



OFFICE OF THE RESIDENT & HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR, YANGON, REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR

REFERENCE:

**SITUATION REMAINS BLEAK ONE YEAR ON FOR 140,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED
IN RAKHINE STATE BY INTER-COMMUNAL VIOLENCE**

(Yangon, 17 June 2013) One year on from inter-communal clashes in Rakhine State, 140,000 people remain displaced, with little hope of their lives returning to normal.

Outbreaks of inter-communal violence in Rakhine State in June and October 2012 caused the death of 167 people, destroyed over 10,000 buildings and led to a loss of livelihoods and infrastructure across the state. The onset of violence triggered a multi-sector humanitarian response, with food, health, sanitation, shelter and other lifesaving relief to people in need.

Humanitarian assistance has improved the temporary situation of the communities displaced. Food is distributed on a monthly basis to those in need, with nearly 2,200 metric tonnes provided in May alone. Some 3,000 latrines are now functioning. Temporary shelter for over 71,000 people has been built. However, there are still significant gaps that need to be filled, including additional funding for camp management and coordination activities. These gaps will be updated when the Rakhine Response Plan is released in late July.

Restrictions of access and freedom of movement have severely affected employment, and health and education rights. For example, about 20,000 primary school-aged displaced children have lost an entire school year, with no access to formal education. Everyone needs to have the right to move freely and access basic services.

Several thousand people have been displaced since the clashes, have lost their jobs, and access to land and markets. As a result they have migrated to the displacement camps to get assistance.

Humanitarian assistance is a short-term solution and the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar, Ashok Nigam, urges the Government of Myanmar and the international community to remain focused on addressing longer term issues; “Humanitarian assistance is a temporary measure to respond to immediate needs. Sustainable solutions must be found to restore a lasting peace and harmony between the people of Rakhine State. Reconciliation between communities is the larger priority. The root causes of the tensions that exist between the people must be addressed. Inter-communal tensions fuel fear and resentment. Left unresolved, they will drive communities further apart. The international community stands ready to support the Government in its efforts to foster peace and harmony in Rakhine State.”

Trust-building between communities and the authorities also needs to be rebuilt so that peace and inter-communal harmony can be achieved. Left unaddressed, mistrust will likely deepen fear.

“The citizenship status of the 800,000 Muslims in Rakhine State must also to be addressed,” Mr. Nigam cautioned. “The consequences of statelessness for Muslims in Rakhine State continue to have a direct effect on fundamental human rights, and the social and economic development of Myanmar.”

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