

POLITICAL MONITOR NO.4

OFFICIAL MEDIA

DEFENCE SERVICES COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF VISITS LAOS AND INDONESIA

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing led a defence services goodwill delegation to the Lao People's Republic and Indonesia from 14 to 20 February.

The Burmese Commander-in-Chief held two separate meetings with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence of Laos People's Democratic Republic Lieutenant General Douangchay Pichith on 14 February and Laotian President Choummaly Sayasone on 15 February. In their official talks, the two sides stressed the need to enhance amity and friendship between the two armed forces and countries. They also called for border cooperation in handling border issues and the completion of the Burma-Laos Friendship Bridge by March 2015.

In Jakarta, Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing called on Commander-in-Chief of Indonesian National Defence Forces Gen Dr. Moeldoko on 17 February, who expressed his belief that Burma will be able to successfully hold meetings on ASEAN armed forces in March and May, saying both countries have good relations and both are members of Nonalignment movement. C-in-C Min Aung Hlaing stated that the visit to Indonesia is the first-ever visit for him as a military chief and is aimed at strengthening amity and friendship between the two armed forces.

C-in-C Min Aung Hlaing also met the Indonesian Minister for Defence Prof. Dr. Purnomo Yusgiantoro and discussed the on-going democratization and national reconciliation process in Burma and Yusgiantoro reaffirmed his attendance to the upcoming ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting to be held in Burma later this year.¹

INVESTIGATION COMMISSION TOURS DUCHEERTAN VILLAGE IN RAKHINE STATE

The Burma Red Cross Society Chairman Dr. Tha Hla Shwe and the Investigation Commission tasked with probing the recent communal unrests in Ducheertan village, visited Maungtau Township in Rakhine State from 15 to 21 February. They met locals from both Bengali and Rakhine communities in visited Ducheertan, Khayaymyaing and the Kinchaung villages and held meetings with personnel from UN agencies and officials from local and foreign social organizations. The commission members also investigated the killing of Police Sgt Aung Kyaw Thein who was murdered at the village of Ducheertan (middle) on 13 February and visited the Kinchaung cemetery to look for clues with the aid of legal and forensic experts. Similarly, a team from the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) comprising the Secretary and three members visited Sittway and Maungtau Townships and made a tour of Ducheertan Village-tract from 30 January to 3 February 2014, in order to investigate the news reports on the incident that had occurred at Ducheertan. Upon its return, the National Human Rights Commission issued a statement regarding its findings on the

¹ Myanmar, Laos vow border cooperation in the areas of combating illegal armed groups, illicit trade & human trafficking – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-15.pdf> (NLM) 15 February 2014 (p.16) / Myanmar, Laos to strengthen friendship and amity – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-16.pdf> (NLM) 16 February 2014 (p.1 & 9) / Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visits Laungprabang Province in Lao PDR – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-17.pdf> (NLM) 17 February 2014 (p. 1) / Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with Indonesian armed forces chief – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-18-red.pdf> (NLM) 18 February 2014 (p. 9) / Myanmar, Indonesia to bolster ties between the two nations, the two armed forces – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-19.pdf> (NLM) 19 February 2014 (p.16 & 9)

recent communal unrests. (Please see Appendix A for full text of the statement issued by the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC).²

UN HUMAN RIGHTS ENVOY MEETS GOVERNMENT MINISTERS

The UN's Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Tomas Ojea Quintana visited Burma from 14 to 19 February, where he called on government ministers, the Deputy Speaker of the Upper House, the Election Commission Chairman and leaders from civil society organisations.

They discussed election matters, potentials to by-election and activities of election commission, legal affairs and human rights. Further discussions on matters related to media, amendment of the Constitution, progress of both communities in Rakhine State and its issues of peace and stability and rehabilitation tasks, issues of political prisoners, confiscated farmlands, internal peace-making process, ceasefire, uplifting of socioeconomic status of internally displaced persons, taking census process, enacting and amending laws of education and health.

Quintana also visited Kachin State, Letpandantaung Copper Mine and Thilawa Special Economic Zone Project. In his meeting with the Chief Minister of Kachin State La John Ngan Hsai on 16 February, he asked about measures being taken for acquisition of humanitarian assistance for relief camps and matters related to political prisoners and also met responsible personnel from the KIO Liaison Office in Sitapu ward in Myitkyina.³

HLUTTAW SESSIONS – Highlights

Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) sessions

The 9th Regular Session of the First Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) held its 16th day meeting on 19 February. At the session, the following issues and questions were raised and discussed:

- MP Thein Tun Oo of Amarapura constituency asked **if action would be taken against licensed companies and private money lenders who lend money to borrowers with high interest rate and if investigation would be carried out into their business whether they are in conformity with the microfinance rules** at Pyithu Hluttaw on 19 February. Deputy Minister for Finance Dr Lin Aung replied **that if the ministry finds out malpractices in their business, actions would be taken against them under the Microfinance Law;**
- Dr Nay Lin of Seikkan constituency asked **if the government has a plan to implement the health insurance system for the people.** Deputy Minister for Health Dr Than Aung replied **that the Ministry of Finance has a plan to establish the public health insurance systems, including the system for well-to-do people by contributing premium to the system;**

² Investigation Commission on inspection tour for exposing true incident of Ducheertan Village –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-17.pdf> (NLM) 17 February 2014 (p.16)/

Investigation commission continues probe into Ducheertan Village conflict –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-18-red.pdf> (NLM) 18 February 2014 (p.16 & 9) /

Investigation Commission makes inspection tour of Maungtau for Ducheeratan incident –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-21.pdf> (NLM) 21 February 2014 (p. 16) /

Statement No. (2/2014) of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission regarding findings of Commission Team from its investigation of the incident at Ducheeratan village-tract –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-15.pdf> (NLM) 15 February 2014 (p. 9)

³ Special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar arrives in Yangon –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-14.pdf> (NLM) 14 February 2014 (p.9) /

Special Rapporteur visits Central Prison, Thilawa Sez, Myitkyina –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-17.pdf> (NLM) 17 February 2014 (p.16) /

Mr Quintana holds separate talks with UEC chairman, Union ministers –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-19.pdf> (NLM) 19 February 2014 (p.16 & 9)

- The Bill Committee submitted a report on the Bill Amending the Peaceful Gathering and Procession Law. The Bill Amending the Highways Act and the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Bill were also discussed at the meeting.⁴

Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) sessions

The 9th Regular Session of the First Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) held its 14th day meeting on 17 February. At the session, the following issues and questions were raised and discussed:

- Deputy Minister for Transport U Han Sein welcomed entrepreneurs' interest to develop inland water transport on the River Thanlwin, saying that plans are underway to conduct a feasibility study for water transport along the river by the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems;
- The session also approved the Consumer Protection Bill sent back by Pyithu Hluttaw with its amendments.⁵

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Parliament) sessions

The 9th Regular Session of the First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Parliament) held its 15th day meeting on 20 February. During the session, discussions were focussed on land grabbing issues which occurred during the times of the current and past governments.

- Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun clarified the implementing of the report section 1, 2 and 3 of the Investigation Commission, saying that Ministry of Defence had received only 565 cases related to battalions and regiments and not received 2,192 cases presented by MPs;
- On land grab issues, the President's Office has given guidelines to Ministry of Defence not to ask tenant farmers to grow crops on land grabbed by battalions and regiments, to manage the minimum area required for the security and training groups, to use the land that is actually required for the battalions and regiments and to give back the remaining land to farmers;
- The Central Committee for managing and settling land grab and land utilization led by Vice-President U Nyan Tun was formed on 16 September 2013;
- According to the Investigation Commission formed by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, there are a total of 745 cases of land grabbing issues, comprising 512,204,701 acres. All 745 cases occurred during the 5 decades of successive governments implemented projects in the interests of the country and the people in accordance with the rules and regulations;
- The ministries who managed the land and implemented projects in 5 decades include the Ministry of Home Affairs, Agriculture and Irrigation, Environmental Conservation and Forestry, Mines, Construction, Transport as well as the Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay Development Committee, the deputy minister said;
- In addressing the land disputes the decision of Region/State Farmland Management Committee is final. Land dispute over the ownership, a verdict shall be made by the Ward/Village Committee within 15 days after opening the case. A letter of complaint can be submitted to the Township Committee within 30 days and a verdict shall be made within 30 days after receiving the complaint. The district committee has to give its verdict within 30 days and complaint can be made within 60 days. The Region/State Committee

⁴ K 672 million sought in Parliament to conserve Mrauk-U cultural heritage zone in 2014-2015 FY – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-20.pdf> (NLM) 20 February 2014 (p. 16 & 9)

⁵ Region/State government's recommendation needed to postpone repayment period on agriculture loans of pest-stricken farmers – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-18-red.pdf> (NLM) 18 February 2014 (p. 9)

will decide the case within 60 days after receiving it. So, the case will last 135 days before reaching a final decision;

- **The Central Committee has coordinated with the respective Region/State/Nay Pyi Taw Committees and the Union ministers for the settlement of 745 land disputes up to 14 February, 2014;**
- **Currently a total area of 332,894.723 acres in 358 cases as the handover of these lands have is being carried out in accord with the law with compensations have been awarded for a total area of 1,698.98 acres in five cases;**
- **Regarding the lands disputed with private entrepreneurs, those concerned have been informed to seek legal advice. So far 688 of 745 cases have been settled up to 14 February;**
- **Compensation for the seized lands will be included in the Union Budget for 2014-2015 FY and that a total of 3387 letters of complaints has been sent by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to the Union government;**
- **The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw has sent complaint letters to the Ministry of Defence and region/state government directly without the Union government's knowledge and that issues on land grabbing cannot be settled as soon as possible;**
- **The respective Union ministries and committees are scrutinizing the complaint letters under the supervision of the central committee led by the Vice-President.⁶**

UNOFFICIAL MEDIA

NEW GROUP TO ENSHRINE MOTHER LANGUAGES IN EDUCATION

Burma's ethnic groups have established an education network organization to preserve and protect ethnic minority languages in the country. The organization, the Myanmar Indigenous Network for Education (MINE), was launched on 21 February, to coincide with International Mother Language Day.

Saw Kapi, a spokesperson for the group said, "MINE is an exciting development for us. We have struggled for our language and cultural rights for so long and without success. Now with MINE we have the support of our other indigenous brothers and sisters." A recent seminar hosted by the Karen Teacher Working Group (KTWG) was attended by ethnic leaders from 22 organizations representing 12 ethnic groups.

"The recognition of our language and cultural rights is important to us, and is also essential if there is going to be peace and stability in Burma," Saw Kapi added. According to the MINE media statement, the group would pursue a "multilingual language policy for the Union" which would include English and Burmese. Saw Kapi said that learning more than one language would promote a better-educated generation of young people.

The KTWG Chairperson, Naw Ler Htu, stressed that it was vital for Burma's future to enshrine ethnic minority languages. "With MINE, we can share our experiences and work together across different indigenous groups. We will work together to advocate for culturally appropriate education for our children. Most importantly, schooling for our children in their own languages." Naw Ler Htu said.

Currently, government policy does not allow for the learning of a mother tongue or use of a mother tongue in the delivery of government services, including education, the MINE statement said.

"Our aim is to ensure that indigenous school children have the right to mother tongue education and to establish a multilingual education system in our country, where diverse ethnic nationalities co-exist," Saw Kapi concluded.⁷

⁶ 745 land grabbing cases happened in 5 decades as successive governments implemented projects in interests of country and people in accordance with rules, regulations – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-21.pdf> (NLM) 21 February 2014 (p. 1 & 8)

POLITICAL PRISONER GROUP DEMANDS MEETING ON REMAINING DETAINEES

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners has sent a letter to President Thein Sein demanding the immediate resumption of meetings with the Remaining Political Prisoners Scrutiny Committee (RPPSC).

According to the Joint General-Secretary of the AAPP Bo Kyi, "It has been a long time. We haven't had an opportunity to resume meetings, and for no apparent reason. A committee meeting is urgently needed. Political prisoners still remain in jail, and so we must discuss the immediate release of the political prisoners who remain. This matter is related to the prestige of the country. But the fact that the President's Office has yet to reply to the RPPSC is quite disappointing." Bo Kyi added that the RPPSC could resume meetings as soon as possible this month.

He also added that released political prisoners face violations of their human rights or citizen's rights after being released and it is necessary to send evidence of abuses to the concerned associations so that they can inform the public and the international community.

