



Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8085th meeting
Monday, 6 November 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Cardi (Italy)

Members:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
China	Mr. Wu Haitao
Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
France	Mr. Delattre
Japan	Mr. Bessho
Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
Russian Federation.	Mr. Iliichev
Senegal	Mr. Seck
Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni
Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Allen
United States of America.	Ms. Tachco
Uruguay.	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The situation in Myanmar

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Myanmar

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Bangladesh and Myanmar to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"The Security Council condemns the attacks against Myanmar security forces carried out by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) on 25 August in Rakhine state and expresses grave concern over accounts that ARSA has been responsible for human rights abuses.

"The Security Council strongly condemns the widespread violence that has taken place in Rakhine state, Myanmar, since 25 August, which has led to the mass displacement of more than 607,000 individuals, the vast majority belonging to the Rohingya community.

"The Security Council further expresses grave concern over reports of human rights violations and abuses in Rakhine state, including by the Myanmar security forces, in particular against persons belonging to the Rohingya community, including those involving the systematic use of force and intimidation, the killing of men, women, and children, sexual violence, and including the destruction and burning of homes and property.

"The Security Council reaffirms its strong commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and unity of Myanmar, stresses its support to the Government of Myanmar in the pursuit and consolidation of its ongoing democratic transition process, and emphasizes the importance of reforms to promote accountable Government institutions, especially in the security and justice sectors and to build the confidence of the people of Myanmar.

"The Security Council stresses the primary responsibility of the Government of Myanmar to protect its population, including through respect for the rule of law and the respect, promotion and protection of human rights.

"The Security Council calls upon the Government of Myanmar to ensure no further excessive use of military force in Rakhine state, to restore civilian administration and apply the rule of law, and to take immediate steps in accordance with its obligations and commitments to respect human rights, including the human rights of women, children and persons belonging to vulnerable groups, without discrimination and regardless of ethnicity, religion or citizenship status; further calls on the Government of Myanmar to implement measures in line with resolution 2106 (2013) to prevent and respond to incidents of sexual violence; and encourages in this regard the Government of Myanmar to work with the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

"The Security Council expresses further grave concern over accounts of intercommunal violence and calls upon the Government of Myanmar to take all necessary measures to counter incitement to violence or hatred and restore peace and intercommunal harmony through dialogue and a comprehensive reconciliation process, and by respecting the rule of law.

"The Security Council expresses alarm at the significantly and rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Rakhine state and grave concern at the increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons, which has a destabilizing impact in the region.

"The Security Council notes the initial steps taken by the Government of Myanmar and humanitarian agencies to provide humanitarian assistance to individuals in Rakhine state, including through granting access to the World Food Programme, expresses its deep concern that humanitarian access remains severely limited and that humanitarian needs exceed the current levels of provision, and demands that the Government of Myanmar grant immediate, safe and unhindered access to United Nations agencies and their partners, as well as other domestic and international non-governmental organizations, to

provide humanitarian assistance in Rakhine state, as well as to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

“The Security Council highly commends the efforts undertaken by the Government of Bangladesh, with the assistance of the United Nations, their partners and other nongovernmental organisations, to provide safety, shelter and humanitarian assistance to those who have fled the violence, encourages the Government of Bangladesh to continue to do so until those who have fled the violence can return voluntarily and in conditions of safety and dignity to their homes in Myanmar, with due regard to the principle of non-refoulement, welcomes States’ provision of support to Bangladesh, and encourages States able to do so to provide further financial and logistical support to Bangladesh, the United Nations, in particular to the United Nations Rohingya Refugee Crisis Humanitarian Response Plan, and other humanitarian partners engaged in this effort.

“The Security Council welcomes the signing of a memorandum of understanding on 24 October 2017 between the Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh on the situation in Rakhine state, urges the Government of Myanmar to work with the Government of Bangladesh and the United Nations to allow the voluntary return of all refugees in conditions of safety and dignity to their homes in Myanmar, welcomes in this regard the commitment to establish a joint working group between the Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh to implement this process, urges the Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh to invite the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant international organization to participate fully in the joint working group and implementation of the returns process, and further calls upon the Government of Myanmar to expedite the voluntary return of all internally displaced persons in conditions of safety and dignity to their homes in Myanmar.

“The Security Council welcomes the Government of Myanmar’s decision to establish the Union Enterprise Mechanism for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement, and Development in Rakhine (the Union Enterprise Mechanism) as well as its commitment to ensure that humanitarian assistance and development work undertaken by

the Union Enterprise Mechanism is provided for the benefit of all communities in Rakhine state without discrimination and regardless of religion or ethnicity, urges the Government of Myanmar to ensure that the Union Enterprise Mechanism supports the voluntary, safe and dignified return of displaced individuals and refugees to their homes in Rakhine state, and to allow United Nations agencies to operate with full access in Rakhine state.

“The Security Council urges the Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh, the United Nations and other humanitarian partners to pay special attention to the specific needs of women and girls in all assessments, planning and delivery of humanitarian assistance and to ensure the availability of specialized medical and psychosocial services for survivors of sexual violence.

“The Security Council commends the continued efforts of countries of the region and regional organizations, in particular the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the European Union, in providing humanitarian assistance and supporting dialogue between all relevant stakeholders.

“The Security Council calls upon the Government of Myanmar to address the root causes of the crisis in Rakhine state by respecting, promoting and protecting human rights, without discrimination and regardless of ethnicity or religion, including by allowing freedom of movement, equal access to basic services, and equal access to full citizenship for all individuals.

“The Security Council welcomes the Government of Myanmar’s public commitment to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, chaired by Dr. Kofi Annan, as well as the establishment of a ministerial-level committee to implement the recommendations, and urges all parts of the Government of Myanmar to work together to implement these recommendations swiftly and in full.

“The Security Council stresses the importance of undertaking transparent investigations into allegations of human rights abuses and violations, including sexual violence and abuse and violence against children, and of holding to account all

those responsible for such acts to provide justice for victims.

“In this regard, the Security Council calls upon the Government of Myanmar to cooperate with all relevant United Nations bodies, mechanisms and instruments, in particular the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and to continue further consultations on opening a country office of the OHCHR.

“The Security Council calls upon the Government of Myanmar to urgently grant domestic and international media organisations full and unhindered access to Rakhine state and throughout the country and to ensure the safety and security of media personnel.

“The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide his good offices and to pursue his discussions with the Government of Myanmar, involving all relevant stakeholders, to offer assistance to the Government of Myanmar in this regard, and encourages him to consider, as appropriate, appointing a special adviser on Myanmar.

“The Security Council remains determined to continue to closely follow the situation in Myanmar and requests the Secretary-General to brief the Security Council on developments on the situation in Rakhine after 30 days from the adoption of this statement.”

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2017/22.

I now give the floor to the representative of Myanmar.

Mr. Suan (Myanmar): We are deeply concerned by the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2017/22, on the situation in Myanmar.

We thank those delegations that tried hard to balance the text and reflect the reality. However, it fails to give sufficient recognition to the Government of Myanmar for its efforts to address the challenges in Rakhine state. It also singles out a Member State based on accusations and false evidence. We strongly reject the use of self-designated nomenclature in the statement, which will not help to resolve the issue. The statement will not help our efforts to resolve the issue, but rather lead to further polarization and escalation of

tensions among different religious communities in the country and beyond. It exerts undue political pressure on Myanmar.

Some elements of the statement infringe on the work of the other organs of the United Nations. The same issue is under consideration in the Third Committee of the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. At this time, many delegations, including those in the Security Council, are pointing to the need to avoid duplication of work and to make stringent use of the budget of the United Nations. Such duplication of work is unwarranted.

I take this opportunity to apprise the Security Council of the recent developments in Rakhine state. As members are aware, the 25 August terrorist attacks and ensuing terrorist actions committed by the so-called Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) triggered one of the most tragic situations in Rakhine state. Innocent civilians from different communities had to flee their homes and villages out of fear. Thousands of ethnic Rakhine, Hindu and small minority groups, such as the Daing-net, Mro, Thet and Mramagyi, sought safe places in southern Rakhine, whereas the majority of the Muslim community took refuge on the Bangladesh side for various reasons. We feel deeply for the suffering of all the people who have been caught up in the conflict.

Recognizing the unfolding humanitarian tragedy, the Government of Myanmar, in a spirit of good-neighbourliness, has reached out to Bangladesh. There has been exchange of visits at the ministerial level, most recently in October. On 24 October, two memorandums of understanding were also signed on the establishment of border liaison offices and on security cooperation and dialogue. We have been working closely with Bangladesh on the voluntary, safe and dignified return of displaced persons. We are currently working on the arrangement for repatriation. Once we finalize the arrangement, a joint working group will be set up and the repatriation process will start immediately.

I would like to highlight some of the measures taken by Myanmar towards solving the issues we face in Rakhine state.

A ministerial-level committee has been set up and started its work for the expeditious implementation of the recommendations the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, led by Mr. Kofi Annan.

With regard to the current humanitarian situation in Rakhine state, the Union Enterprise Mechanism for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine has been launched and begun its work. State Counsellor Daw Augn San Suu Kyi visited the areas in northern Rakhine state on 2 November.

We are also working with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management and the Red Cross Movement to provide humanitarian assistance to people in need, in accordance with humanitarian principles. Moreover, the World Food Programme and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization are already working on the ground. We continue to maintain our cooperation with the United Nations. We are engaging with high-ranking officials from the Secretariat and United Nations funds, programmes and agencies. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, recently visited Myanmar.

We are disappointed by the presidential statement's failure to mention the attacks of 25 August as a terrorist act. Everyone in the Chamber agrees with me that we cannot condone terrorism in any form or manifestation. I hope that the statement will not help to spread terrorism in the world.

