
ASEAN, MYANMAR TO FORMALISE COOPERATION ON REFUGEE REPATRIATION

-

20.12.2018

Myanmar Times (19 December 2018)

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the government on Tuesday discussed the Terms of Reference (ToR) that will formalise their cooperation in the repatriation of refugees from northern Rakhine State living in cramped camps in Bangladesh.

Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Win Myat Aye, said the 10-country regional group, of which Myanmar is also a member, was represented in the discussion by Secretary General Lim Jock Hoi.

We will take action for cooperation after we discuss the ToR he said.

He added the government will show the international community that it will systematically implement the repatriation of the over 700,000 refugees with the participation of ASEAN.

Lim led the ASEAN delegation, which included the executive director of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre), on a visit to restive northern Rakhine State on Monday to observe the governments preparations related to the resettlement of the returnees.

U Soe Aung, head of the Maungdaw township administration, said the ASEAN delegation visited the Taung Pyo Latwe and Nga Khu Ya reception centres, as well as the Hla Phoe Khaung transit camp in Shwezar village.

They checked the buildings at the reception centres and the preparation work of immigration for the returnees, he said.

U Aung Kyaw Zan, deputy permanent secretary of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, said on Tuesday that Myanmar and ASEAN are also discussing in detail the assignment of fact-finding missions to conduct the actual repatriation on the ground.

He added that the international pressure on the government could be greatly reduced as a result of ASEAN being not only a witness to the process of repatriation that the Myanmar government has been implementing but also an active participant in the effort.

ASEAN can put in place the necessary mechanisms for repatriation and we could implement them efficiently if there is someone fully supporting us, U Aung Kyaw Zan said.

Myanmar and Bangladesh signed the Arrangement on Return of Displaced Persons from Rakhine State on November 23 last year in which they agreed to repatriate over 2000 refugees last month.

However, no refugees opted to return, saying they didnt want to go back without being given assurances of security and citizenship rights.

The refugees fled from northern Rakhine last year after the government launched a military crackdown on the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) after it attacked several government outposts in the area on August 25.

The international community accused government forces of using excessive force and perpetrating grave human rights abuses against minority Muslims in the state.

<https://www.mmmtimes.com/news/asean-myanmar-formalise-cooperation-refugee-repatriation.html>

Kaynak/Source: