

STATEMENT ON THE DIPLOMATIC VISITS TO RAKHINE STATE IN FEBRUARY 2018

February 19, 2018 – Yangon, Myanmar

We thank the Government of Myanmar for arranging the recent diplomatic visits to Rakhine State. We appreciated the opportunity to interact with local communities and government officials, even under those constrained circumstances, and to see for ourselves the facilities the Government of Myanmar has built in anticipation of potential returns. We expect the government will now focus as well on addressing the underlying problems, including security, freedom of movement, access to livelihoods, health and education, and citizenship/legal status issues, as outlined in the Rakhine Advisory Commission's final recommendations. Progress in these areas will help create conditions conducive to the safe, voluntary, and dignified repatriation of all displaced communities to their villages. Increased access to Rakhine State will further foster increased understanding of conditions on the ground and allow for support to the return process preparations and the provision of humanitarian assistance.

This statement is issued by the following diplomatic missions in Myanmar, which took part in government-arranged trips to Rakhine State in February 2018: Australia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Turkey, and the United States.

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