

POLITICAL MONITOR NO. 18

OFFICIAL MEDIA

GOVERNMENT & KAYINNI NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE PARTY (KNPP) HOLD UNION LEVEL PEACE TALKS, SIGN AGREEMENT

The government's peace negotiating team and Kayinni National Progressive Party (KNPP) met for peace talks in Loikaw, Kayah State 9 June, where they cordially discussed the 20 points submitted at the State level meeting in March and signed the agreements for external peace. The talks were attended by Union Peace-making committee Vice Chairman U Aung Min and members of the government peace-making team, and the KNPP was represented by Secretary-1 U Khu Oo Yal, Secretary-2 U Aung San Myint, and KNPP Chief of Staff Major General Bi Htoo.¹

PRESIDENT MEETS MEMBERS OF INT'L PEACE DONOR SUPPORT GROUP, PDSG PLEDGES MASSIVE FUNDING

President U Thein Sein as Chairman of the Union Peace-making Central Committee received a delegation from the Peace Donor Support Group (PDSG) coordinators representing Norway, the United Nations, Australia, Britain, the World Bank and the European Union on 12 June. The President highlighted that the government is making efforts to foster peace and stability as well as to promote economic development, and that at such an important juncture, international assistance is critically needed to implement these efforts successfully. The President requested the PDSG members to share their experiences and technical know-how and to cooperate with the government in peace-making process. The PDSG representatives announced a total of nearly US\$ 500 million to support the peace-building process and other projects.²

Unofficial: According to the president's office website, the bulk of the funding will come from the UK and the EU, which will give US\$300 million and €150 million (\$187 million), respectively.³

RAKHINE STATE: BORDER AFFAIRS MINISTER, UN BURMA ENVOY & ISLAMIC LEADERS VISIT AREAS & REFUGEES AFFECTED BY SECTARIAN VIOLENCE

Minister for Border Affairs Thein Htay, accompanied by U.N. Burma envoy Vijay Nambiar and Islamic leaders, visited Maungtau in Rakhine State on 14 June and met people whose homes were destroyed in the recent sectarian unrest. The Minister said to the refugees that the government would provide assistance to displaced people to rebuild their homes and implement measures to restore peace and stability in the region. He also said that action would be taken against those who caused the riots and violence. Nambiar also announced that the UN would work in cooperation with the government to provide relief and aid to those affected by the unrest. During the unrest from 8 to 11 June, 21 people have been killed, 21 injured and a total of 1,662 houses burnt down.⁴

¹ Union Peace-making Work Committee, KNPP Peace-Making Group hold Union level peace talk – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-11.pdf> (NLM) 11 June 2012 (p. 2)

² Modest goal of government, eternal peace and equality under same law / EU urged to fully lift economic sanctions like Norway and Australia, hoping that it would finally be lifted soon – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 June 2012 (p. 1 & 8)

³ International Donors Pledge Massive Funding for Burma - <http://www.irrawaddy.org/?slide=international-donors-pledge-massive-funding-for-burma> (Irrawaddy) 13 June 2012

⁴ Union Minister for Border Affairs and for MID visits refugee camps in Rakhine State <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-15.pdf> (NLM) 15 June 2012 (p. 1 & 9) / Lt-Gen Hla Min and party meet Islam towns-elders from wards, villages of Sittway Township <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 June 2012 (p. 8) / Security force trying to bring peace and stability to Rakhine State. Action taken against mobs to prevent arson attacks, clashes – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 June 2012 (p. 9) / Lt-Gen Hla Min encourages victims of West Model Village in Sittway Township –

Unofficial: According China's Xinhua news agency, the recent sectarian violence in Rakhine State has left 29 people dead and 38 injured. Among the dead, 13 were Rakhine and 16 Muslim; 16 of the injured were Rakhine and the other 22 Muslim. 37 camps have been opened in Rakhine State to accommodate the 31,884 refugee - 14 camps are located in Yadae Taung, 4 in Ponnagyun and 2 in Pauktaw. Due the unrest 9 Buddhist monasteries, 7 Muslim mosques and a school as well as 2,528 residential houses across the state were burned down.⁵

PARLIAMENTARY SESSIONS TO RECONVENE ON 4 JULY

The state-run media reported on 12 June that the 4th Regular Sessions of the Pyidaungsu (Union), Amyotha (Upper House) and Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) will be reconvened on 4 July in Nay Pyi Taw. The upcoming parliamentary sessions are expected to deal with the crisis in Rakhine State and will be the first time NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi takes her seat as a Lower House MP.⁶ (*Please see Annexes A, B and C for the full text of the announcements*).

