The following is the translation of the request to the Muslims.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

All Myanmar Islam Association

No. 214 (Government's Religious Cash Assistance Acceptance Committee Office)

Bo Sun Pak Street, Pabedan Township, Yangon

Ph: 388146, 253683, 252608, 241717, 241212, 296134

8 June, 2012

Request to Muslims

There have been different views among the people concerning the news reporting on the newspapers issued on 5 June, 2012.

With regard to this, All Myanmar Islam Association has issued a statement which it submitted to responsible organizations concerned seeking for peaceful resolution within the framework of law.

Thus, Muslims are requested in all seriousness to live in tranquility in accordance with Islamic teachings, avoiding expression of wishes in groups.¹²

(Al-Haj Maw
Lana Yusof)
Vice-President
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Secretary General
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Organization
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(Al-Haj Myint Tun)
Chairman
Myanmar Muslim
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Organization Ma-
Ma-La
Headquarters

(Kyaw Khin)
General Secretary
Myanmar Muslim
National Affairs
Federation (Ma-
Ah-Pha)
Headquarters

¹¹ All Myanmar Islam Association issues statement of its stance –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-09.pdf> (NLM) 9 June 2012 (p. 16)

¹² All Myanmar Islam Association requests Muslims to keep calm –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-09.pdf> (NLM) 9 June 2012 (p. 16)