

Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar

Yangon International Airport, Myanmar, 26 July 2014

Introduction:

Good evening and thank you all for coming today. I have just concluded my first official ten-day mission as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. The objective of my visit was to assess the human rights situation in Myanmar through a better understanding of the realities on the ground. Accordingly, I sought to engage constructively with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including Government officials, political, religious and community leaders, civil society representatives, as well as victims of human rights violations and members of the international community. I was pleased to have had a frank and open exchange of views on a range of matters related to my mandate. And I am grateful that many were so forthcoming in their views on sensitive issues.

Today, I would wish to highlight some preliminary observations from my mission and from additional background research. These issues, along with others, will be elaborated in more detail in the report I will present to the 69th session of the General Assembly later this year.

I would like to warmly thank the Government of Myanmar for its excellent cooperation and flexibility throughout my visit. I would particularly like to note with appreciation the efforts made to ensure my safety and that of my team, including in challenging circumstances. I would also like to thank the United Nations Country Team for giving their full support to this mission and for their invaluable assistance and advice in organizing my programme of meetings.

In Nay Pyi Taw, I met with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Director –General of the ASEAN Affairs Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Attorney General, the Chief Justice and members of the Supreme Court, the Chair and members of the Constitutional Tribunal, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Border Affairs, the Minister of Information, the Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security, the Minister of Immigration and Population, the Deputy Minister of Education, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Home Affairs. I also met with Ministers U Soe Thein and U Aung Min in the President's Office, and the Legal, Political and Economic Advisers to the President. Additionally, I met with the Union Election Commission. I was grateful that many provided detailed information highlighting the sequence of events and the context in which certain policy decisions were made or actions were undertaken.

Also in Nay Pyi Taw, I met with the members of various parliamentary committees of the Amyotha and Pyithu Hluttaws and with the Parliamentary Constitutional Amendment Implementation Committee.

I also had a meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

In Yangon, I met with members of the Interfaith Friendship Group of Myanmar and the Interfaith Dialogue Group, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, as well as with civil society actors working on a wide range of human rights issues, media professionals, lawyers and lawyers groups, members of the 88 Generation Student Group and

released prisoners of conscience. I visited Insein Prison and met with six prisoners of conscience: Dr. Tun Aung, U Saw Gay They Mu, U Chit Ko, U Saw War Lay, U Htin Kyaw and U Nay Linn Dwe. I also held meetings with the United Nations Country Team, the Humanitarian Country Team and the diplomatic community.

During my mission, I also visited Rakhine State, Kachin State and Mandalay Division. I will elaborate on those visits shortly.

Preliminary observations:

Myanmar is undergoing an important transition and the sweeping and far-reaching reforms that we have seen in recent years have dramatically transformed the political, economic, social and human rights landscape. This was affirmed in my meetings with various Government officials in Nay Pyi Taw. In three years, Myanmar has come a long way since the establishment of the new Government. This must be recognized and applauded.

Yet, there are worrying signs of possible backtracking which if unchecked could undermine Myanmar's efforts to become a responsible member of the international community that respects and protects human rights. As many have said, Myanmar therefore needs further encouragement and understanding in order to address these challenges and to continue on the path of reform. And I hope that my observations and recommendations will be taken in this light.

Shrinking of democratic space:

The opening up of democratic space for people to exercise their rights to freedom of opinion and expression and to freedom of assembly and association is widely acknowledged as one significant achievement in Myanmar's continuing reform process. Yet, in recent months many of my interlocutors have seen the shrinking of that space for civil society and the media.

During my mission, I was informed of the use of the judicial system and the application of outdated legislation, such as the 1923 State Secrets Act or the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act, as well as other legislation such as the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act (now amended) to criminalize and impede the activities of civil society and the media. I learned of the continuing arrests and prosecution of people exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and association, particularly under Section 18 of the amended Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act. A disturbing example is the recent conviction of Chin activists who protested against the alleged rape of a woman by a military soldier in Chin State.

Civil society actors also face intimidation, threats and attacks and I was concerned by the alleged threats received by various activists who had publicly voiced opposition to a proposed package of draft bills related to religion, including a proposed interfaith marriage bill and a religious conversion bill.