UNOFFICIAL MEDIA

AUNG SAN SUU KYI BEGINS LANDMARK TRIP TO EUROPE

Aung San Suu Kyi embarked her first European trip in 24 years on 13 June that will include her formal acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize in Norway. The hugely popular Nobel Peace laureate will visit five countries - Switzerland, Norway, Britain, Ireland and France - on a 17-day tour almost certain to wrest the international spotlight away from the astonishing reforms by Burma's once-vilified leaders. She addressed the annual International Labor Organization (ILO) conference in Geneva on 14 June, where she called for "democracy friendly" investment and a political settlement to end ethnic bloodshed. The ILO also announced that it would remove restrictions on assistance (GSP restrictions) in place since 1999 that are part of punitive measures the EU has cited to block Burma from receiving preferential market access. Burma and the ILO agreed on a strategy to eliminate forced labor before 2015, according to a statement.

In Oslo she will deliver a long-awaited acceptance speech for the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize, which she was unable to accept due to her detention. In London she will address both houses of parliament, and she will return to Oxford University, which she attended in the 1970s, to receive an honorary doctorate. In Dublin, she will receive an award from Amnesty International, which has arranged a concert for her which will include Bono. This will be her second trip abroad, which follows a recent five-day visit to Thailand where she attended the World Economic Forum (WEF). The newly-elected lawmaker is expected to return to Burma in time for the 4 July reconvening of parliament, which is set to consider crucial legislation, including laws on media regulation and foreign investment.⁷

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 June 2012 (p. 10) /

Cash, foodstuff donated to victims in Rakhine State –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 June 2012 (p. 10) /

Aids for rehabilitation of local people who lost their properties in Rakhine State requested –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-12.pdf> (NLM) 12 June 2012 (p. 16)

⁵ 31,844 displaced refugees in Burma's Rakhine State: minister –

<http://www.mizzima.com/news/inside-burma/7325-31844-displaced-refugees-in-burmas-rakhine-state-minister.html> (Mizzima) 15 June 2012

⁶ Fourth Regular Session of First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw summoned

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 June 2012 (p. 16) /

Fourth Regular Session of First Pyithu Hluttaw summoned –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 June 2012 (p. 16) /

Fourth Regular Session of First Amyotha Hluttaw summoned –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 June 2012 (p. 16)

⁷ Aung San Suu Kyi Departs on Landmark Trip to Europe

<http://www.voanews.com/content/aungsan-suu-kyi-departs-on-landmark-trip-to-europe/1208153.html> (VOA) 13 June 2012 /

Suu Kyi set to steal Myanmar spotlight on Euro tour -

<http://news.yahoo.com/suu-kyi-set-steal-myanmar-spotlight-euro-tour-091653064.html> (Reuters) 13 June 2012 /

MUSLIM AND ARAKAN LEADERS MEET US EMBASSY OFFICIALS

Burmese Muslim and Arakan community leaders met officials from the US embassy in Rangoon on 14 June and held talks on the recent riots that erupted in the Rakhine State. Chairman of the Myanmar Muslim Youths Myint Htun said the US embassy hosted talks with his group as well as members from the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party (RNDP) separately to inquire about the on-going unrest. The discussions focused on the situation of refugees in Sittwe and Maungdaw as well providing food and aid to those affected. The US State Department has also issued a warning to US nationals to avoid travelling to the Rakhine as well as to the Kachin State, where there is on-going conflict between government forces and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA).⁸