The RPPSC is planning to discuss the issue of amending Section 18 because some are still being charged under it. That part of the law is not acceptable at all, said Buddhist monk Bhadanta Yekkhavamsa. "I was charged under Section 18 because of my solo protest to release political prisoners. My peaceful solo protest had no effect on anyone," he said.

Asked if he thought the meetings of the RPPSC had been deliberately halted, Bo Kyi said he did not think so. Minister for the President Office Soe Thein had said that the RPPSC needed to continue its work in order to solve further problems and both the government and the group had agreed to holding monthly meetings.

Although the president promised to release all political prisoners at the end of 2013, there are still those who remain incarcerated as political prisoners, said Bo Kyi. "He [Thein Sein] didn't keep his word. So we are continuing our efforts on behalf of those political prisoners still being incarcerated and charged under Section 18, and to make this known to the international community."⁸

FOR NATIONAL RACES AFFAIRS MINISTERS TO LIAISE DIRECTLY WITH UNION GOVT

President Thein Sein promised that ministers for national races affairs would be able to communicate directly with the Union government to work for the people. He indicated during his recent exclusive meeting with them on 11 February that they could work closely with President's Office Minister Hla Tun, Border Affairs Minister Lt. Gn. Thet Naing Win, and Livestock Breeding, Fisheries and Rural Development Minister Ohn Myint.

Three Chief Ministers for Chin Affairs - Salai Ko Ko Naing from Arakan State, No Than Kap from Sagaing, and Salai Hla Tun from Magwe Regions - also attended the meeting.

No Than Kap said: "We, Chief Ministers for Chin Affairs, don't have to go through State/Region government or State/Region Chief Minister but will be able to keep in direct contact with Union ministers regarding our work including development and other issues." "They [Union ministers] will

⁷ New Group to Enshrine Mother Languages in Education –
<http://karennews.org/2014/02/new-group-to-enshrine-mother-languages-in-education.html/> (Karen News) 21 February 2014 /

Pan-Ethnic Network Launches to Promote Multilingual Education in Burma –
<http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/pan-ethnic-network-launches-promote-multilingual-education-burma.html>
(Irrawaddy) 21 February 2014

⁸ Political prisoner group demands meeting on remaining detainees –
http://elevenmyanmar.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5089:political-prisoners-group-demands-meeting-on-remaining-detainees&catid=32:politics&Itemid=354 (Eleven News Media) 17 February 2014

provide necessary responses and assistance to our proposals and needs," added the Sagaing Chin Affairs Minister.

According to the President's Office website, Thein Sein said that he had invited ministers for national races affairs to the meeting for making 'collaborative efforts in implementing the political, economic and administrative reform process' in the country. Some say that the meeting was mere window dressing displaying a 'fake' unity while others wonder if this is likely to work in reality to benefit the people.

Currently there are 29 National Affairs Ministers, 1 in Arakan (Rakhine), 4 in Kachin, 3 in Karen, 1 in Karenni, 3 in Mon, and 7 in Shan States, and 2 in Irrawaddy, 1 in Magwe, 1 in Mandalay, 1 in Pegu, 2 in Rangoon, 2 in Sagaing, and 1 in Tenasserim Regions.⁹

PRESIDENT ASKED TO EXPEL MSF FROM RAKHINE STATE

Rakhine State residents sent a petition on 15 February to President Thein Sein urging him to expel the humanitarian aid group Medicins Sans Frontiers (MSF / Doctors without Borders). The President has been asked to expel MSF from the state by the end of the month because Rakhine people were dissatisfied with its work, said the chair of the Rakhine Women's Network, Daw Nyo Aye.

The demand follows a series of protests held in big towns in Rakhine State since 3 February at which Burmese and foreign non-government organizations were accused of showing discrimination in providing assistance to victims of communal violence. The protests had also demanded that all NGOs leave the state within a week.

The decision to write to the President to seek the expulsion of MSF had come after no NGOs left the state, Daw Nyo Aye said. "MSF wrongly reported after the incident in Du Chee Yar Tan village [in early January] that it treated 22 people for injuries, which was a fabrication aimed at creating trouble," she said. "They don't want to help; it's clear they have other purposes and that's why we decided to write to the President."

