



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

137th IPU Assembly

St. Petersburg, Russian Federation
14–18 October 2017



Assembly
Item 2

A/137/2-P.17
15 October 2017

Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda

Request for the inclusion of an emergency item in the agenda of the 137th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union submitted by the delegation of Myanmar

On 14 October 2017, the Secretary General received from the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar a request and accompanying documents for the inclusion in the agenda of the 137th Assembly of an emergency item entitled:

"Humanitarian situation in Rakhine State".

Delegates to the 137th Assembly will find attached the text of the communication submitting the request (Annex I), as well as an explanatory memorandum (Annex II) and a draft resolution (Annex III) in support thereof.

The 137th Assembly will be required to take a decision on the request of the delegation of Myanmar on Sunday, 15 October 2017.

Under the terms of Assembly Rule 11.1, any Member of the IPU may request the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda. Such a request must be accompanied by a brief explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution which clearly define the scope of the subject covered by the request. The IPU Secretariat shall communicate the request and any such documents immediately to all Members.

Furthermore, Assembly Rule 11.2 stipulates that:

- (a) A request for the inclusion of an emergency item must relate to a recent major situation of international concern on which urgent action by the international community is required and on which it is appropriate for the IPU to express its opinion and mobilize a parliamentary response. Such a request must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in order to be accepted;
- (b) The Assembly may place only one emergency item on its agenda. Should several requests obtain the requisite majority, the one having received the largest number of positive votes shall be accepted;
- (c) The authors of two or more requests for the inclusion of an emergency item may combine their proposals to present a joint one, provided that each of the original proposals relates to the same subject;
- (d) The subject of a proposal that has been withdrawn by its authors or rejected by the Assembly cannot be included in the draft resolution submitted on the emergency item, unless it is clearly referred to in the request and title of the subject adopted by the Assembly.

**COMMUNICATION ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL
BY THE DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR**

St. Petersburg, 14 October 2017

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

In regards to the emergency items to be discussed at the upcoming 137th IPU Assembly in St. Petersburg, the delegation of Myanmar would like to submit an emergency item entitled:

"Humanitarian situation in Rakhine State".

I hope this document reaches you well and I look forward to having it disseminated to all IPU Member Parliaments for their consideration. Please find attached the explanatory memorandum and the draft resolution.

Thank you for your kind assistance.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

T. Khun MYAT
Deputy Speaker of the
House of Representatives of the
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN RAKHINE STATE

Explanatory memorandum submitted by the delegation of Myanmar

Since coming to office, the Government has made addressing the situation in Rakhine one of its first priorities. We are painfully aware of the challenges facing the State and the urgent need for lasting and meaningful solutions.

To that end, the Government, of its own volition, has set up the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State led by former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who has sought to find a constructive path forward. The Commission delivered its final report on 24 August 2017. The Government will now give the report its full consideration with a view to carrying out the recommendations to the fullest extent, and within the shortest time frame possible, in line with the situation on the ground.

In its report, the Commission recognizes that the situation in Rakhine is deeply complex and challenging and that there are no quick fixes. Decades of fear and distrust between the Muslim and Rakhine communities have been compounded by chronic underdevelopment – Rakhine is one of Myanmar's poorest states. This has only been made worse by the recent escalation of violence in that region ignited by the fresh coordinated attacks against 30 border police posts on 25 August 2017.

To provide long-term and sustainable solutions for Rakhine, within weeks of taking office, the State Counsellor formed the Central Committee on the Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development in the Rakhine State, which is responsible for coordinating with government ministries and international partners.

While there is still much to do, progress has been made, and a number of recommendations outlined in the interim report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State have already been implemented.

Progress highlights:

- Prior to the fresh outbreaks of violence on 25 August 2017, humanitarian aid had reached 95 per cent of the affected areas. Currently, effective measures are being put in place by the Government to provide humanitarian assistance to all those affected by terrorist attacks since 25 August 2017.
- The Government has provided over US\$ 1.96 million in humanitarian assistance to both communities, including cash, food, clothing, household items, tents, radios, motor vehicles, and solar panels.
- Health-care access has been improved through new mobile clinics. Schools have been upgraded and vocational and technical training programmes have begun.
- Hundreds of new jobs and opportunities have been created for local people through public-private partnerships and we are also assessing the viability of a new special economic zone that would bring new jobs and businesses to the region.
- In terms of new infrastructure, electrification has been expanded and new roads and bridges built, including a new highway connecting remote areas previously only accessible by boat.
- We are working to promote religious harmony and communal relations by engaging interfaith groups. We plan to introduce a new curriculum in schools with a focus on moral, civic and peace education.
- We have developed a strategy and timeline to move forward the National Verification Process, as well as a strategy to close camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Rakhine State. Three IDP camps have been closed, and new houses are being built nearby.
- A new FM radio channel, which broadcasts in Rakhine, Bengali, and Myanmar languages, has been set up to provide information, including on health care and on the National Verification Process to all communities in Rakhine. Cooperation of the communities is essential to the success of the National Verification Process.
- In cooperation with European Union and United Nations bodies, we are providing training and capacity building for police and security forces in the areas of human rights, child protection and gender-based violence.