Civil society actors campaigning on land and environmental issues, or trying to help communities affected by large-scale development projects, face particular challenges. They are routinely harassed and subject to arrest (including for violating the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act). There are also continuing reports of the excessive use of force by the police and the authorities in breaking up protests. During my mission, I met with one

activist who had been arrested multiple times and was under trial in multiple township courts for protesting against land grabbing and forced evictions. He informed me that he would continue to protest, regardless of the personal consequences, so as to raise awareness amongst local communities and to ensure that the authorities “listened to what we have to say”.

These patterns not only undermine the work of civil society, but also impose a climate of fear and intimidation to society at large. The Government should create a safe and enabling environment for civil society, given their central role in democratisation, national reconciliation, development and the promotion and protection of human rights. Thus, any administrative and legislative provisions that impede their legitimate and peaceful activities should be reviewed and abolished. Further, specific protections measures should be put in place to allow civil society actors to carry out their work safely and without fear of reprisals. Complaints of violations should be investigated and properly brought to justice.

With respect to the media, I arrived in Myanmar shortly after the sentencing of four journalists and an editor of Unity Journal to ten years’ imprisonment with hard labour under the 1923 State Secrets Act, and charges were brought under Section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act against 50 journalists who had staged a silent protest against the verdict. I also received information of other arrests of journalists who had reported on issues deemed too sensitive or critical of those in power, such as Government corruption. Additionally, I was told of the threats and intimidation faced by journalists, including most recently in trying to report on the recent violent incidents in Mandalay. Many spoke to me of a climate of uncertainty, intimidation and fear of arrest resulting in a form of self-censorship of the media.

The enjoyment of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association and peaceful assembly are essential ingredients for Myanmar’s democracy and for debating and resolving political issues, particularly in the run-up to the 2015 elections. Electoral periods are important moments in the life of a nation with the potential to consolidate and strengthen democratic principles and practices. The mere fact that elections are held is not an adequate indicator of democracy. The process leading up to the election is a crucial component of a democratic society. Thus, there should be strict and clear safeguards to prevent undue interference in public freedoms, in particular the rights to freedom of opinion and expression and the freedom of peaceful assembly and association. In effect, genuine elections cannot be achieved if these rights are curtailed.

Prisoners of conscience:

I commend the 15 prisoner amnesties granted since the establishment of Myanmar’s new Government. And I note that the most recent presidential pardon of 30 December 2013 (which released more than 41 prisoners) included those convicted under various laws, such as the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act, the Unlawful Associations Act, sections 122, 124 (a) and 505 of the Penal Code, and the Emergency Provisions Act of 1950.

However, I believe that there are several remaining prisoners of conscience who did not benefit from these amnesties or who were recently arrested (as I described earlier). The information I received from civil society sources as well as my interviews with several prisoners in Insein Prison, Sittwe Prison, Bhamo Prison and Myitkina Prison confirmed that this issue has not been resolved. I raised these cases in my meetings in Nay Pyi Taw and called for their review and release as a matter of priority.

In this respect, I was pleased to hear that the prisoner review committee would continue to function and would likely hold regular monthly meetings. I encourage the Government to continue working with this important body in order to release all remaining prisoners of conscience and to fulfil President Thein Sein's pledge. And I also reiterate my predecessor's call for this body to be formally established as a standing institution with a mandate to review continuing detentions that may be politically motivated and to consider questions related to the rehabilitation of released prisoners.

Development and economic, social and cultural rights:

I was encouraged by the priority attention given to education and health and the efforts made to improve Myanmar's education and health systems as a whole. I was also encouraged to hear of significant increases in public spending on these sectors though note that this is still a very small portion of the total national budget.

My meetings with both Government and civil society actors confirmed my predecessor's view that land rights issues, in particular land grabbing and confiscations, as well as forced evictions are and will remain one of the major challenges facing Myanmar. And I note that the majority of complaints received by the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission related to land rights and that various parliamentary commissions have been established to address this issue.