A spokesperson for MSF, Daw Aye Pyi Sone, confirmed that it had treated 22 people for injuries after the Du Chee Yar Tan village incident and expressed regret that the NGOs role, of providing medical assistance, had been misunderstood. "We have never released information aimed at causing trouble; we reported what we have done to the Rakhine State Ministry of Health as well as to the media," said Daw Pyi Sone. "We have been impartial wherever we work and we have been providing medical assistance in some of the most difficult places in the world for 40 years," she said of MSF, which was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 1999 in recognition of its "pioneering humanitarian work on several continents".

Rakhine State government spokesperson Win Myaing said that the Memorandum of Understanding under which MSF operated in the state is believed to have expired and the Ministry of Health was verifying its legal status. MSF is reported to be negotiating with the Union Government for an extension of its MOU to operate in Rakhine State.

MSF has been working in Burma since 1992 and has provided medical assistance in Rakhine, Kachin and Shan states and Yangon and Tanintharyi Regions. Since communal arrest erupted in Rakhine

⁹ Ministers for national races affairs to liaise directly with Union govt – <http://chinlandguardian.com/index.php/national-news/item/2113-ministers-for-national-races-affairs-to-liaise-directly-with-union-govt> (Chinland Guardian) 19 February 2014

State in June 2012, MSF is reported to have opened clinics in the state capital, Sittwe, and in 8 other townships.¹⁰

ANALYSIS

The visit by the Investigation Commission to probe the recent outbreak of violence in Ducheertan village between the Rohingya and Rakhine communities once again raises questions about the authorities' ability to maintain law and order. While the Commission's formation and its mandate may be following normal democratic practices, its existence will become irrelevant if it fails to bring justice to the perpetrators and in preventing future outbreaks of violence.

The government's responses to recent and past communal clashes has been slow, but, more importantly, it has not taken not enough action against instigators and to promote reconciliation between the two communities. The mere formation of commissions and compiling of reports and recommendations will not be enough to solve the deep-rooted communal conflicts prevailing in Burma. The government will also need to consult with other key political leaders in reaching and implementing decisive decisions in resolving the conflicts. Community, religious leaders and civil society organisations at all levels also have a role to play in defusing tension and promoting peace. And in the absence of such measures it is likely that similar outbreaks of violence will reoccur.

¹⁰ President asked to expel MSF from Rakhine State – <http://mizzima.com/mizzima-news/myanmar/item/10916-president-asked-to-expel-msf-from-rakhine-state> (Mizzima) 17 February 2014

APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Statement by the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission regarding its Findings of the Incident in Ducheeratan Village-Tract, Rakhine State

1. A team from the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) comprising the Secretary and three members visited Sittway and Maungtaw Townships and made a tour of Ducheeratan Village-tract from 30 January to 3 February 2014, in order to investigate the news reports on the incident that had occurred at Ducheeratan middle village.
2. During the trip, the Commission Team carried out the following activities with regard to:
 - (a) the news of the killing of 8 Bengalis,
 - (b) the news of 40 Bengalis killed in the police shooting in connection with the attack on the police patrol team by a group of Bengalis from Ducheeratan middle village on the night 13 January, and
 - (c) the Internet news that Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF) treated 22 patients wounded in the abovementioned shooting;
 - met and had discussions with some Ministers of the Rakhine State on 30 January and 3 February 2014 and took statements from the relevant responsible officials;
 - took statements from officials concerned, including three high-ranking police officials, District Administrator and also from the Administrator of Kinchaung village, some villagers, and four detainees being remanded and under investigation at the Maungtaw Police Station;
 - interrogated both male and female villagers from Ducheeratan middle village and surrounding Bengali villages and took statements from them;
 - met with about 20 village elders and Islamic religious leaders from the Ducheeratan village-tract at the primary school of Ducheeratan middle village and verified with them the news of the killing of 8 and 40 Bengalis;
 - met with over 200 women from Ducheeratan middle village and heard and noted their complaints on the Ducheeratan incident and took statements from some of them had discussions with the representatives of UNHCR, UNOCHA and Medicine Sans Frontiers (MSF);
 - had discussions with Rakhine town elders of Maungtaw Township;
 - had discussions with Islamic religious leaders and elders of Maungtaw Township;
 - conducted an inspection tour of Ducheeratan villages, including Ducheeratan west village where a fire broke out on 28 January 2014;
 - inspected the former cemetery of Khayay Myaing village.
3. The following are the facts found out by the Commission Team from the above-mentioned activities.
 - (a) The news report that 8 Bengalis were killed on 9 January 2014 was not known in Khayay Myaing and Kinchaung villages where Rakhine nationals live. However, this news was rumoured in Ducheeratan middle village and other villages where Bengalis reside.
 - (b) Although the information that a woodcutter discovered 8 Bengalis buried at the Khayay Myaing cemetery emerged in Ducheeratan Bengali villages, no evidence was detected to confirm this information.

