

Statement on inaccurate references to the use of international guidelines on urban and territorial planning in Rakhine State

14 March 2018

The United Nations in Myanmar wishes to clarify inaccurate references to international guidelines on urban and territorial planning for prospective returnees in an article published by 7 Days news on 13 March 2018 and an [article](#) published by RFA on 23 February 2018.

The international guidelines on [Housing and Property Restitution](#) and [Urban and Territorial Planning](#) provide guidance for urban development in the context of resettlement. They apply to refugees and displaced persons who were arbitrarily or unlawfully deprived of their former homes, lands, properties or places of habitual residence, regardless of the circumstances by which displacement occurred.

Human rights protection is at the core of the guidelines. The principles do not call for land clearance or leveling of villages, as is inaccurately suggested in the concerned articles. The principles promote inclusive planning process with the participation of returning communities.

The UN in Myanmar, including the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), firmly adheres to these principles. None of the UN agencies in Myanmar has been involved in the planning or in the ongoing reconstruction process in Rakhine.

The UN is prepared to assist the Government of Myanmar make human settlement planning and housing construction meet international standards.

The UN is ready to support a voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of refugees to their places of origin.

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