These are complex issues requiring reforms to the legislative and institutional framework governing land use and management, the management and sharing of resources, as well as land tenure. A change in the response to public protests on land issues and the handling of complaints received by various institutions and bodies is also needed. While I will elaborate upon these issues in my report to the General Assembly, I will state generally that priority attention should be given to these issues in accordance with human rights principles and standards. This requires that the principles of equality and non-discrimination, participation, protection, transparency and accountability, including access to appropriate remedy, are fully taken into account.

I was also struck by the information I received regarding the impact of large-scale development projects, particularly on vulnerable groups, such as the rural poor, displaced persons and returning asylum-seekers, ethnic communities and women. In this regard, I believe that it is essential to ensure that environmental and social impact assessments are undertaken and recommendations implemented consistently, that relevant information about development projects be made widely available and accessible, and that concerned communities are able to participate actively, freely and meaningfully in the assessment and analysis, design and planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of such projects.

The coming years present an opportunity for the Government to proactively manage development and investment processes so as to ensure a rights-based and people-centred form of sustainable development, inclusive growth, poverty reduction and equitable resource-sharing. I believe that Myanmar has started to embark on this path but further reforms to the relevant legislative, institutional and administrative frameworks, as well as a change in mindset and behaviour, is required.

Legislative reform and the rule of law

A recurring and cross-cutting concern mentioned in many of my discussions on a broad range of issues is the need to strengthen the rule of law in Myanmar. This is the foundation for any functioning democracy and underpins the entire process of reform. Thus, it should continue to be given priority attention by the Government.

Central to this is the continuing review and reform of legislation, particularly outdated laws that do not reflect current realities and those deemed to be inconsistent with international human rights standards, as well as the adoption of new laws. While I was encouraged by the scope and pace of the legislative reform process, I heard many concerns regarding the lack of consultation on draft laws, with some laws drafted in secret, published at a late stage with little time for comments to be provided or with unclear or no information on where comments should be submitted. In raising these issues consistently during my mission, I came away with the impression that greater coordination, priority-setting, transparency, consistency and clarity in the process by which laws are reviewed, consulted and drafted is vitally needed. Clear timelines should be given to enable broad consultation and proper consideration of draft laws, including by civil society and international organizations. Consultation should be meaningful and not merely superficial, with comments properly taken into account and concerns addressed. Additionally, more efforts should be made to raise awareness of new laws amongst the general public, beyond their publication in newspapers and journals.

Further, while legislative reform is an organic process, shaped and defined by changing realities, it should ultimately consolidate and further democratic transition and respect for human rights. I am therefore concerned by the legislative package on the protection of race and religion, which includes four draft bills on interfaith marriage, religious conversion polygamy and population control. I have spoken out publicly on this issue and have raised concerns that these bills are incompatible with international human rights standards, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Myanmar is party. I add my voice to those who have called for the package to be withdrawn.

Women's rights and gender equality

During my visit, I had the opportunity to meet and discuss with civil society organizations and activists working on women's rights issues in Myanmar. Yet, it seemed to me that women's voices and women's roles are seemingly lacking on the public radar: women are severely underrepresented in Government and Parliament, as well as in the formal peace process, and there does not seem to be much public awareness and understanding of the important roles women could and should play in the reforms process – as both agents and beneficiaries of change. As party to CEDAW, I believe that Myanmar should do more to promote women's participation in all areas of public and political life.

Rakhine State

During my mission, I had the opportunity to visit Sittwe and Maungdaw and I wish to thank the State Government for its cooperation and logistical facilitation. In Sittwe, I met with the Chief Minister and members of the State Government, members of the Rakhine State Emergency Coordination Centre, representatives of the Rakhine Buddhist community and representatives of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and United Nations agencies. I also visited Shwe Say Ti Monastery. In and around Sittwe, I visited Set Yone Su and Baw Du Par Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, Ohn Yay Paw Village and Aung

Mingala. I also visited Sittwe Prison and met with U Kyaw Hla Aung, U Than Shwe, U Kyaw Myint and three Muslim male prisoners. In Maungdaw, I met with four Muslim women who were being held under charges of arson in the Maungdaw police station detention centre.

