



For immediate release

Statement of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide on the situation in Myanmar

(New York, 25 March 2013) The Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, expresses deep concern at reports of increased violence between Muslim and Buddhist communities in Myanmar.

“The recent episode of violence in Meikhtila in central Myanmar raises concerns that sectarian violence is spreading to other parts of the country,” stated Mr. Dieng. “In the context of last year’s violence between Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state, there is a considerable risk of further violence if measures are not put in place to prevent this escalation. These measures must address not only the immediate consequences of the current violence but also the root causes of the problem. Failing to do so can have serious future consequences which the international community has solemnly promised to prevent.”

“The Government of Myanmar must clearly demonstrate that it is serious about holding accountable those responsible for the past and present violence, regardless of their religious or ethnic affiliations. The Government must also take measures to protect populations still at risk,” urged Mr. Dieng. As the primary responsibility to protect lies with the State, the Special Adviser called upon the Government of Myanmar to address this situation as a matter of urgency, develop a comprehensive national strategy that upholds international human rights standards and promotes reconciliation and tolerance among Buddhist and Muslim communities in the country.

“I call upon all religious leaders, local leaders and the communities themselves, to promote a culture of respect for diversity and peaceful coexistence that is fundamental in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society such as the one in Myanmar,” stated Mr. Dieng. “As a country that has positively surprised the international community with its recent transformation towards democracy, Myanmar needs to demonstrate that the rule of law will prevail and that all those living within its borders are and will be protected from violence and discrimination, particularly on the basis of religion or ethnicity.”

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