Myanmar National Human Rights Commission issues statement

NAY PYI TAW, 13 Dec—Myanmar National Human Rights Commission issued a statement today. The full text of the statement is as follows:

Statement by the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

1. A four-member team of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission headed by its Secretary visited Kachin State from 8 to 10 December 2011 in order to observe at first hand the civil population who were displaced as a result of armed skirmishes that occurred from June 2011, with the view to ascertain their conditions in camps that are under the supervision of the Kachin State Government and also to make a need assessment.

2. The team went to Myitkyina, Waingmaw and Bhamo townships and met with the responsible authorities and visited Buddhist monasteries and Christian Churches and met and interviewed the displaced persons. They also visited the Myitkyina General Hospital and again interviewed the patients. There are 59 camps in 11 townships where 14,113 people are cared for under the auspices of the State Government. 51 schools in 10 townships with a student population of 7,872 have to be temporarily closed. The State Government, however, has been able to make arrangements for all students that have arrived at the camps to continue their studies. Currently, there are 3,153 students studying in schools in various vicinities.

3. Under coordination by the Kachin State Government, humanitarian assistance by various government organizations, Civil Society Organization and UN agencies were systematically distributed to the population in the camps and their basic necessities were provided for. However, with the coming of the cold weather, there is a need for warm clothings and blankets. Families were randomly put together in temporary accommodations which pose a challenge to families, particularly, those with young children. From individual interviews, it was evident that almost all wanted to return to their own villages. The children appear to be suffering from psychological trauma and the adults seem to experience a sense of insecurity and diminished confidence.

4. The team from the Commission was able to liaise and coordinate with the concerned authorities to enable the distribution of humanitarian assistance by the Kachin State Government, UN agencies and Civil Society Organizations to the displaced persons in and around Laiza.

5. The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission will similarly continue to exert all efforts for enhancing assistance to the displaced persons in the Kachin State.

6. The Commission wishes to make the following observations and recommendations.

- It acknowledges the effective role of the Kachin State Government in providing basic humanitarian needs to over 14,000 displaced persons that have arrived at their camps.
- It is particularly gratified that the State Government has been able to distribute in an efficient and systematic manner the material and monetary assistance provided by government organizations, UN agencies, international organizations and the national civil societies.
- It is happy to note that the children of the displaced persons are able to continue their studies.
- It acknowledges that the State Government has been able to provide basic health facilities to the displaced persons and 177 patients in the hospital, including the victims of landmines who were given proper medical attention, thereby, saving their lives. The Commission urges the avoidance of the use of landmines which cause grievous harm to innocent civilians.
- It notes that the donations in cash and kind, provided by the government organizations, Hluttaw Representatives, UN agencies, international organizations and Civil Society Organizations from 9 June to 9 December 2011, amounted to over 1.4 billion kyats. This is in addition to the donations made by religious and social organizations as well as individuals from the region. The Commission urges those business enterprises which have not yet donated to follow suit.
- It is cognizant that the over 14,000 displaced persons in the camps as well as those in Laiza and Maija Yang near the Myanmar-China border had to leave behind their homes and worldly possessions which adversely affected their economic, social and spiritual well-being. The Commission, therefore, strongly urges the armed groups to strive for the restoration of security and stability to the region.
- It also visited Myitkyina Prison on the morning of 9 December 2011 and was able to meet the prisoners in every prison ward. It was found that the prisoners are provided with proper health care and nutrition and the prison sanitary conditions are adequate. The prisoners were able to avail themselves of TV and library facilities. It is found that the prison population exceeds the maximum capacity. The Commission would like to recommend that this condition be redressed at the earliest opportunity. Apart from the religious programs currently provided, programs for all religions should be included.
- It is privileged to acquaint itself with the ongoing peace efforts by both sides which were made possible by the invitation of the Union Government for peace negotiations. The Commission strongly urges that the peace negotiations which would result in the cessation of hostilities, ending of conflicts and bring about peace throughout the nation be carried out to its successful conclusion.
- The Commission accordingly, strongly welcomes and supports the latest news that the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has instructed the Tatmadaw for the government military forces in the Kachin State not to engage in offensive operations against the KIA and observe a unilateral ceasefire except in self defence. The Commission strongly urges the KIA to reciprocate in the same manner.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

2011, 13 December

Deputy FM attends 4th Bali

Union Attorney-General receives Singaporean