I listened carefully to the views expressed by both communities in order to better understand their different perspectives and grievances. I recognize that Rakhine State is one of the poorest in Myanmar and for many years, has suffered from neglect and underdevelopment. I visited Ohn Yay Paw Village and saw a glimpse of how some in the Rakhine Buddhist community lived – with no toilets, no electricity and with a minimum of basic services. I was pleased to hear that the United Nations was cooperating with the Rakhine State Government to provide development assistance and I would encourage similar support and cooperation in other areas of Rakhine State.

In visiting the IDPs in and around Sittwe during the rainy season, I gained first-hand impressions of the difficult conditions in which men, women and children of both communities live. The situation is deplorable. Many have remained in the camps for two years and I do not believe that there is adequate access to basic services. In Set Yone Su (Rakhine Buddhist) camp, I was told that while children attended primary school in the camp, older children had to make their own travel arrangements to attend the middle school some distance away from the camp. A number of the IDPs also highlighted the lack of access to livelihoods, with women selling craft work and men performing day labour in order to earn an income.

Yet, it is undeniable that the situation is worse in the Baw Du Par camp I visited, given the sheer number of IDPs in the camp – around 10,000, the comparatively fewer latrines per person than in the Set Yone Su camp (around 40 persons to one latrine by my count), and the lack of a health clinic or adequate access to health services (particularly given the departure of certain INGOs providing crucial health services). Restrictions on the freedom of movement have a severe impact on basic rights, including access to livelihoods, food, water and sanitation, health services and education. One young woman told me that she had passed her matriculation exams and wished to go to university. Yet, she could not physically leave the camp in order to pick up the university application forms. In Aung Mingala, the only Muslim quarter in Sittwe, I was also told that the residents were only allowed to leave the camp twice a week to go to the market. Students were prohibited from attending Sittwe University and were told that they could only pursue distance learning if they wished. Many merchants wished to return to their shops in order to reopen their businesses.

The health situation in the Muslim IDP camps is of particular concern. With the departure of INGOs providing critical health services and the operation of humanitarian organizations not yet at full capacity after the attacks in Sittwe in March, health provision still falls far short of needs. While the local health authorities have deployed additional medical professionals and provided mobile clinics, I have received disturbing reports of people dying in camps due to the lack of access to emergency medical assistance and due to preventable, chronic or pregnancy-related conditions. There are frequent daily reports of illnesses, yet there is now limited access and limited capacity by INGOs and the United Nations to provide the necessary services, undertake the necessary monitoring of the situation, and collect the necessary data.

The operational environment for INGOs and the United Nations remains difficult with continuing reports of threats, intimidation and attacks against staff. At the same time, representatives of the Rakhine Buddhist community spoke often of the perceived bias and discrimination in the assistance provided over decades and currently.

In listening to all views from both communities, I am concerned about the prevalence of inaccurate rumours and false information about the conditions of camps, the quality of assistance provided and the perceived intentions and behaviours of members of different communities, which subsequently become accepted as reality. More must be done to stop misinformation which only serves to heighten tensions and hostility and to increase the sense of discriminatory treatment. The conditions of both camps and the situation of both communities must be accurately reflected and seen for what they are.

I understand the sense of grievance and perceived discrimination by the Rakhine Buddhist community. And I do believe that their concerns should be taken into account when trying to address the underlying causes of the intercommunal violence. We need to call a spade a spade.

By virtue of their legal status (or lack of), the Muslim community has faced and continue to face systematic discrimination, which include restrictions in the freedom of movement, restrictions in access to land, food, water, education and health care, and restrictions on marriages and birth registration. Since the 1993 report of the first Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, the various forms of human rights violations faced by the Muslim community has been regularly documented by successive Special Rapporteurs. These include enforced disappearances, torture, forced labour and forced displacements, as well as rape and other forms of sexual violence.

In addition, I have received continuing allegations of violations against the Muslim community, including arbitrary arrests, torture and ill-treatment in detention, death in detention, the denial of due process and fair trial rights and rape and sexual violence. I believe these allegations are serious and merit investigation, with perpetrators held to account.

