

## World oblivious to suffering of other minorities in Rakhine, says Myanmar Vice-President

20 September 2017 – Informing world leaders that the violence, suffering and mass displacement in Myanmar's Rakhine province affects not just Muslim and Rakhine communities, but also other minority groups – to which most of the world has been oblivious – the country's Vice-President stressed his Government's deep concern over the situation.

"There is no denying that this is a problem of significant magnitude," said U Henry Van Thio, the Vice-President of Myanmar. "I am [however] happy to inform you that the situation has improved. No armed clashes have been reported since 5 September."

Noting that his Government is also concerned over reports that the number of Muslims crossing into Bangladesh remains unabated, the Vice-President said that the reason needed to be found for the exodus.

What is little known is that the great majority of the Muslim population decided to remain in their villages, he stated.

Acknowledging that it is his Government's "first and foremost" responsibility to respond to the challenges in Rakhine province, he announced the adoption of an integrated national strategy to address the situation there.

Humanitarian assistance also remains a top priority, said the Myanmar leader, adding that the Government is committed to ensuring that aid is received by all those in need, without discrimination.

Further, noting that there has been a call for the repatriation of the displaced people who fled northern Rakhine to Bangladesh, the Vice-President recalled the Myanmar State Councillor's announcement yesterday in which, according to him, she stated that "Myanmar was prepared to start the verification process at anytime."

"Our two neighbours have had the experience of such a process in 1993 through the establishment of a joint working group for implementation of repatriation process. We can develop a process based on the experience of 1993," said the Vice-President.

"The recent events in Rakhine state are a painful reminder that we face difficult challenges ahead on the long journey towards peace, prosperity and democracy," he added, and further recalled State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's first address to the General Assembly, in which she said:

"As part of this commitment, we have made the national reconciliation and peace process our top priority. Our vision here is clear: to achieve a democratic, federal Union, based on the principles of freedom, justice, equal

rights and self-determination.”

Noting that his country has made real progress, he expressed that his Government knows that the road ahead is “long and convoluted.”

“Our democratic transition is fragile. At this important juncture in our nation’s history, we only ask that the international community continues to support our efforts to achieve peace, prosperity and democracy,” urged the Vice-President of Myanmar.

[Full statement available here](#)