- (c) On interrogation, it was found that Rakhine nationals obtained this information as Internet news.
 - (d) Neither in meeting with the elders and religious leaders of the Ducheeratan village tract nor in meeting with over 200 women of Ducheeratan middle village, mention was made by any of them of this information.
 - (e) Different news versions of the killing of 8 Bengalis could not be confirmed.
 - (f) It was known that some army and police forces entered Ducheeratan villages to search for police sergeant Aung Kyaw Thein after the incident at Ducheeratan middle village on the night of 13 January 2014.
 - (g) Regarding the killing of 40 Bengalis from Ducheeratan village, the Commission Team took statements from the departmental officials concerned, high ranking police officials and policemen, responsible persons from the villages concerned, Bengali elders and women from Ducheeratan villages. These statements, however, contained no information that substantiates the alleged news of killings.
 - (h) Although the Commission Team urged Bengali religious leaders and women to frankly come forth with their views, no proof was discovered to confirm the alleged news.
 - (i) The Commission Team observed that the statements made by Bengali villagers did not contain any information on the attack by villagers on the police patrol commanded by police sergeant Aung Kyaw Thein.
 - (j) Discrepancies were noted in the news on the alleged killings of Bengalis. For example, it was reported that over 100 people were killed during the police shooting on 13 January 2014 while the news that a list of 52 people killed given to the Human Rights Commission was found to be incorrect. In fact, such a list was not given to the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission.
4. In the discussion with MSF, it was stated by MSF that 22 people which included 1 person with gunshot wound, 4 people with swellings, 10 people with cuts and bruises and 7 emotionally upset people, were treated by them. However, MSF did not provide the patients' names and identities to the Commission Team as it keeps the patients list as confidential due to the humanitarian nature of its work. MSF also stated that they did not report the case of gunshot wound either to the police to the government health department and that it merely urged the patient to continue his treatment at a government clinic. According to the township medical officer, no government clinic in Maungtaw received any patient with gunshot wound. However, as a result of the investigations by District Administrator and Township Medical Officer, it was also learnt from two doctors of the MSF that their clinics did not treat any such patients.
5. The Commission Team discussed its findings with other members of the Commission on 5 February 2014 and reaches the following conclusions and recommendations:
- The news of the killing of 8 Bengalis and 40 Bengalis did not emerge in the Ducheeratan village-tract and it is therefore concluded that the said news is unverifiable and unconfirmed;
 - The government departments and organizations concerned delayed in issuing the news on the true situation regarding the incident at Ducheeratan middle village and this delay gave rise to the spread of rumours and unsubstantiated news;
 - The Commission concludes that the attempt of the 3 policemen to stop the attack of a group of Bengali villagers failed due to defective ammunition and led to a confused situation that finally resulted in the disappearance of the police sergeant Aung Kyaw

Thein. It is recommended that necessary steps should be taken to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future;

- The villagers from Ducheeratan east and middle villages fled on 13 January 2014 and as a result, the looting of their possessions, rice stocks and cattle must have occurred during the ensuing commotion. It is therefore recommended that steps should be taken urgently to provide food and other basic needs to the two villages in question;
- In view of the continued tensions and concerns among the villages involved in the Ducheeratan incident, special security arrangements should be initiated as a matter of priority to prevent further issues from emerging again in those areas.¹¹

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

Date: 14 February 2014

YANGON

¹¹ Statement No. (2/2014) of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission regarding findings of Commission Team from its investigation of the incident at Ducheeratan village-tract – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs17/NLM2014-02-15.pdf> (NLM) 15 February 2014 (p. 9)