I also was provided information about the status of the three INGO national staff who were arrested in connection with the 2012 violence and who remain in detention. I believe that they have been denied fair trial and due process rights and were arrested under spurious charges. I call for their immediate release.

In my discussions on possible solutions with the Rakhine State Government, I was provided a brief overview of the Rakhine State Action Plan but was not able to actually study the Plan myself. I noted with concern, however, that the Government's plan for long-term peaceful coexistence may likely result in a permanent segregation of the two communities. As an immediate priority, more must be done to reduce tensions and hostility, and promote reconciliation between the two communities.

Issues around terminology and citizenship are particularly sensitive. I was repeatedly told not to use the term 'Rohingya' as this was not recognized by the Government. Yet, as a human rights independent expert, I am guided by international human rights law. In this regard, the rights of minorities to self-identify on the basis of their national, ethnic, religious and linguistic characteristics is related to the obligations of States to ensure non-discrimination

against individuals and groups, which is a central principle of international human rights law. I also note that various human rights treaty bodies and intergovernmental bodies, including the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which I chaired for four years and of which I was a member for ten years, the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly use the term 'Rohingya'.

In my discussions on the question of citizenship for the Muslim community, I was repeatedly told that the rule of law should be respected; in this regard, strong opposition was voiced by many against the review and reform of the 1982 Citizenship Law. Yet, laws by nature are forever evolving. As the reforms process in Myanmar has demonstrated, they can be and should be amended whenever there are deficiencies and are not in line with international standards. The 1982 Citizenship Law should therefore not be an exception.

Kachin State

I also visited Kachin State – Myitkina and Bhamo - and I wish to thank the State Government for its cooperation and logistical facilitation. In Myitkina, I met with the Chief minister and members of the State Government, as well as representatives of civil society organizations. I also visited Waimaw IDP camp and Myitkina prison where I met with U Brang Yung. In Bhamo, I met with the District Administrator and members of the District Administration. I also met with Kachin and Shan civil society organizations and with organizations working on women's issues. Additionally, I visited the AD 2000, Robert Church and Shwe Kyi Nar IDP camps. I also visited Bhamo Prison where I met with U Mali Tan.

It has been three years since the resumption of conflict in Kachin and Northern Shan States and many IDPs have lived for years in camps that were only meant to be temporary. Many of the IDPs I spoke with highlighted the fervent desire for peace so that they could simply return to their homes. Yet, there was a general fear for their safety and security upon return, as well as uncertainty over what they would return to – with homes and farmland possibly destroyed or riddled with mines. Some noted the lack of access to livelihoods; in one camp, the majority of the IDPs were entirely dependent on amber polishing and the production of amber jewellery as the only means of income. The youth do not have any options for employment or livelihoods and many are turning to drugs.

While there has been progress in the peace negotiations, with another round of talks resuming this weekend in Laiza, almost all with whom I spoke were unaware of developments and had neither been informed nor consulted. Greater efforts must be made, therefore, to inform, involve and consult displaced populations or local communities. Greater efforts must also be made to inform and consult IDPs about the possibility of return. Any initiative to return IDPs to their places of origin has to be done with the free, prior and informed consent of those concerned, and also involve consultation with humanitarian actors including the United Nations.

Despite assurances by the Chief Minister of improved international humanitarian access to non-government controlled areas (where roughly half of the 100,000 displaced by the conflict are living in camps or with host families), in reality, access remains limited and there are concerns regarding the access of people in these areas to adequate food, water and sanitation, health care and education. The humanitarian situation thus has clear human rights dimensions - with consequent impact on basic rights. It is imperative therefore that the

United Nations and international humanitarian actors be provided with more regular and systematic access to areas outside government control.

During my visit, I received information about human rights violations committed by both the Kachin Independence Army and the Tatmadaw, including attacks against civilian populations, sexual violence, the recruitment of child soldiers, as well as forced labour. These allegations are serious and must be addressed as a matter of priority, with perpetrators taken to account. All parties to the conflict must do more to ensure respect for international human rights and humanitarian law.

