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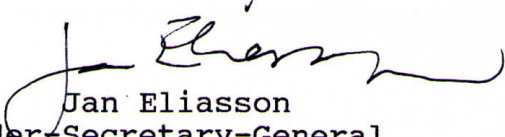
26 January 1994

Dear Dr. U Ne Oo,

Thank you for your letter of 31 December 1993 and for your kind words about the United Nations' efforts on behalf of the Rohingya people. The concerns you expressed have been carefully noted and many are shared by the members of the UN system that are dealing with this problem directly. I was particularly pleased that you share my view that it is the humanitarian concerns of the people themselves which must be the focus of our attention.

As you know, I was engaged for many months in a process of dialogue toward improvement of the conditions which forced the refugees to flee to Bangladesh, and to ensure that their repatriation would only be undertaken on a voluntary basis in conditions of safety and dignity. As you may know, as a result of these and other efforts, on 5 November, the UNHCR and Myanmar signed a memorandum of understanding which provides for a UNHCR presence in Arakan State during the repatriation operation. I hope that this could be the first step in a process of ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the people of Myanmar.

Yours sincerely,

  
Jan Eliasson  
Under-Secretary-General  
for Humanitarian Affairs

Dr. U Ne Oo  
48/2 Ayliffes Road  
St. Mary's, Adelaide  
Australia SA 5042

"My Copy"

# Paper + letter

Dr. U Ne Oo,  
48/2 Ayliffes Road,  
St. Mary's, Adelaide,  
AUSTRALIA SA 5042.

December 31, 1993

MR JAN ELIASSON,  
THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS,  
PALAIS DES NATIONS,  
1211 GENEVA 10,  
SWITZERLAND.

Dear Sir,

RE: Humanitarian Assistance for the Burma-Rohingyas.

I am a Burmese national who presently residing in Australia. Until 1992, I was working as a demonstrator at the Department of Physics, Rangoon Arts and Science University. I completed Ph.D. in Physics at the University of Adelaide in 1993. Like many other expatriate Burmese, I have been involved in the movement for democracy in Burma through Burma Action(South Australia) and Australia Burma Council. These views expressed in this letter, however, are of my own and may not necessarily reflect those organizations.

First and foremost, I would like to thank you for your intensive efforts that has been made to reach the agreement between Myanmar authorities and the Government of Bangladesh for the repatriation of Rohingya. From the Asia Watch report of October 9-1993, it is apparent that the Government of Bangladesh as well as Rohingya wish the repatriation program to be completed as soon as possible. It is therefore appropriate for the United Nations to assist a speedy repatriation for Burma-Rohingyas.

I presumed that the reception centre at the Myanmar side of border will not have enough capacity to carry out such speedy repatriation. Furthermore, the Rohingya will have serious difficulties to resettle back into the local community with their properties and villages destroyed. I therefore support respective UN agencies, the UNHCR, UNDP and UNICEF, to form a task-force in assisting the repatriation program. On this occasion, the United Nations should encourage the authorities in Myanmar to form a *Reception Committee* consisting of various governmental agencies - The Armed forces, Department of Immigration, Department of Health, etc.- and the members of the local community - The Elected Members of Parliaments, the religious leaders, villages head men, etc. The UN task-force should shows its preference in contacting with such a *Reception Committee*, rather than local Law and Order Restoration Council(LORC), to carry out repatriations.



I also wish to draw the UN agencies' attention in regards to the ways of assisting the Rohingyas. The status of Rohingyas have been a controversial issue since the time they migrated to Northern Arakan in 1824. There were incidences of various communal tension occurred between local Arakan people and Rohingyas throughout our history. Therefore, the necessary precautions should be taken in which the way Rohingyas being reintegrated into the local community. Therefore, please ensure that the UN task-force gives attention to both local community as well as refugees and, the assistance on humanitarian needs also benefits the local communities.

There were concerns among NGOs and Human Rights Organizations with regards to the issue on the presence and operations of the UN agencies (i.e. UNDP and UNICEF) in Burma. Their main concern is that the SLORC will promote its legitimacy through the involvements of UN agencies. Furthermore, SLORC will also use such UN agencies involvements as a propaganda to the people of Burma that SLORC is accepted as a legitimate Government by the United Nations. There is also concerns of the United Nations' fund for development may be channelled to the use of armed forces. While the need for the UN agencies presence in Burma is important, I would support the UN to set up a guideline and also a code of practice for the UN Agencies that would consistent with the recommendations of the Commission on Human Rights.

The guideline should meet the UN agencies requirements to improve the humanitarian situation of the people of Myanmar as well as the necessity to promote Human Rights. The illegitimacy of SLORC would be highlighted, though indirectly, by taking measures such as (1) formation of above *Reception Committee* and;(2) the United Nations' Agencies conducting only with such a committee.

The guidelines should also be set in order to encourage the reconciliation between the Burma's Armed Forces and the civilian population. There are signs of the Burmese military been willing to reconcile with civilian population and also to participate in the reconstruction of Burma. The United Nations should encourage such aspect of the military and civilians working together under the auspices of United Nations for the improvements of humanitarian situation in Myanmar.

At present, the UNHCR would be able to monitor the Rohingya refugees who are inhabitants of Northern Arakan State. Depending on the success and acceptance by Myanmar authorities on the concept of *Reception Committee*, the United Nations should extends its humanitarian operations to all Arakan State. The low cost development projects - such as promoting new agricultural land- for small land owners may also be carried out.

The United Nations should also find ways to increase its influence on Burma's democratization process. Presently, SLORC shows no signs of transferring power to the elected civilian government. However, there are possibilities that an Interim Committee, with members from both elected parliamentarians and military personnel, that may be formed to function. The process of framing the Constitution, which may include the rights of ethnic nationalities, could be undertaken from both United Nations and the Interim Committee. Therefore, the

United Nations can assist to built-up democratic institutions in Burma.

Finally, I wish to support to make a co-ordinated plan of action for Myanmar from all UN Agencies, including UNHCR and The Commission on Human Rights. As a citizen of Burma, I will give my personal assistance to the United Nations, in any possible way, for a peaceful transition of state power and building a democratic Burma.

Many thanks for your kindness in helping Burmese people, especially, Burmese refugees.

Your faithfully and sincerely,

U Ne Oo  
31/12/93  
(U Ne Oo)

copy to:

(1) Ms Sadako Ogata, UNHCR, CASE POSTALE 2500, CH-1211 GENEVA-2  
DEPOT, SWITZERLAND.