Challenges:

Despite the progress made to date, the remaining challenges should not be underestimated. There has been a disturbing increase in violence and unrest in the Rakhine State over recent months due to provocative attacks.

There is worrying evidence – independently verified – of external interference aimed at aggravating an already difficult situation for their own political agenda.

Most recently, the August 2017 attacks on security forces by extremists led to the death of policemen and security personnel as well as innocent civilians from many ethnic groups. A group called the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) has claimed responsibility for the coordinated attacks.

The brutal attacks coincided with the release of the final report by the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. It is clear that they were a calculated attempt to undermine the efforts of those seeking to build peace and harmony in the region.

The aim of the brutal attacks was also to attract the world's attention to the issue at the United Nations. Fresh fighting has led to the displacement and suffering of both communities and stoked deep-rooted mistrust and fears. Unbalanced reporting is also fuelling the flames.

These are long-standing and complex issues that will not be resolved overnight – but the Government is resolute in its commitment to finding meaningful and lasting solutions.

We must not allow our work to be derailed. Now more than ever, our focus must be on resolving, and not inflaming, the issues in Rakhine. Through the implementation of the Advisory Commission's recommendations, we are working to change mindsets and build trust between these communities so that tolerance, respect, and eventually peace, may take hold.

We must also remember that the situation in Rakhine cannot be seen in isolation.

Many challenges remain across our fragile new democracy – not least the challenge of forging a lasting peace after decades of ethnic strife and conflict. We have achieved a great deal, but there are difficulties that cannot be transformed overnight.

We ask only that the international community continue to support us and provide the time and space we need, as we strive to build a peaceful, prosperous, democratic and united Myanmar.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN RAKHINE STATE

Draft resolution submitted by the delegation of MYANMAR

The 137th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Gravely concerned* about the coordinated attacks on 30 police outposts in Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Yathedaung Townships in Rakhine State by the so-called ARSA group on 25 August 2017,
- (2) *Considering* that terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and shall not be condoned in any of its forms and manifestations,
- (3) *Acknowledging* that victims of the terrorist attacks in Rakhine State were not only Muslims, but also Buddhists, Hindus and other ethnic nationalities of different faiths,
- (4) *Condemning* the killing of 45 innocent Hindu men and women, the enforced disappearance of 92 Hindu men and women and the kidnapping of 8 women to Bangladesh by the ARSA group,
- (5) *Welcoming* the statements issued by the All Myanmar Islamic Religious Organizations and the Interfaith Dialogue Group of Myanmar condemning the acts of terror committed by the ARSA group,
- (6) *Also welcoming* the statements delivered by State Counsellor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 19 September and 12 October 2017 with regard to the National Reconciliation and Peace Report to the People,
- (7) *Recalling* the three main important issues expressed by the State Counsellor including repatriation, resettlement and rehabilitation, bringing development to the region, and the establishment of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine,
- (8) *Acknowledging* that the primary responsibility of the Government of Myanmar is to ensure that humanitarian assistance shall be provided to all those who have been displaced within and beyond Rakhine State,
- (9) *Commending* the establishment of the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State on 12 September 2017 in order to implement the report of the Maungdaw Region Investigation Commission and the recommendations contained in the final report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State,
- (10) *Welcoming* the visit of the Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor to Bangladesh at the invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh from 1 to 3 October 2017 to exchange views on how to resolve the issue of residents from the Rakhine State who have recently crossed over to Bangladesh,
 1. *Calls upon* all stakeholders to provide the necessary humanitarian assistance to all inhabitants affected by the terrorist attacks;
 2. *Urges* the United Nations humanitarian and development agencies to provide assistance without discrimination to local communities in Rakhine State;
 3. *Requests* the IPU Secretary General to convey the present resolution to IPU Member Parliaments, the United Nations Secretary-General and the relevant international and regional organizations.