Also during my visit, I met with two prisoners who had been convicted under the Explosive Substances Act and the Unlawful Associations Act (for alleged ties to the Kachin Independence Army). Both allege that they had been interrogated continuously for several days and subjected to torture and ill-treatment. One individual noted that he had been forced to commit homosexual acts with another male prisoner. Both also allege that photographic evidence showing them handling explosives had been fabricated. These cases are similar to information I have received from civil society sources regarding the arbitrary arrest and torture during interrogation by the military of Kachin men accused of belonging to the Kachin Independence Army. When raising these issues in Nay Pyi Taw, I was told unequivocally that the Ministry of Defence was not aware of any such cases and that it did not have any information on the use of torture or ill-treatment during interrogation. I must state, however, that the disturbingly similar pattern of abuse in the cases I have received merits investigation by the Government. The allegations are serious and should be taken up accordingly.

Mandalay

In Mandalay, I visited the sites where the murders of two men were committed and where incidents of violence took place. I met with the Chief Minister and members of his cabinet, the police chief and the Division Administrator. I also met with members of a non-governmental Peacemaking Committee. I was given detailed information on the actions taken by the Government to quell the violence, including outreach to religious leaders, and on the numbers of people arrested in connection with the murders and with the destruction of parts of a Muslim cemetery. In contrast, the information I received from civil society actors alleged state inaction in stopping the violence and highlighted the lack of transparency in the investigations conducted and in the arrests made. Additionally, many with whom I spoke suggested possible criminal and organized instigators of violence – deliberately timed to destabilize or undermine political movements or reforms. I was also given similar information regarding the events in Meiktila last year, particularly with how the violence was instigated and progressed, and how the authorities responded. I am, however, not in a position to verify these allegations.

In my meetings with various interfaith groups and civil society actors, Myanmar's history of religious pluralism and tolerance was repeatedly highlighted. Yet the violence in Mandalay and previously in other parts of the country demonstrate that amicable relations and harmony between different religious and ethnic communities can never be taken for granted. In fact, the recurring outbreak of intercommunal violence reveals deep divisions and a growing polarization between Muslim and Buddhist communities. In this regard, I am concerned by the spread of hate speech and incitement to violence, discrimination and hostility in the media and on the Internet, which have fuelled and triggered further violence. I understand that the

Government is making efforts in working with religious and community leaders, as well as the media and civil society, but more needs to be done to counter this negative trend. A comprehensive series of measures is needed as a priority; this should include the adoption of specific legislation to prohibit and combat hate speech – one that is compliant with international human rights standards, carefully construed and applied by the judiciary so as not to excessively limit the freedom of expression. Such legislation should be accompanied by a set of policy measures to address the root causes and underlying grievances, foster dialogue and bring about a change in mindsets and discourse. This should include education and awareness-raising measures, as well as intercommunal and interfaith dialogue and cooperation initiatives. Political leaders and public officials have a special responsibility and in this regard, I welcome President Thein Sein's clear and public call against hate speech and incitement earlier this month. Others in positions of influence should also clearly speak out against hate speech.

Finally, I would encourage the Government of Myanmar to fully utilize and implement the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. The Plan of Action sets out a series of measures to prevent and respond to incidents of incitement to hatred while upholding the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of religion or belief and other freedoms.

Conclusion

These are some of my preliminary observations from my first official mission to Myanmar as Special Rapporteur. As noted previously, I will elaborate upon these and other issues in greater detail in my forthcoming report to the General Assembly. Allow me to note that I am very much guided by the work of my predecessor and in this respect, I am of the view that many of his priorities and concerns remain valid and will be carried forward during my tenure.

Upon my appointment as Special Rapporteur last month, I stated that it was my intention to discharge my duties and responsibilities under this mandate in an objective and impartial manner. It is indeed my wish to be able to contribute to the efforts Myanmar has undertaken in its path towards democratization, national reconciliation and development. As Special Rapporteur, I look forward to working closely with the Government and the people of Myanmar, in a spirit of cooperation and dialogue, towards the promotion and protection of human rights in the country.

Thank you.