ANALYSIS

The situation in Burma's western state of Rakhine remains tense and volatile, with more than 30,000 people left homeless as a result of the sectarian clashes. The government's efforts to restore law and order in Rakhine State by declaring a curfew has helped to ease the tensions though many feel that this will not be enough to prevent further outbreaks of violence. The unrest comes at a time when the national reconciliation process is entering a crucial stage and at such a critical juncture the unrest in Rakhine State could become a major setback for President Thein Sein's 15-month old government. The attempts by the President to introduce reforms have at times been seen as smooth and has seen liberal laws for greater press freedom, the release of political prisoners and opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi returning to politics. However, the recent unrest has now led to some even thinking of the unthinkable, the possibility of a military intervention to put an end to the sectarian violence in Rakhine State. At such a time, confidence by the people and the international community on President Thein Sein's government needs to be maintained while at the same time the call for unity within the country is now needed more than ever before. How the government reacts and responds to this sensitive matter at hand could become a key defining moment of President Thein Sein's tenure in office and the country's fledgling path to democracy.

Suu Kyi seeks Myanmar investment on 'exhausting' Europe tour -

<http://news.yahoo.com/aung-san-suu-kyi-embarks-european-tour-014455201.html> (AFP) 15 June 2012 /

(Suu Kyi Statement at the ILO:) 'I do not understand why people say I am full of courage' -

<http://mizzima.com/news/world/7329-i-do-not-understand-why-people-say-i-am-full-of-courage.html> (Mizzima) 15 June 2012 /

UN Labor Body Lifts Myanmar Restrictions in Boost to EU Trade -

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-06-14/un-labor-body-lifts-myanmar-restrictions-in-boost-to-eu-trade> (Bloomberg) 14 June 2012

⁸ Muslim, Arakanese leaders meet with US officials -

<http://www.dvb.no/news/muslim-arakanese-leaders-meet-with-us-officials/22476> (DVB) 15 June 2012

APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Announcement of date to reconvene Parliament (Union)

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Announcement No. 2/2012

8th Waning of Nayon, 1374 ME

(12 June, 2012)

Fourth Regular Session of First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw summoned

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw announced today that according to Section 79 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 13 of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law, Fourth Regular Session of First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will be convened in Nay Pyi Taw, at 1 pm on Wednesday on 4th July 2012 (1st Waning of First Waso, 1374 ME).⁹

Sd/ Khin Aung Myint
Speaker
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Appendix B:

Announcement of date to reconvene Parliament (Lower House)

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Pyithu Hluttaw

Announcement No. 2/2012

8th Waning of Nayon, 1374 ME

(12 June, 2012)

Fourth Regular Session of First Pyithu Hluttaw summoned

Pyithu Hluttaw announced today that according to Section 126 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 34 of Pyithu Hluttaw Law, Fourth Regular Session of First Pyithu Hluttaw will be convened in Nay Pyi Taw, at 10.00 am on Wednesday on 4th July 2012 (1st Waning of First Waso, 1374 ME).¹⁰

Sd/ Thura Shwe Mann
Speaker
Pyithu Hluttaw

⁹ Fourth Regular Session of First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw summoned
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 June 2012 (p. 16)

¹⁰ Fourth Regular Session of First Pyithu Hluttaw summoned –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 June 2012 (p. 16)

Appendix C:

Announcement of date to reconvene Parliament (Upper House)

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Amyotha Hluttaw

Announcement No. 2/2012

8th Waning of Nayon, 1374 ME

(12 June, 2012)

Fourth Regular Session of First Amyotha Hluttaw summoned

Amyotha Hluttaw announced today that according to Section 155 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 34 of Amyotha Hluttaw Law, Fourth Regular Session of First Amyotha Hluttaw will be convened in Nay Pyi Taw, at 10.00 am on Wednesday on 4th July 2012 (1st Waning of First Waso, 1374 ME).¹¹

Sd/ Khin Aung Myint
Speaker
Amyotha Hluttaw

¹¹ Fourth Regular Session of First Amyotha Hluttaw summoned –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 June 2012 (p. 16)