



3rd MYANMAR-EU HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE **Joint Press Release**

Myanmar and the European Union hold third bilateral Human Rights Dialogue (22/11/2016)

1. The Third Myanmar-EU Human Rights Dialogue was opened on 22 November 2016 by State Counsellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and co-chaired by European Union Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, U Kyaw Tin.
2. During the dialogue, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen cooperation in the field of human rights on the basis of shared values and international human rights standards. The EU commended Myanmar's peaceful transfer of political power and the early steps taken by the Government to advance democracy and fundamental freedoms following competitive and credible elections in November 2015. The EU underlined its strong and continuing commitment to intensify support for reforms in Myanmar, as outlined in the EU Joint Communication 'Special Partnership for Democracy, Peace and Prosperity' and endorsed by EU Foreign Ministers on 22 June 2016.
3. Discussions between the parties covered a wide range of human rights issues, including land rights, labour rights, bilateral investment agreements, the situation in Rakhine State, rights of national minorities in EU Member States, preventing religious intolerance and incitement to hatred, the human rights of migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons, human trafficking, cooperation in international human rights fora, and accession to core international human rights conventions.
4. Both sides provided updates on efforts to enhance the protection and promotion of human rights, exchanged best practices, and identified ways of strengthening cooperation in areas of mutual interest.
5. Myanmar informed about its implementation of the ILO conventions and labour laws review process. The EU encouraged Myanmar to join the remaining ILO fundamental conventions and welcomed the progress Myanmar has made in the advancement of labour rights including its tripartite engagement.
6. On land rights, both sides recalled the importance of resolving land conflicts in line with international human rights obligations, and Myanmar presented its strategy and ambitions regarding land rights, including addressing forced evictions.

7. Myanmar and the EU discussed the Investment Protection Agreement (IPA) which is currently under negotiation, and agreed on the importance of transparency through public consultations, including on human rights matters.
8. The EU expressed concern about the recent security and human rights situation in northern Rakhine State, reiterating calls for an independent, credible investigation into both the initial attacks and the subsequent actions as well as for the urgent re-opening of humanitarian access to the populations in need. Myanmar provided an update on recent violent armed attacks, while assuring that subsequent actions were carried out with maximum restraint. Myanmar also explained that humanitarian assistance was being provided and that additional access to humanitarian partners would be granted in the areas as appropriate; Myanmar further informed about the imminent establishment of a national investigation commission into the incidents. The parties discussed concrete steps to work towards a long-term political, security and socio-economic strategy for Rakhine State.
9. Both sides also discussed the rights of national minorities in EU Member States. The EU shared its policy and measures in addressing the challenges. Myanmar and the EU also provided updates on the legal framework for the protection of persons belonging to minorities and ongoing efforts to promote non-discrimination. While underlining their full commitment to freedom of expression, both sides agreed on the need to fight intolerance and the incitement to hatred and violence in order to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights for persons belonging to minorities, as well as freedom of religion and belief.
10. The EU shared lessons learned from recent developments of migration to Europe and provided an update on policy initiatives.
11. Both sides underlined the need to enhance dialogue and support in the area of human trafficking. Myanmar reiterated its commitment to combat human trafficking, including placing a special emphasis on protecting and promoting the rights of women and children.
12. Multilateral issues were discussed to help deepen mutual understanding, and to enhance cooperation, including by reinforcing common positions in favour of strengthening international human rights standards. Myanmar shared its consideration to develop a national plan of action for the implementation of accepted UPR recommendations and the EU expressed its support and readiness to share its experiences with Myanmar in this regard. The parties also discussed the cooperation with the OHCHR and the ratification of remaining core international human rights instruments.
13. Both sides agreed that the next dialogue round would be held in 2017 in Brussels.
14. The Director-General for International Organizations and Economic Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, U Kyaw Moe Tun, EU Ambassador to Myanmar, Mr. Roland Kobia, Myanmar Senior Officials from eleven different government agencies, EU Officials and senior diplomats from European Union Member States also attended and contributed to the Dialogue.
15. The Dialogue was preceded by a Civil Society Forum in Yangon on 21 November 2016, where the EU's and Myanmar's achievements and remaining challenges in the area of human rights were discussed with civil society and human rights defenders.