Allow me to draw the Council's attention to a news article under the headline "Foreign Militants In Rakhine". The article says:

"Scores of foreign militants — mostly Pakistanis and Bangladeshis — are fighting besides rebels of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) since radical groups across the Islamic world called for 'a jihad against Burmese colonialism' in the Arakans (Rakhine).

"Indian intelligence officials say they have intercepted communication between some of the Pakistani militants fighting for ARSA when they called their principals and relatives in Pakistan.

"On the basis of the intercepts, the number of Pakistani militants fighting in Rakhine has been estimated around 30 to 40, but if such recruitment is a continuous process, these numbers may go up."

Although we reject some elements contained in the presidential statement, we are determined to find a sustainable solution for the issue of Rakhine state.

We will continue to work with all stakeholders who are interested in being part of the solution in our quest to find a sustainable answer to the protracted and tragic issue of Rakhine state. We are determined to work with the international community, including the United Nations and interested parties, towards sustainable peace and development for all in Rakhine state.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Momen (Bangladesh): I thank you, Sir, for giving Bangladesh this opportunity to speak. We wish to thank you and, through you, all members of the Council for the consensus adoption of the fairly comprehensive presidential statement S/PRST/2017/22 this afternoon.

It will be quite reassuring to the Rohingya and other communities forcibly displaced from northern Rakhine state since 25 August that the Council remains engaged with their prolonged suffering, insecurity and uncertainty. We believe that the presidential statement can be a critical building block to help the Council to pursue timely, decisive and appropriate action until the time when a peaceful, just and lasting solution to this unfolding humanitarian crisis is achieved. From our perspective, it is of paramount importance that the Council speak in a unified manner on this situation, even though time is of the essence.

Bangladesh thanks the Council for its recognition of the efforts of our Government and people to stand by those in desperate need of safety, shelter and humanitarian assistance. We thank the United Nations and relevant humanitarian partners for sharing the work with us during this unprecedented influx of nearly 610,000 people, many of them children. I can assure the Council that Bangladesh will continue to work towards fulfilling what the Council has recommended and invited us to do. We shall remain engaged with Myanmar in good faith to find a lasting solution to this dire humanitarian situation, provided that our overtures and initiatives are reciprocated in a sustained and meaningful manner.

This time around, we shall also seek the international community's sustained engagement in and ownership of our bilateral efforts with Myanmar. As we have said time and again, Bangladesh stands ready to do our part but, as we know from experience, we shall not be able to make any headway unless the international community, especially the Council, stays hands-on as custodian of

our efforts. The statement just made by my Myanmar counterpart gives a hint of the complex challenges to be encountered, not least the persistent denial of the situation on the ground.

The presidential statement aptly recognizes that the growing number of refugees and forcibly displaced persons has a destabilizing impact on the region. On the specific question of their repatriation, we are yet to embark on any concrete steps between Bangladesh and Myanmar. There has been a decision to constitute a joint working group, but the details of its mandate and parameters will need to be just, transparent and comprehensive, without the imposition of unnecessary caveats. The presidential statement offers some broad guidelines for the process and recognizes the many commitments and pronouncements made by Myanmar. It will now be critical to make sure that those statements of intent result in concrete deliverables so that the Rohingya can gain the trust and confidence that they may return to their homes in Rakhine state in safety and dignity.

We sincerely hope that there will be some positive and tangible progress in the situation on the ground by the time the Secretary-General reports to the Council in 30 days from now. In the meantime, the General Assembly, through its Third Committee, is poised to further strengthen the Secretary-General's tireless efforts by giving him the mandate to appoint a special envoy on the situation in Myanmar. We take this opportunity to invite all Member States to support the General Assembly's draft resolution in order to reinforce the complementarity of the work of the Assembly and the Council.

We reiterate our Prime Minister's observation that the problem has its roots in Myanmar, and its solution has to be found in Myanmar. For now, the priorities are clear to all.

First, there has to be sufficient and unimpeded provision of humanitarian assistance in northern Rakhine state so that the remaining Rohingya population — whatever small number remains — does not feel compelled to leave. Secondly, the Union Enterprise Mechanism for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine set up by the Myanmar authorities must start making a real difference on the ground in Rakhine state, and the joint working group between Bangladesh and Myanmar must start demonstrable, result-oriented and sustainable work on the repatriation process. Thirdly, the recommendations made by the Kofi Annan Advisory Commission on Rakhine State must be used as a viable and comprehensive road map for restoring the rights and freedoms of the Rohingya, including their citizenship, with a view to ensuring their safety and peaceful coexistence with other communities in Rakhine state.

We hope the presidential statement adopted by the Council today will give further impetus to addressing these priorities. We wish to put on record our profound appreciation to the delegations for the United Kingdom and France for their relentless efforts in achieving this consensus outcome in the Council.

Referring to the statement made by the representative of Myanmar, the allegation that Bangladesh abets terrorism in Rakhine state is pure fiction.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.